TONY BALLANTYNE
WEBS OF EMPIRE
Locating New Zealand’s Colonial Past
WEBS OF EMPIRE
In memory of
Joy Ballantyne, 1929–2010
Garth Ballantyne, 1928–2010
WEBS OF EMPIRE
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TONY BALLANTYNE

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CONNECTIONS, COMPARISONS
AND COMMONALITIES

This book explores how the British Empire operated during the nineteenth century, focusing on the development of the imperial connections and cultural processes that underwrote New Zealand’s incorporation into the empire and shaped its development. It especially considers the role of knowledge – about the environment, the indigenous people and their traditions, and the place of Māori within the deep history of human migrations and social development – in empire-building and colonisation. But the history of colonial knowledge making offered in *Webs of Empire* is never simply a story of the unproblematic transplantation and reproduction of British traditions and conventions to an empty colonial space. Rather, it demonstrates that translation, accommodation and improvisation significantly shaped colonial knowledge in a setting where indigenous communities struggled hard to protect their autonomy, remained able to contest state policy and maintained key aspects of their knowledge systems even as they lost their sovereignty and valued sources. Even this volume is primarily imagined as an attempt to grapple with the cultural history of British imperialism; strong emphasis is placed on processes of indigenous knowledge transmission and the significant imprint of some of these traditions on British understandings of landscape, Māori cultural origins and traditional history, te reo Māori (the Māori language) and Māori cosmology and ritual life.

In reconstructing some key forms of colonial knowledge and the ways in which cultural difference was produced within the empire, many of the essays in this volume complicate or challenge framings of the colonial past that are organised around simple dichotomies such as colonisers/colonised or settler/native. They do this in two key ways. First, they highlight important forms of translation and appropriation, novel religious idioms that blended old and new and innovative forms of indigenous modernity that sit uneasily with neat visions of bounded and fixed cultures. Second, many of the essays here demonstrate that many seemingly small and localised encounters were underpinned or inflected by connections that reached out beyond the immediate site of engagement. Many of the linkages that
I explore in the volume tied New Zealand to Britain’s Asian empire, especially its colonial holdings in India. The authority of national histories means that such networks often seem surprising now, but I suggest that these expansive links were integral to the operation of the empire. India in particular functioned as a sub-imperial centre as well as a religious and intellectual touchstone for important strands of Anglophone thought for much of the nineteenth century, and its influence was threaded through the economic, cultural and religious life of colonial New Zealand in a variety of ways. Rematerializing the networks and processes that created various forms of interdependence between so-called settler colonies (such as Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand) and Britain’s dependent empire in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean is particularly important, I would suggest, given the prominence of scholarship on the so-called British World since 2000. That approach, which has been driven by a desire to re-center the history of the white settler colonies within scholarship on the British Empire, has shown interest in imperial networks, but primarily when such connections forged alliances and bonds between white colonists in various colonial locations in addition to the ‘imperial centre’, Britain itself. It is possible to read this volume as an extended riposte to any reading of imperial history that implicitly or explicitly makes the history of the empire primarily a story of colonisers or Britishness and thereby renders indigenous mentalities, pre-colonial social formations and native textual traditions and sources marginal or even invisible.

Thus, in exploring New Zealand’s place within the empire, Webs of Empire is also about how historians work: how they conceptualize their archives, how they read source material, how they position themselves in relationship to the places they study and the spatial units they deploy (from the locality to the district to the province to the nation to the empire) and how they can reconstruct the forms of cultural traffic that knitted the empire together. Such methodological questions have become prominent points of debate within the voluminous scholarship produced on British colonialism since 1990: while often heated, such exchanges have generally been productive, and they have opened up a variety of different pathways into the past.

Aspects of the volume intersect productively with Canadian scholarship. The essays that reassess knowledge production and communication, for example, merit reading against Cole Harris’s studies of British Columbia or even the paradigmatic works of Harold Innis on media and communication, works that are themselves a key touchstone for several pieces in this collection. The studies of mobility and place making work alongside the scholarship of Carolyn Podruchny, Nicole St-Onge and Brenda Macdougall on the centrality of mobility in the operation of the fur trade and making of Metis communities. And the essays that explore connections to Asia and encounters between colonists of Asian origins and Māori
bear useful juxtaposition with the recent work of Henry Yu and Renisa Mawani on the engagements produced by imperial mobilities, migration and colonisation. More generally, the arguments here about the nature and consequences of imperial connections can be read in dialogue with Laura Ishiguro’s work on the expansive global familial connections of BC colonists, Adele Perry’s influential investigations of power and cultural difference at the edge of the British Empire or Mawani’s *Colonial Proximities*. And given the growing interest in global or transnational reframings of the Canadian past, this volume will serve as further stimulus for critical work that is alive to the need to write histories that look both under and beyond the nation.

Hopefully, *Webs of Empire* will not only offer a valuable set of insights into one colony and its imperial connections but will also feed into broader debates over how to make sense of empires and how to write histories of colonialism. In particular, it might help catalyse new work on the connections and commonalities that link the histories of Canada and New Zealand or help stimulate new comparative work. Such work can build on some solid foundations, including Mark Francis’s monograph on colonial governors, Katie Pickles’s studies of imperial feminism, Charlotte Macdonald’s work on bodily culture, Kenton Storey’s exploration of press networks, Angela Wanhalla's examinations of mixed-descent communities and recent scholarship on comparative legal cultures. These examples have demonstrated that there is real value in both comparative and connective histories that prise open nationally bounded approaches to writing about colonialism. That is a crucial project if we are to make sense of the legacies of empires, which were so central in producing many of the continuities and commonalities that link societies such as Canada and New Zealand, even as the weight of geography, the particularities of the demography of particular communities and their respective positions within the empire produced very real and important divergences. Assessing those connections, uniformities and differences is one key avenue for making sense of how the British Empire worked and its role in producing a particular form of global modernity.
The essays collected here could never have been written without the expertise and assistance of librarians and archivists. Although digitisation has made it possible to carry out some historical research and writing almost anywhere, historians depend on archival repositories and their staff. For me, the Hocken Collections remain the key site for my research and I am immensely grateful to the Hocken’s staff for their knowledge and service. The chapters in this volume are also grounded in work undertaken in the Archives Research Centre of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand at Knox College, Dunedin; Otago Settlers Museum; National Archives, Dunedin; North Otago Museum; Invercargill Public Library; Dunedin Public Library; Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore; and the Lakes District Museum, Arrowtown. Outside Otago I have made use of the Alexander Turnbull Library and National Library in Wellington; National Archives, Wellington; Auckland War Memorial Library; Auckland Public Library; the British Library; the Cambridge University Library (including the Commonwealth Society Collection); and the National Library of Scotland. I am also very grateful to the interloans and reference staff at the following institutions: the National University of Ireland, Galway; the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Washington University in Saint Louis; and, especially, the University of Otago Library.

Several of the pieces in this collection were the product of a large project on knowledge and the colonisation of southern New Zealand that was generously supported by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Other members of the research team were Erik Olssen, John Stenhouse, Khyla Russell and Michael Stevens. The University of Otago’s Ngāi Tahu Research Committee supported the project and Khyla Russell helped facilitate the research process. I am also extremely grateful to the Division of Humanities at the University of Otago and the Otago’s Department of History and Art History for the support that enabled the production of this volume. Sue Lang, our wonderful administrator in the Department of History and Art History, has overseen my research grants with great skill and I greatly appreciate her institutional knowledge. Peter Cadogan
did sterling work in his typically efficient manner in helping bring together the original electronic files and producing a coherent and standardised manuscript.

The idea for this collection took shape through a series of email exchanges and conversations I had with Bridget Williams over several years. Bridget has been an important figure in shaping cultural debate and scholarly writing in New Zealand and it is a great pleasure to work with her. I was delighted by Bridget’s enthusiasm for the project and greatly appreciated a long talk we had one afternoon in Wellington in the winter of 2011 about historical writing, publishing, and New Zealand culture. It has been a great pleasure to work with Michael Upchurch, Tom Rennie and Philip Rainer at Bridget Williams Books. Their engagement with the project was both enthusiastic and meticulous and I have greatly appreciated their insights and suggestions.

These chapters have taken shape over more than a decade. In that time scholars who work on the history of British imperialism, historians of New Zealand, and departmental colleagues have shaped my work. I am grateful to: Jean Allman, Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Chris Bayly, James Beattie, Barbara Brookes, Tom Brooking, Annabel Cooper, Ann Curthoys, Dave Haines, Sue Heydon, Chris Hilliard, Rani Kerin, Donald Kerr, Marilyn Lake, Alan Lester, Charlotte Macdonald, Jane McCabe, Angela McCarthy, the late Hew McLeod, Lachy Paterson, Shef Rogers, Michael Reilly, Damon Salesa, Rachel Standfield, Frances Steel, Sydney Shep, Kenton Storey, Noel Waite, Angela Wanahalla and Lydia Wevers. Antoinette Burton, my former colleague at the University of Illinois and long-standing collaborator, remains a great inspiration: she is a fount of references and challenging ideas. At Otago I have been very lucky with my teachers and colleagues. Erik Olssen was an inspiring teacher, a generous boss (I was his research assistant) and remains an important intellectual mentor. Brian Moloughney has shaped many of the ideas in this volume, especially those relating to New Zealand’s connections to Asia and my work in this area was profoundly shaped by my collaboration with him. John Stenhouse has always been a crucial reader of my work and I greatly value his reflections on the moral and political importance of historical writing as well as his enthusiasm for the colonial past. Despite the distance between our areas of research, I greatly value my colleague Mark Seymour’s thoughts on my writing and his willingness to discuss a wide range of historical issues. Michael Stevens, who I supervised as a PhD student and who is now my colleague, has taught me a great deal and his engagement with my work has been very important over the past few years.

My family has lived with this project. Evie and Clara have put up with their dad’s research trips and conference travel. But they have also enjoyed family weekends and summer breaks in Gore, Invercargill, Arrowtown and Oamaru that have combined research with recreation. Watching them learn to read and write and discover the world has, I am sure, shaped my research in ways that I
am not fully aware of. Sally Henderson was the first reader of most of the original essays and they are all the better for that. The essays were drafted, revised and published as we, first as a couple and then a family, moved from Galway, to Urbana, to Dunedin, to Saint Louis and then back to Dunedin. For Sally’s sake, I hope that this collection demonstrates that there was some coherence to all of the pieces of writing I have inflicted on her over the years: I continue to value her advice, suggestions, and questions.

I began seriously working on an outline for this volume in 2010. Collating these chapters turned out to be much slower than I hoped, in part because 2010 proved a difficult year. I was in Bristol in June 2010 to present an early version of Chapter Six at a conference when my mother, Joy, died suddenly. In November of the same year my father Garth also died after spending three months in and out of hospital. Not surprisingly, these personal transitions have made this project of reflecting on the trajectory of my own New Zealand-focused work more meaningful. I also realise now that in many ways my recent turn to locally focused work on Southland and Otago reflects an attempt to understand the popular world-views of southern colonists that continued to have some purchase when my parents were born in the late 1920s. Humble and hard working, both Joy and Garth valued education even though their own opportunities were limited. They were both enthusiastic readers and were interested in family history. Above all, they possessed very strong senses of place, with their particular attachments to Ohai and Gore, Woodlands and Oamaru, Mosgiel, Portobello, and Sawyer's Bay, Caversham and St Kilda, and Waikaka, their final resting place. This volume – with its preoccupation with knowledge and place – is dedicated to them.

Tony Ballantyne
October 2012
NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND USAGE

This volume uses macrons to mark long vowels in te reo Māori words and proper names (for example, iwi, hapū, churches, meeting houses and canoes) but not on personal names and places. Using macrons was not a common practice during the nineteenth century, the focus of this book. All quotes in this book are direct transcriptions, so such material drawn from nineteenth century texts will typically lack macrons. More generally, there are some cases where it is also unclear where macrons might have been used with historical names and in these instances no macrons have been inserted.

Another linguistic issue relates to dialectal variation. In the southern South Island there is preference for ‘k’ in the place of ‘ng’ digraph. Throughout the volume when I discuss those portions of the Ngāi Tahu iwi that live south of the Waitaki river, I have used the southern dialect forms that prefer ‘k’ (thus ‘Kāi Tahu’ rather than ‘Ngāi Tahu’ or ‘rakatira’ rather than ‘rangatira’). When I am discussing the broader tribal community or Māori culture and history more generally, however, I revert back to the ‘ng’ usage.
Colonsation and its legacies continue to stand at the heart of New Zealand life. The fact of colonisation is undeniable, but it is an awkward and frequently divisive heritage, generating faultlines across the cultural and political landscape. The nature of colonial rule, its immediate effects and its role in producing abiding inequalities are most visibly contested in front of the Waitangi Tribunal, an institution that has been integral to reshaping the state since 1985 and whose inquiries have generated a substantial body of historical research and argument. But colonialism is widely debated beyond the Tribunal: it is subject to often heated exchanges in parliament, in editorials and letters to the editor, on talkback radio, and on blogs. The colonial past also provides rich material for New Zealand creative artists, who are not only drawn to its drama and conflict, but have also seen it as a powerful mirror to reflect on the shape of our contemporary society and our values, anxieties, and conflicts.

For successive generations of Māori activists, colonialism has been central in explaining the challenges their people face: they have persistently sought recognition and some have demanded redress for the wrongs of the past. Conversely, some academics and Māori leaders, a significant number of politicians and many state functionaries have also suggested that the colonial past is the source of a set of guiding ideals that provide the charter for creating a fairer and more just society, a bicultural New Zealand built around the ‘principles’ of the Treaty of Waitangi. Embracing these principles, it has been suggested, will allow New Zealanders to ‘heal’ the past and move forward together with a clear contract guiding cross-cultural relations.1

There remains, however, significant public anxiety about such visions. For many Pākehā, Treaty talk makes them worry about the shape of the future. But, equally importantly, it also has little to do with their understanding of their own connections to the colonial past. Heated public exchanges over the violence and inequalities of colonialism seem far removed from the family trees and stories passed down the generations that frame many families’ sense of history. By their very nature, popular genealogy and family history have little interest in the political economy of the colonial order. Genealogies record the marriages and births that
make families, while family histories tend to narrate how ‘migrant’ ancestors worked hard, built relationships, struggled to get ahead in New Zealand. Some New Zealanders still feel that these contests over the colonial past should be put aside, this difficult history should be forgotten, and that the nation’s focus should be confronting ‘contemporary’ problems and building a vibrant economic future.

Thus, colonial history has been a key ground for what Russell Brown has called the ‘Great New Zealand Argument’, the protracted and perhaps endless contest over the nature of our past and our national identity. Historians have made crucial contributions to these arguments and, more broadly, scholarly work on the development of colonial New Zealand has fed into a wide range of contemporary discussion through accessible and popular national histories, influential documentaries, and high school texts written by leading professional historians. Historical scholarship has also shaped public understanding of the colonial past through exhibitions and museums (including, but not limited to the national museum Te Papa Tongarewa) and through important public history initiatives such as Te Ara, the online encyclopaedia of New Zealand produced by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Although historians influence arguments over colonialism and its legacies, contemporary interpretations of colonialism remain open to debate. This is not surprising: after all, history as a discipline can be understood as a contest of interpretations and the range and complexity of archival materials that historians use can support a wide range of readings of the past. Assessing the quality of extant work against the evidence and asking new questions of archives allows historians to contest existing interpretations and to elaborate new visions of the past. Drawing on a particular professional trajectory and archival work, the journal articles and book chapters gathered here develop a distinctive approach to New Zealand’s history from the 1770s through to 1900. While they offer reassessments of well-known transformations that shaped colonial culture – such as the wars of the 1860s or the rise of Māori Christianity – more broadly they reflect on lesser-known stories and offer new vantage points on the colonial past.

Taken together, these writings stress the need to understand colonialism in New Zealand not as the distant foundations from which an increasingly confident and independent nation developed, but rather as part of the larger dynamics of British empire-building. These chapters reconnect New Zealand’s history with broader history of Britain’s commercial intrusions, territorial conquests, and transfers of population to imperial frontiers, placing a particular emphasis on the significance of a diverse and shifting range of connections to Britain’s colonies in Asia. Although it seeks to return New Zealand’s development to the history of the empire that shaped it so profoundly, this collection does not aim to turn back the cultural clock and to simply view New Zealand’s history from the perspective of London. Rather, it explores the interactions between global
forces, imperial linkages, and local developments on the ground on the New Zealand frontier. By stressing the value of neglected archives, exploring histories that sit uneasily within received ways of thinking, and framing our colonial past within larger global processes, *Webs of Empire* offers some new pathways into the colonial past.

The chapters that make up this collection have been written over the past eleven years, appearing as essays in a wide range of international and New Zealand publications. The main body of the book is made up of four groups of chapters. While it would have been possible to organise them in a variety of other schemes, each group of chapters works well together and can be productively read as a set. Most of the clusters are organised roughly by order of publication and this chronological scheme allows readers to trace developing ideas and shifts in interpretation and emphasis.

The collection opens with ‘Race and the Webs of Empire’, establishing most of the themes that run through the collection as a whole. These include the integrative work of empire, the changing nature and significance of networks that linked the colony to India, and the ways in which colonial encounters generated new understandings of cultural difference and new forms of knowledge. When it was first published in 2001, this piece offered a distinctive new approach to the history of British empire-building. In the old imperial history tradition, historians frequently saw the empire from London (or, less frequently, the industrial mill towns or Oxbridge) and imagined power, influence and capital flowing from the imperial centre out to the colonial periphery. In the late 1980s and 1990s, this tradition had been rejuvenated by the detailed and sophisticated work on the development of the imperial economy by Peter Cain and Tony Hopkins. Cain and Hopkins argued the power and influence of the ‘gentlemanly capitalists’ – merchants, financiers, and moneymen – of England’s southeast, rather than northern industrialists, played a pivotal role in driving forward the extension of British imperial power, both through direct colonial rule and ‘informal imperialism’ in places like China and Argentina.

At the same time, a cohort of feminist historians led by Catherine Hall, Antoinette Burton and Mrinalini Sinha had also turned their focus to the connections between the metropole and its colonies. Where Cain and Hopkins’s focus was economic, this feminist work examined the ways in which empire-building modified culture, focusing on how colonialism depended upon and in turn reshaped gender ideologies. Hall, Burton and Sinha were deeply interested in how the colonies shaped Britain itself, identifying connections with the colonies which transformed the landscape of British high politics, intellectual life, and debates over the rights of women. This kind of work was energised by a set of long-running and overlapping debates within Britain over the nature of Britishness, the impact of migration from the Commonwealth on British culture,
and the legacies of British imperialism. This tradition of politically engaged scholarship predated the call of the anthropologist Ann Stoler and the historian Frederick Cooper to bring metropole and colony into a single frame in a widely cited 1997 essay. These feminist examinations of the interweaving of British culture with its Caribbean and South Asian colonies laid the foundation for the ‘new imperial history’, which took shape in the later half of the 1990s and which was defined by its interest in what Bengali historian Partha Chatterjee called the ‘rule of colonial difference’.

‘Race and the Webs of Empire’ pushed the analytical concerns of the ‘new imperial history’ in a new direction by offering a distinctive model for understanding the spatial organisation of the British Empire. It was a gloss on *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*, published in December 2001 and a revision of my Cambridge PhD thesis. In tracing the dissemination and reworking of the idea of an ‘Aryan race’ across the British Empire – from India to Britain and Ireland, to Southeast Asia and Polynesia, including New Zealand – both ‘Race and the Webs of Empire’ and *Orientalism and Race* placed new emphasis on ‘horizontal’ connections that gave the empire shape. ‘Horizontal’ linkages were the networks and exchanges that fashioned new forms of interdependence between colonies. In New Zealand’s case some important horizontal connections include the movement of sealers, whalers and sailors across the Tasman Sea, the influence of Port Jackson capitalists in the exploitation of southern New Zealand’s natural resources through to the 1840s, and the flows of migrants from the Australian colonies to settlements in New Zealand, including the influxes of white miners in 1861–2 and then Cantonese miners from Victoria from 1865. While such relationships between Australia and New Zealand might be well known, a host of other relationships between New Zealand and other British colonies also developed. *Orientalism and Race* particularly highlighted a range of personal, institutional and textual connections that formed between British India and New Zealand. It demonstrated how these carried ideas and arguments about cultural difference and racial history shaped by British colonialism in India to New Zealand and reconstructed the ways in which these India-derived templates were reworked and contested in New Zealand. This approach did not deny the significance of Britain itself and continued to explore the important ‘vertical’ linkages which linked individual colonies back to Britain itself and vice versa. It did however demonstrate that colonial development was shaped by a complex mesh of flows, exchanges, and engagements that linked New Zealand to other colonies as well as to Britain, the heart of the empire.

As a result of its emphasis on the coexistence of these vertical and horizontal links, this approach imagined the empire as a web-like structure and it offered a new way of thinking about the operation of the empire. Rather than envisaging the empire’s structure as resembling a spoked wheel, where Britain was simply
linked to each colony through a discrete and self-contained relationship, it reimagined the empire as messier and more dynamic, a set of shifting linkages that were constantly being remade as the relationships between colonies, as well as between Britain and its colonies, shifted. The historical geographers Alan Lester and David Lambert have summarised the significance of this new vision:

Ballantyne’s project has been dependent on an unusually explicit and extended discussion of the British empire’s weblike spatiality. He argues that the image of the web ‘captures the integrative nature of cultural traffic, the ways imperial institutions and structures connected disparate points in space into a complex mesh of networks’. As Ballantyne notes, the utility of a networked or ‘webbed’ conceptualisation goes further: it enables us to think about the inherent relationality of nodal points or ‘centres’ within an empire. Undercutting the simple metropole-[colony] binary divides, places and people can be ‘nodal’ in some of their relations with immediate hinterlands or subordinates (Calcutta in relation to Bengal, for instance), and yet simultaneously ‘peripheral’ in some of their relations with other Centres (Calcutta in relation to London).7

Chapter Ten in this collection, ‘Mr Peal’s Archive’, recounts how this ‘web’ model took shape through archival research, but here it is important to note that this way of thinking about the nineteenth-century empire has been productive because the web metaphor was deeply rooted in Victorian culture. In her response to Orientalism and Race, Catherine Hall suggested that this was one of the strengths of the analytical model, noting that George Eliot’s Middlemarch deployed webs as a metaphor for the exploration of ‘provincial life’ in Victorian Britain.8 The metaphor of the empire as a web of connections was also frequently used in discussions of imperial policy and colonial connection in Britain, the Australian colonies, and New Zealand, especially in the later years of Victoria’s empire.9

In the wake of ‘Race and the Webs of Empire’ and the publication of Orientalism and Race, the idea of the ‘webs of empire’ has been widely adopted and invoked by historians of modern British imperialism. It has also been embraced by scholars working on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century empire, including the study of Tudor and Stuart cosmopolitanism by Alison Games entitled the Web of Empire, and by scholars of Spanish, French and other imperial systems.10 Often it has been used to gesture towards the significance of the connections and the cultural traffic that were the lifeblood of empires, rather than as a starting point for research that carefully reconstructs the operation of the changing circuits of imperial systems. Nevertheless, together with Alan Lester’s work on the imperial networks that supported British colonial governance and humanitarian reform movements, Orientalism and Race offered a significant template for thinking about the broader patterns of movement and exchange that underpinned the empire as well as moulding the development of individual colonies.11
My own later study of the transformation of Sikh culture, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora* (2006), reaffirmed the value of the approach and placed particular emphasis on the ways in which colonial networks followed, cannibalised, extended and reworked pre-existing indigenous networks. Unlike the developing ‘British World’ approach to the history of the empire, which focused on settler colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) and highlighted the bonds that linked whites across the empire, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora* also stressed the ability of colonised people to generate patterns of regularised contact and exchange. Under British rule colonised people constructed their own independent sets of contacts (for both cultural purposes and to enable resistance against empire) as well as building institutional, financial and political webs of connection that nestled inside imperial networks. Thinking about the webs of affiliation and association created by indigenous and colonised peoples – before, during and after empire – remains a productive line of thought and its value in the New Zealand context has been stressed by Damon Salesa and Alice Te Punga Somerville. *Between Colonialism and Diaspora* briefly discussed New Zealand’s place in Punjabi diasporic networks during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, gesturing to the broader history of New Zealand’s historical relationships with Asia.

Links to Asia are the focus of the first grouping of chapters in this volume, gathered under the rubric ‘Connections’. These pieces emphasise the integrative work of empires in ‘Race and the Webs of Empire’. The first of these, ‘Writing Out Asia’, offers a set of critical reflections on how the history of transnational forms of interdependence have been marginalised by the strength of national history writing in New Zealand. Rather than suggesting that Pākehā racism was the sole cause of the marginalisation of Asia and Asians in the national imaginary – a common argument – this chapter argues that the exclusion of Asians was in fact central to the project of nation-building from the late nineteenth century. More broadly, it suggests that while the reworking of national history into a bicultural mould has rested on a deepened appreciation of Māori histories and, more particularly, on Māori-Pākehā relations, this new model still depends upon the exclusion of Asia and Asians.

After writing this polemical essay, it was necessary to reconstruct some of these historic connections to Asia beyond my initial work on Aryanism. One significant starting point for that project was an essay co-authored with Brian Moloughney, examining how networks that linked Otago to China and India changed over time and shaped the region’s colonial culture. In that essay, which is not included in this collection, we offered some thoughts on how such networks operated and changed shape within a context of colonisation, traced the ways in which Asia imprinted colonial material culture in the south, and identified some significant encounters between te ao Māori and Asia in the Murihiku region (south of the Waitaki river).
Such encounters could be imaginative as well as face-to-face. Chapter Three, ‘Teaching Māori About Asia’, offers some broad reflections on Māori engagements with Asia and Asians before focusing more narrowly on the ways in which Māori readers ‘discovered’ Asia in newspapers in the second half of the nineteenth century. This chapter, which can be productively read alongside other recent studies of Māori newspapers (especially Lachy Paterson’s Colonial Discourses), stressed the texture and complexity of colonial racial formations. It noted that Māori themselves wrote about the nature of race and cultural difference and also exhibited significant interest in Asia. Māori editors and writers offered critical reflections on political developments, including colonial rule, in Asian colonies and these types of engagements with Asia were obviously meaningful for some Māori communities as some supported charitable initiatives designed to help India and China during times of crisis.

Chapter Four, ‘India in New Zealand’, works on an even bigger canvas and draws attention to some of the ways that connections to India helped shape colonial economic life and social practices and how they also moulded understandings of religious difference in New Zealand. It highlights the importance of Protestant Christianity in influencing colonists’ engagements with India and, in particular, providing a framework for understanding South Asian religious traditions. As the chapter shows, such questions were not simply academic: the growth of theosophy and the commitment of colonial Protestants towards supporting overseas missionary work meant that the nature of Hinduism was subject to regular debate in the colony.

The final chapter in this section moves away from these broad reflections on the role of economic, religious, and cultural links to Britain’s Asian colonies in the making of New Zealand to reconstruct the life of one man. It explores the shadowy history of a lascar, a sailor from India, who made his home amongst Kāi Tahu Whānui in the first half of the nineteenth century. ‘Te Anu’s Story’ explores the difficulties of reconstructing such encounters and reflects on where he fitted into developing ideas about cultural difference in the south of the South Island. His story is a reminder of the long history of cross-cultural encounters in these islands and the ways in which individual lives can sit uneasily with the broad racial categories that are frequently mobilised in explaining the development of New Zealand society.

These chapters on Asia’s significance in shaping colonial life all stress the pivotal role of the British Empire in mediating the relationships between locations and communities in New Zealand and those in Asia. The three chapters that make up the second section of the volume focus on the dynamics of empire-building in nineteenth-century New Zealand. The first of these, ‘Sealers, Whalers and the Entanglements of Empire’, examines the cultural forms that enabled early imperial intrusions into southern New Zealand. Rather than seeing the signing
of Treaty texts in 1840 or the arrival of the first colonists attached to the Otago colony in 1848 as initiating the south’s incorporation into the British Empire, this chapter explores the region’s imperial connections from the 1790s, offering a reassessment of sealing and whaling. Setting aside popular stereotypes of these men as rambunctious working-class adventurers, it sees their work as driving forward particular forms of imperial extraction and as providing the foundations for the region’s colonisation, a process that was shaped by the capital and initiative of powerful maritime magnates as well as the endeavours of individual sealers and whalers who settled in the south.

This re-evaluation of sealing and whaling is grounded in a reassessment of the culture of these industries. Although it has been common to stress the informal and oral nature of maritime culture, this chapter highlights the importance of writing in shaping the organisation of these industries and in propelling the exploitation of the resources found on the New Zealand frontier. The connections between culture and empire also are at the centre of Chapter Seven, which explores the connections between Christianity, colonisation and cross-cultural communication in nineteenth-century New Zealand. It suggests that the ability to read and write frequently allowed Māori to wrench control of Christianity out of the hands of missionaries and was a key element of the construction of a range of indigenised Christian traditions during the nineteenth century. These used Christian teaching, the Bible, and innovative Māori readings of Christianity as powerful and flexible tools that could be deployed in criticising the developing inequalities of the colonial order, to map alternative visions of the colony’s social and political future, and to assert God’s particular love for Māori. This chapter demonstrates that while Christianity and colonialism were entangled in some significant ways, new religious traditions also reshaped Māori society and were at the heart of Māori attempts to reorder their society and to exercise control over their prospects.

The connections between religion and colonial rule are also explored in Chapter Eight. Where Chapter Seven examines the links between religion and colonial power in New Zealand across the nineteenth century, this chapter focuses on a narrower period – the late 1850s and 1860s – but places New Zealand in a broader imperial context. It offers a connective and comparative reading of the crises and conflicts that shook British rule in New Zealand and India and the strategies that the British used to reconstruct their authority. While it examines the importance of information gathering and cross-cultural understanding, it highlights the limits of ‘knowledge’ as an explanatory tool for making sense of these conflicts and the subsequent reordering of imperial power. The chapter stresses the ways in which colonial states re-established their authority through these crises, as they deployed violence and coercion, but also made use of the law and court systems to suppress threats to their authority. It also highlights some
of the states’ strategies designed to build new connections to communities that remained ‘loyal’ in order to shore up authority in the long term. This exercise in reading the histories of colonial India and New Zealand against each other shows that colonial anxieties about the ‘native mind’ and the threat of rebellion persisted into the twentieth century and that religious movements amongst colonial populations caused particular concern. Moreover it demonstrates that colonial regimes were consistently anxious about the limits of their knowledge and power and this anxiety often propelled violent and coercive responses to any challenge to the state’s authority.

The kind of culturally oriented approach to the history of empire-building that runs through these first two sections of *Webs of Empire* has frequently focused on ‘colonial knowledge’. Over the last two decades historians have been consistently interested in how knowledge gained in the colonies reshaped European world views as well as the ways it facilitated colonial conquest and control. My understanding of the nature and development of colonial knowledge emerged out of working in archives in Britain and India. At the same time, however, it was also shaped by scholarship on colonial India that emphasised the ‘dialogic’ processes that made knowledge on the frontiers of the empire. In this view, ‘colonial knowledge’ was not simply produced by Europeans working within established European intellectual frameworks, but rather it was generated out of cross-cultural engagements and negotiations between European imperial agents and local experts, intellectual traditions, and knowledge traditions. This kind of work – produced by Eugene Irschick, Chris Bayly, and Norbert Peabody – emphasised the ways in which colonial knowledge was implicated in local conversations, debates and tussles. Such a reading was at odds with the more instrumentalist approach of some anthropologists and historians who emphasised the ways in which ‘knowledge’ was largely constructed on British terms with the aim of being wielded as an instrument of colonial control.

Questions about the development of colonial knowledge form the focus of the third section of this collection: ‘Writing’. In Chapter Nine, an essay written in 2004, I set out some of the possibilities that the literature on South Asia might offer for New Zealand historical writing and note some of the striking divergences between the historiographies of the two colonies. In exploring the particular value of using archives as sites of analysis, rather than thinking of them as storehouses of evidence, I place particular emphasis on the underdevelopment of scholarship on gender and knowledge construction in the New Zealand context. This remains an important gap in our historiography and although my work on South Asian and global history is attentive to gender and sexuality, my own writing on colonial knowledge in New Zealand has to date made only limited use of gendered analysis. Future work should think carefully about how sexuality mediated knowledge production as well as exploring the ways
in which knowledge within the colony was ordered around gendered divisions, including important distinctions between public knowledge and private or familial knowledge.20

The remaining chapters in this section branch out in a variety of directions. Chapter Nine’s concern with how historians conceptualise archives is extended in the subsequent chapter. This uses the archive of a British tea planter based in Assam held by the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington to think about the awkward relationship between archives produced by empire-building and national repositories that might be thought of as providing the memory for the nation state. ‘Mr Peal’s Archive’ explores both the centripetal and centrifugal forces that shape the function of archives as it explains the particular importance of Peal’s collection in generating the ‘webs of empire’ model at the heart of Orientalism and Race. This piece was written while I was teaching at the University of Illinois at Urbana and was imprinted by an ongoing set of conversations with my colleague and collaborator Antoinette Burton and a group of other scholars who were also preoccupied with the question of the archive.21

Chapter Eleven, ‘Paper, Pen and Print’, turns away from thinking about the expansive connections that facilitated the imperial traffic in knowledge to examine how different ways of recording knowledge shaped social organisation in a specific community. This chapter came out of a large collaborative project on the colonisation of southern New Zealand and particularly focused on the ways in which new knowledge technologies transformed the world of Kāi Tahu Whānui during the nineteenth century.22 It was shaped by extensive archival research, especially in the massive archive of the ‘collector’ Herries Beattie, but at a conceptual level was framed by my ongoing engagement with the great Canadian historian and political economist Harold Innis’s writings on empire and communications.23 This examination of the transformation of the knowledge order at the heart of Kāi Tahu life draws on Innis as it emphasises the role of knowledge technologies in reorienting Kāi Tahu communication and social practices from reproduction through time to connecting communities across space. In charting these shifts ‘Paper, Pen and Print’ places a group of Māori communities at the heart of the colonial story. This approach complements an important line of argument offered in Chapter Twelve, ‘Writing and the Culture of Colonisation’. That chapter presents a broad assessment of recent scholarship on the colonisation in New Zealand. In particular it develops a critique of the ‘cultural colonisation’ approach pioneered by Peter Gibbons and developed by several historians of the colonial past. This kind of history has stressed the ways in which Pākehā cultural practices have secured political dominance and naturalised the presence of Pākehā, masking the violence of colonisation. This chapter suggests that one of the major problems with such an approach is that it places Māori outside the history of colonialism, making Māori objects who
were acted upon, not active subjects who attempted to resist, reshape, or retreat from the colonial order. More broadly, this chapter suggests that a key limitation of post-colonial historical writing in New Zealand is that it has disconnected colonisation from capitalism, an argument that resonates with the approach to imperial extraction developed in Chapter Six.

The final section of the volume offers two chapters that explore questions relating to place and locality. In these pieces the changing shape of colonial networks and the circulation of information and ideas are explored in a specific locale, Gore and its surrounding communities in eastern Southland. Chapter Thirteen examines the connections between intellectual life and sociability in shaping community formation in Victorian Gore. It highlights the role of local institutions and cultural practices in forging forms of connection within Gore and its district. But it also shows that this late developing rural town was never isolated and, in fact, locals were engaged with important imperial and global developments through their reading and writing. This chapter suggests that it is possible to write a history of colonial intellectual life that moves away from focusing on reading the texts written by well-known politicians and intellectuals, to focus on the processes through which knowledge was produced and consumed. Moreover, this chapter shows how it is possible to examine the operation of networks in a particular colonial locality. Where my earlier work on Aryanism reconstructed the broad shape of several sets of web-like imperial networks, this work on Gore examines how webs of interdependence and exchange intersected in and helped give shape to one colonial community.

This approach is extended in Chapter Fourteen, which develops a broader model for thinking about the relationships between place and space in how historians write about the colonial past. It particularly explores some of the ways in which ‘New Zealand’ was constructed as a national space and emphasises how the nation was shaped by the regulation of mobility and exchange. In urging historians to think under as well as across the nation – the ideal of much ‘transnational history’ – the chapter suggests that places were generated by the work of networks and mobility. In this view, towns like Gore are reimagined as knot-like conjunctures where both local networks and larger scale webs of connection converge and are given shape by infrastructure and institutions. Such an approach offers an important alternative to models of historical analysis that are insufficiently grounded. It also offers a useful starting point for thinking about the links between colonisation and the development of capitalism, a set of relationships that generally have been conceived of in relatively narrow terms within recent New Zealand historical writing.

‘Writing the colonial past’ brings the collection to a close by offering some reflections on the connections between archival research, historical writing, and popular debates about the colonial past. This concluding chapter returns
to the limits of histories that are framed around a national story and reflects
on the limits of historical work that echoes state-sponsored visions of history.
But this chapter also draws attention to the importance of disciplinary craft in
shaping historical analysis and stresses the ways in which archives can unsettle
established interpretations and narratives and generate new analytical models,
a broad argument that draws upon the particular experience at the heart of
Chapter Ten.

When viewed against received understandings of the colonial past, some of the
material and arguments brought together in this collection may seem surprising. It
is important to state that these chapters were not designed as a kind of sustained
revisionist critique of New Zealand historical writing, but took shape through
the attempt to make sense of archival research. Of course, that research itself has
had a particular trajectory that was shaped by my training at Cambridge within
the traditions of imperial and South Asian history. While that background has
directed me towards certain collections of material and has given me a particular
set of analytical tools, the resulting research does open up broader questions
about New Zealand’s place in the British Empire and the relationship between
imperial connections and local forces in shaping colonial culture.

Those dynamics are nicely captured in the map that adorns this volume’s cover.
Taken from the *Harmsworth Universal Atlas and Gazetteer* of 1906, it represented
New Zealand within a complex mesh of commercial, communication, and
transportation networks. These linkages tied the colony to Australia, the Pacific,
the United States, and South America and placed it within a set of imperial and
global connections that traversed a variety of distances. The islands that make
up New Zealand were themselves imagined as reservoirs of valuable resources
rather than simply being depicted as a self-contained political entity. A range of
commodities were inscribed in red capitals on the regions that produce them.
These included the well-known export commodities of ‘WOOL’, ‘BUTTER’,
‘CHEESE’, and ‘MUTTON’ alongside ‘GOLD’, as well as less glamorous products
like ‘TALLOW’ and ‘HIDES’. This map imagined the empire as a system of
circulation. It represented the wide array of staples, consumables, raw materials
and luxuries that moved through criss-crossing transportation networks to
reach markets across the empire. By highlighting these linkages, it powerfully
articulated the integrative power of empire and capitalism. It can also be read
as an expression of the global imperial consciousness promoted by Britain’s
commercial and colonial reach. As such, it neatly encapsulates many of arguments
that are developed in the following pages.
REFRAMING COLONIALISM
Knowledge, particularly about cultural difference, has emerged as a central theme in recent studies of imperialism. Scholars from across the humanities have increasingly highlighted the importance of the cultural projects of empire-building, largely, if not exclusively, encouraged by Michel Foucault’s work on power/knowledge and Edward Said’s paradigmatic studies of Orientalism. Studies of colonial disciplines (from cartography to psychology), rereadings of canonical texts, and a new recognition of cultural manifestations of imperial ideologies (from advertisements for soap to the place of Shakespeare in colonial classrooms) have profoundly reshaped our understandings of the sources, structure and consequences of imperialism. Central to this new scholarship has been a fundamental reappraisal of racial thought: no longer some epiphenomena of empire, race – a concept that emerged unevenly over time and space – is now seen as being fundamental to the discourses of European imperialism from the sixteenth century on.

This chapter re-examines the development of Aryanism within the British Empire in the long nineteenth century. A range of case studies have identified Aryanism – the notion that certain communities shared cultural features as a result of their sharing a common ‘Aryan stock’ – as one of the most significant racialising discourses in contexts as divergent as India and Nigeria, Ireland and Hawai‘i, Argentina and New Zealand. Rather than simply recounting the development of this domain of knowledge narrowly within one colony, it shows that a careful examination of Aryanism reveals the profoundly mobile character of racial knowledge and discourses about cultural difference within the British Empire, a reality that necessitates a transnational analysis of imperial knowledge production. To achieve this end, this chapter re-evaluates the place of Aryanism in the historiography of South Asia and the Pacific, revealing the important elisions that can arise from a ‘national’ history of racial thought. By sketching the conscious transplantation of ethnological models drawn from British India to the New Zealand frontier in the second half of the nineteenth century, it recovers some of the important networks and exchanges that shaped the empire
and underscores the fundamentally intertextual nature of colonial knowledge. Before mapping these ‘webs of empire’, it is important to begin by sketching the inherited spatial models that order most studies of British imperialism.

Since the mid-1990s there have been growing calls for transnational histories and many historians have insisted that the construction of new analytical models, that recover the movement of people, ideas, ideologies, commodities and information across the borders of the nation states, are urgently needed in this global moment. Traditionally, of course, history is conceived of as a temporal discipline in which the fundamental structures of research, analysis, and narrativisation are concerned with change over time. But, as is increasingly apparent, history is also a spatial discipline and historical knowledge is structured by spatial parameters, whether these units are continental, cultural, regional, or, most frequently, national. Calls to fundamentally reorder the spatial basis of historical writing and write histories that look beyond the nation pose a fundamental challenge to history, a discipline that has produced enabling narratives for so many nations and that continues to depend heavily upon state-sponsored archives, institutions, and funding. Breaking this ‘narrative contract’ – to borrow Sudipta Kaviraj’s memorable phrase – between history and the nation state is difficult, yet this project is pressing as historians seek to understand both the complex forces that have framed the asymmetries of our contemporary world and the future shape of the discipline of history itself.5

The need to revisit what might be termed the ‘spatial imagination’ of historical writing is particularly vital within the specific context of British imperial and post-colonial history, as the vast majority of historians continue to use one of two models. The first and perhaps dominant historiographical tradition has been the production of metropolitan-focused imperial histories, a tradition revivified by Peter Cain and A. G. Hopkins’s model of ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ and, more recently, by David Hancock’s study of the role of London merchants in the integration of an eighteenth-century Atlantic world.6 In viewing the empire and its history from London, these models return indigenous people to the margins of history while foregrounding the powerful financial and mercantile interests of England’s southeast. In effect, these models reinscribe London’s privileged position as the ‘heart’ of the empire, the centre from where power, people, capital, and ideas flowed out to the colonies in the periphery. The second model neatly inverts this spatial imagination, as many historians working on the ‘periphery’ – the former colonies of the empire – focus on the severing of the ties to London, charting the progress of the individual colony to independence. These colonial histories typically narrate the birth of the nation in highly teleological narratives.
that recount the growing maturity of national consciousness and the long and often bloody journey towards the achievement of the nation state.

Despite increased calls for histories that interrogate the nation state and recover transnational exchanges and mobility, these imagined geographies of empire have proven difficult to displace. These two models provide the basic structure for the five-volume *Oxford History of the British Empire* (1998-9), where the empire was repeatedly carved up into national chunks, and even thematic essays often worked to reinforce the primacy of the nation state and the fundamental divide between metropolitan and colonial histories. While this editorial strategy, of course, merely reflected prevailing historical practice, it further legitimated the division between imperial and colonial history. This division of academic labour has been pernicious, disassembling the empire into a series of discrete components, rather than conceiving of it as the product of the ‘bundles of relationships’ that Eric Wolf identifies as being at the heart of history.

The *Oxford History of the British Empire* reinstated this long-established division by both rejecting the claims of critical post-colonial histories and by marginalising the work of historians of migration, gender and popular culture who have insisted on the profound entanglement of metropolitan and colonial histories. Such work actually has a long lineage that reaches back until the 1980s (if not before), but has become more prominent and theoretically sophisticated over the last ten years. Although grounded in divergent epistemologies and concerns, the works of John MacKenzie and Catherine Hall in the 1980s played a pivotal role in underscoring the centrality of empire in metropolitan politics and social life. More recently, Mrinalini Sinha’s *Colonial Masculinity* (1995) marked a particularly important move towards a history of British imperialism that revealed the complex meshing of metropolitan and colonial histories. Published in the MacKenzie’s Studies in Imperialism series, *Colonial Masculinity* sketched the contours of an ‘imperial social formation’, a shared (if fundamentally uneven) space of social reform and political debate that transcended national boundaries. In charting the travels of South Asian students, feminists, and social reformers in fin-de-siècle Britain, Antoinette Burton has further undercut the division between ‘home’ and ‘away’ that structures so much British history, insisting that colonial encounters were staged in London and Oxford as well as in Delhi and Calcutta.

Sinha and Burton have played a key role in bringing the complexities and contradictions of this ‘imperial social formation’ into focus, highlighting the circulation of both ideas and individuals within the empire. However, their work largely focuses the interweaving of the cultural and political space of a single colony (India) and Britain, rather than what might be termed ‘horizontal mobility’, the forms of movement and cultural traffic that linked colonies in the ‘periphery’ together. As we shall see, debates over Aryanism reveal that the ‘imperial social
In 1885 Edward Tregear, a leading Pākehā intellectual published *The Aryan Maori*, a work that drew on European Indology and Orientalist studies of Asian cultures to assert that the Pacific islands had been settled from Asia and that Māori language and culture preserved an ancient Aryan heritage ‘in an almost inconceivable purity’. Published by New Zealand’s Government Printer, Tregear’s volume was widely disseminated and elicited considerable attention, both within New Zealand and from an influential international audience. While Tregear’s work on Māori origins drew support from authorities such as Horatio Hale and F. Max Müller, some New Zealand readers doubted Tregear’s reliance on comparative philology and comparative mythology – the ‘youngest and fairest daughters of Knowledge’ – to establish the deep connections that supposedly linked Māori to the other members of the Aryan family. The *New Zealand Herald* castigated Tregear for chasing linguistic ‘will-o’-wisps’ because, as it asserted, the ‘very primitive’ Māori language bore no resemblance to the sophisticated Indo-European languages. A year later, the noted lawyer and colonial grandee A. S. Atkinson produced an acerbic dismissal of Tregear’s work, relentlessly parodying the search for Māori cognates of Sanskrit terms. Atkinson’s essay, published in *The Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, drew a prompt reply from Tregear, a defensive essay that ceded some ground but restated his central hypothesis: that Māori were Aryans and as such shared profound cultural bonds with Pākehā settlers.

Tregear’s work and his exchange with Atkinson have assumed a central place in the intellectual history of colonial New Zealand. In the 1970s and 1980s Keith Sinclair, M. P. K. Sorrenson and Michael Belgrave disregarded Tregear’s high standing, both in local scientific circles and on an international stage, to dismiss him as an ‘amateur’. Nevertheless, in identifying Tregear as an influential architect of cultural and intellectual imperialism, they all suggested that Tregear’s ideas were central in shaping understandings of both Māori history and settler identity. James Belich fortified this argument in an important essay that revisited the construction of the imperial myths and racial ideologies that underpinned colonial New Zealand’s cultural and political order. Belich agreed with Sinclair, Sorrenson, and Belgrave, characterising Tregear’s work as a ‘joke’, but warned
that the ‘joke was on us, because it obscures the possibility that *The Aryan Maori* became the symbolic bible of Maori-Pakeha relations'\(^7\). For Belich, Tregear's Aryan theory was ‘the apotheosis of the Whitening-Maori myth complex’: a cluster of ideas that identified Māori as ‘white savages’ or ‘sun-tanned Europeans’ capable of embracing Christianity, commerce and civilisation.\(^8\) Tregear’s cherished notion of an Aryan Māori, Belich insisted, drove the assimilationist direction of government policy and framed a popular racial folklore that celebrated Māori as warriors and sportsmen, racial tropes that remain powerfully embedded in New Zealand culture today.

For Belich, Tregear’s work provided powerful insights into the developing cultural programme of settler nationalism and marks an important point in the nation’s long march towards biculturalism. This is not surprising, given the celebration of nationhood that is an integral part of Belich’s work and the very strong investment of New Zealand’s liberal historiographical tradition in the nation state and the prominent role of the state in supporting history in New Zealand.

However, to see Tregear’s work merely as providing the ‘symbolic bible’ for the assimilationist vision of settler nationalism is reductive and fundamentally misleading for two reasons. Firstly it presents an anachronistic reading of Aryanism that simply equates the term ‘Aryan’ with whiteness or the ‘Caucasian race’, obscuring both the South Asian provenance of nineteenth-century Aryanism and the existence of competing visions of the racial implications of the theory. In identifying Tregear’s text as a *foundational* document for settler ethnology and colonial policy-making, Belich abstracted Tregear’s work from a much longer tradition of ‘Indocentric ethnology’, studies that analysed Māori culture against the cultural backdrop of South Asia. This tradition predated the emergence of settler nationalism by at least a generation but it also militated against a narrow vision of nationhood, insisting that New Zealand’s development be framed firmly within broader narratives of racial development and empire-building.

Secondly, in locating Tregear’s *Aryan Maori* as a foundational national text, Belich systematically excised the broader transnational and imperial connections that underpinned Tregear’s work and, more broadly, facilitated development of this Indocentric tradition in New Zealand from the 1850s through to the 1920s. It was only in the late 1920s and 1930s – with the rise of a materialist anthropology, the consolidation of a popular settler nationalism, and growing hostility towards the scattered Gujarati and Punjabi migrant communities in New Zealand – that the notion that both Māori and Pākehā could trace their origins back to north India was rejected in favour of a much narrower vision of a national history.

In exploring these two problems it is possible to sketch a very different understanding of the construction of racial ideologies such as Aryanism, one that insists upon the centrality of transnational networks and imperial discourses in framing the development of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier. Such an
approach does not disregard the nation state or questions of national culture, but it recognizes that under colonialism nations were themselves constituted out of a broader imperial system characterized by complex forms of mobility and exchange. A transnational history of Aryanism therefore is grounded in both an appreciation of the significance of the imperial networks that moulded the cultural development of individual colonies and an insistence that the interrelationship between the different components of the imperial system is of fundamental importance in the reconstruction of the dynamics of imperialism.

The first step towards constructing a transnational history of Aryanism is to carefully trace the provenance and cultural freight of this idea. Historians of intellectual production on the New Zealand frontier have generally been concerned with the gradual development of nationalist thought and the development of a national intellectual tradition.19 Given this heavy investment in the nation, it is hardly surprising that historians have paid limited attention to the origins and development of the Aryan idea in their discussion of Aryan discourses in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New Zealand. The emergence of the Aryan idea and its pivotal role within the empire – especially in colonial India – are treated summarily and are seen as having little bearing on the story of Aryanism in New Zealand. Belich, for example, observed: ‘Ideas of a shared Indo-European Aryan origin date back to the mid-eighteenth century, and were proselytised by F. Max Müller in the mid-nineteenth.’20 In a similar vein M. P. K. Sorrenson noted in his Maori Origins and Migrations (1979) that: ‘The late-eighteenth century discovery by the British orientalist, Sir William Jones, of an affinity between Sanscrit and European languages like Greek and Latin, gave a great stimulus to comparative philology.’21 Even K. R. Howe’s 1988 article that sketched the intellectual background to the Aryan theories of Tregear and his Hawaiian correspondent Abraham Fornander paid little attention to the development of the idea in colonial India.22 These truncated interpretations of the history of the Aryan concept, especially in the case of Belich and Sorrenson, deployed terms anachronistically – projecting the terms ‘Indo-European’ and ‘Aryan’ back to the mid-1700s when they were not used in English until 1813 and 1839 respectively – but also create an image of a ready-packaged British Aryan discourse which was simply transposed to the study of Māori culture.23 Reframing the development of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier as part of an imperial social and intellectual formation, where a multiplicity of connections wove India and New Zealand together, highlights three key features of Aryanism effaced by a simple equation of Aryanism with whiteness: Aryanism’s origins in colonial South Asia and its profoundly imperial nature, the multiple valences
of the term within both scientific and popular racial discourses, and the deep-seated conflicts surrounding the concept’s veracity and usefulness.

Firstly, it is important to underline that Aryanism was both the product of what C. A. Bayly terms the ‘information order’ of colonial South Asia and that its rapid dissemination across the globe was the result of the global reach of British imperial networks. Belich and Sorrenson ignored the colonial origins of Aryanism, gesturing towards the significance of Jones and F. Max Müller, but neglected both the key role that these figures played in framing British imperial mentalities and the centrality of Aryanism in British understandings of India. Although the Aryan concept is based upon the Vedic hymns, which recorded the incursion of nomadic pastoralists from Central Asia who called themselves ‘Arya’ (noble) into north India, the birth of Aryanism as an ethnological framework was the direct result of ‘Company Orientalism’, the body of knowledge about South Asian languages, cultures, and histories produced by the functionaries of the East India Company.

Despite the cultural weight of ‘Arya’ as a marker of community in Sanskritic tradition and its embeddedness within a variety of popular cultural discourses and social hierarchies in South Asia, it remained beyond the reach of European Orientalists until the East India Company consolidated its position as a territorial power in South Asia. This notion remained elusive because of the inability of early European experts to access key texts and the traditions of the Brahmans (ritual experts) who traditionally exercised a monopoly over Sanskrit. Indeed, in the mid-eighteenth century leading Orientalists doubted whether Europeans would ever decipher Sanskrit. But the deep-seated social and cultural changes accompanying the Company’s rise as a territorial power in 1765 enabled a new generation of Company employees to learn Sanskrit and to access Brahmanical tradition. Where the leading Company Orientalist Nathaniel Brassey Halhed found that gaining a solid grounding in Sanskrit in the 1770s was difficult because pandits (Hindu knowledge experts) ‘were to a man resolute in rejecting all ... solicitations for instruction in this dialect’, by the early 1780s Company scholar-administrators were increasingly able to draw upon the expertise of both Hindu and Muslim learned elites. The devastation of the Bengal famines of 1770 and 1783, together with the pressure of the Company’s revenue regime, eroded the ability of leading zamindars (large land-holders) to provide the generous patronage that had traditionally extended to Bengali Brahmans. Because of the constrained opportunities in rural centres, many pandits moved to rapidly expanding Calcutta, where some found that the Company provided a reliable source of income. This opening up of the ‘reservoirs of native learning’ was such that H. T. Colebrooke observed in 1797 that he could not ‘conceive how it came to be ever asserted that the Brahmans were averse to instruct strangers’.

This profound shift in the colonial information order was pivotal in allowing
the Company to access both Hindu and Muslim learned traditions and provided the key context for the emergence of a new vision of Asian culture and a new understanding of the very pattern of universal history. Sir William Jones, a leading Company administrator, Enlightenment polymath, and President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was the central figure in the project. In effect, Jones’s ten ‘Anniversary Discourses’ delivered to the Asiatic Society from 1784, sketched a new interpretation of both Asian and global history, celebrating the precocious development of the linguistic and literary traditions of India and Persia and identifying Asia as the cradle of humanity. Drawing on both his ‘mastery’ of Classical and Semitic (Hebrew, Arabic and Persian) languages and his fledgling studies of Sanskrit, Jones asserted that Sanskrit

is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of the verbs and in the forms of the grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists ...

This argument ‘elevated’ Sanskrit to the level of Latin and Greek, undercutting long-established traditions of representing South Asian cultures. Where medieval and early modern Europeans underlined the otherness of South Asia, depicting it as an exotic land of marvels and wonders, Jones reimagined it in the language of kinship and affinity. South Asian and European languages were connected, suggesting a fundamental cultural bond in the place of the rigid divisions often drawn between Europe and India. Following on from this, the ‘Orient’ was no longer a distant and foreign zone but rather was imagined as the very ‘birthplace’ of civilisation from where both modern European and South Asian culture had developed. This connection established by Jones formed the basis for the emergence of the concept of an Indo-European language family in the early nineteenth century, but also provided the foundation for the later work of James Cowles Prichard and F. Max Müller which popularised the notion of ‘Aryan’ peoples by welding Jones’s notion of linguistic affinity to the accounts of the migration of the ‘Aryas’ from Central Asia to north India recorded in the Vedas.

If Jones’s discovery was a direct result of the translation and textualisation of indigenous traditions (a crucial foundation of the Company’s colonial authority), his vision of the connections between European and Asian languages quickly became an important element of ethnology throughout the empire, from Ireland to Java. Although, at a general level, Jones’s impact can be read as an index of the rising authority of Company Orientalism, more concretely his influence reflected the complex and increasingly dense systems of cultural communication that integrated the empire. This new ethnological model was communicated
throughout the empire thanks to Jones’s prominent role in a late Enlightenment republic of letters that linked influential public figures – his extensive webs of correspondence incorporated leading figures in American, British, and Continental thought (including Edmund Burke, William Robertson, Samuel Johnson, and Benjamin Franklin) – and a thriving print culture that facilitated the rapid dissemination of *Asiatick Researches*, the key forum for the work of Jones and his cohort.33

One of the most striking consequences of these knowledge networks fashioned by Jones was the interweaving of the study of the Pacific and India in Germany. Most intriguingly, it was Georg Forster, a naturalist on Captain James Cook’s second Pacific voyage, who was central in the popularisation of Jones’s work in Europe and in the emergence of a German Indological tradition. Just as his account of his voyage with Cook triggered a ‘Pacific craze’ in Europe, his translation of Jones’s Latin rendering of the Sanskrit play *Shakuntala* was central in ushering in an age of ‘Indomania’ in Germany.34 In knitting British and German intellectual words together, Forster facilitated the emergence of a significant German tradition of Pacific linguistics, one that viewed the Pacific as an extended frontier of South Asia. Drawing on the ‘raw material’ produced by British traders, missionaries and ethnographers, Wilhelm von Humboldt suggested that traces of an ancient form of Sanskrit, or ‘pre-Sanskrit’, could be discerned in the Polynesian languages.35 Franz Bopp argued that a Malayo-Polynesian language family united most of the Pacific and Southeast Asia. These languages, Bopp believed, had emerged from a degraded form of Sanskrit and this Sanskritic influence was evident when Māori and Sanskrit words were compared.36 This German tradition, like the work of Jones and the pioneering linguistic researches of William Marsden on Malayo-Polynesian languages, imagined the peoples of the Pacific as the descendants of the ancient Sanskrit-speaking peoples of north India.37 Polynesians were not Caucasians, nor were they Europeans, instead they were one branch of a larger linguistic and cultural family that originated in Asia and now reached from the eastern Pacific to western Europe.

This brings us to the second effect of the truncated visions of the Aryanism in New Zealand historiography. As we have seen, New Zealand historians have generally equated Aryanism with whiteness and, in Belich’s case, have asserted that Tregear’s theory marked the ‘apotheosis’ of the ‘Whitening Māori’ discourse. This easy equation of Aryanism and whiteness in the New Zealand context is anachronistic, perhaps reflecting a ‘common-sense’ understanding of Aryanism borne out of Nazi ideologies and the racist programmes of the American militias and extreme right. From its emergence in early nineteenth century until the rise of Nazism, however, the term ‘Aryan’ has carried a range of competing racial connotations. It is important to note, for example, that Sir William Jones’s vision of cultural history was quite different from later nineteenth century theories that
would equate Aryans (Indians, Europeans and even Polynesians) as the descendants of Noah’s son Japhet. In Jones’s scheme the Tartars approximated the sons of Japhet, while the more advanced ‘Jews and Arabs’ were the sons of Shem. The languages of the Semites were fundamentally different from the languages of the final group, the ‘Persians and Indians’. This group, the descendants of Noah’s son Ham, would conventionally be identified as being black in the nineteenth century. Jones, however, argued that Ham’s offspring peopled India, Italy, Greece and perhaps East Asia in addition to Africa. This insistence on the Hamitic origins of what later scholars would call the Indo-European or Aryan family reflected both European and Indian sources. Thomas Trautmann has shown that Jones’s theory reworked and extended Jacob Bryant’s *Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1774–6), a work that argued that the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and Indians were all the descendants of Ham. This identification of Hindus as the sons of Ham was also supported by Indo-Islamic sources. Muhammad Qasim Firishtah’s Persian history identified the Indians as the progeny of Ham, while the great late sixteenth-century Mughal text the *Akbarnama* also emphasised the Hamitic origins of the Hindus, while attaching greater value to the Japhetic origins of the Mughals. The currency of these ideas among the learned Indo-Islamic elite simultaneously confirmed the ethnological framework of Genesis and confirmed Jones’s vision of India’s place in global history. In the nineteenth century, Jones’s assertion of the common Hamitic origins of Europeans and Indians was supported by the leading British ethnologist James Cowles Prichard (whose work in turn was a key inspiration for many ethnographers on the New Zealand frontier). Certainly, as the nineteenth century progressed some European ethnologists attempted to strip away the South Asian origins of the Aryan term and attempted to reimagine Europe as the home of the Aryan ‘race’, but such arguments remained marginal within both metropolitan and colonial British science. Even at the close of the nineteenth century the Aryan homeland was typically identified as the southern fringes of central Asia or north India.

Thirdly, the common assumption in New Zealand historiography that terms like Anglo-Saxon and Caucasian are synonyms for Aryan strips away the South Asian provenance of the Aryan concept and disregards the central debates over Māori origins in the nineteenth century. From the 1860s through to the 1920s, it was commonly accepted that Māori had indeed migrated into the Pacific from Asia, but the key question was: where exactly in Asia? From the work of Richard Taylor in the 1860s, which identified Māori as displaced Indo-Aryans, to the work of John Turnbull Thomson, who argued that Māori belonged to the ‘Barata’ race (a widely dispersed group of peoples whose origins could be traced back to the tribal peoples of South India), settlers fashioned an array of competing ethnological visions. While there was no consensus over the exact origins of Māori in the 1860s or 1870s, no ethnologist of note suggested that
Māori were either Caucasian in origin or that they were white. Much was at stake in these debates (and Belich was right to remind us of the great power of racial thought in colonial contexts), as racial origins were both seen as a litmus-test for an indigenous group's capacity for civilisation and as indicative of their very ability to survive the encounter with Europeans. Richard Taylor's assertion of an Aryan brotherhood uniting Māori and Pākehā in his *Our Race and its Origin* (1867) challenged government policy and the racial enmity that fuelled the New Zealand wars. However, Thomson's assertion of Māori's south Indian origins underpinned his belief that Māori were destined to die out and that their extinction was a necessary precondition for the modernisation of the colony.42

If these debates prior to the publication of Tregear's *Aryan Maori* suggest that racial theories were hotly contested, such debates did not immediately abate with the appearance of Tregear's 'Bible' in 1885. Some critics dissented entirely, disputing the connection between Polynesia and South Asia. Gerald Massey, the influential English spiritualist who conducted a lecture tour of New Zealand in the 1880s, elaborated an Afrocentric history of Māori in opposition to the prevailing Indocentrism. He argued that clues to human origins would not be found in the 'degenerated' poetry of the Vedas, but rather in the 'gesture-signs' and 'ideographic' representations of 'the original matter of human thought' which were to be located in ancient Egypt.43 Massey depicted Africa as the 'Mother' of humanity, asserting it was 'the womb of the human race, with Egypt for the outlet into all the world'.44 From Egypt different groups radiated outwards, preserving the particular linguistic and cultural traits of the 'Motherland' at the time of their departure. He argued that Māori had departed Africa at an early point and in the course of a long migration and subsequent isolation Māori culture deteriorated rapidly: any Māori cultural achievements were a result of their early intercourse with civilisation.45 Scorning the implication of cultural commensurability inherent with an Aryan theory of Māori origins, Massey argued that 'savages' such as Māori and the 'Kaffirs, Hottentots or Bushmen' showed that evolution to be 'undoubtedly a descending as well as an ascending progression'.46

Other critics, however, supported the notion that Māori did owe a significant cultural debt to South Asia, but suggested that this connection was to the 'primitive' indigenous cultures of South Asia and predated the Aryan invasion. Samuel Peal, an enthusiastic ethnographer on the Assam frontier and a corresponding member of the Polynesian Society, attacked the supposed Aryan nature of Māori in order to emphasise differences between Māori and European. Peal was a leading authority on the ethnology of India's north-east frontier and forged an extensive web of correspondents including E. B. Tylor, William Wyatt Gill, Horatio Hale, and Percy Smith and Elsdon Best in New Zealand.47 On the basis of this extensive network of intellectual exchange, Peal elaborated an Indocentric vision of the Pacific that disputed the authority of Aryanism. Peal argued Māori
belonged to a non-Aryan racial community that included the ‘Indo-Mongoloids, Dravidians, Malays, Papuans, Polynesians, Formosans, Australians, Massai of east Africa’. The origins of this racial family, Peal suggested, were located in the Gangetic basin among the very tribal peoples, especially the Nagas, who he knew so well. Māori, like the other members of this racial family, were being transformed by ‘the missionary and the Trader’ and were likely to die out in the face of the racial superiority and cultural sophistication of European settlers.

By the 1890s, however, these competing visions of Māori connections to India were beginning to be woven into an Indocentric synthesis. Rather than serving as the foundational text for this ethnological tradition, Tregear’s *The Aryan Maori* was simply one component of this new Indocentric paradigm. As the nineteenth century came to a close, attempts to locate Māori origins within Aryan, Dravidian or tribal communities were no longer of particular concern, as anthropological attention slowly shifted towards the local development of Māori culture and the history of Māori tribal groups. At this stage, the diffusionist model was not entirely supplanted; rather the new Indocentric synthesis provided a general framework for the analysis of Māori culture. In this new synthetic paradigm, various aspects of Thomson’s, Peal’s and Tregear’s research could be drawn upon and reconciled if Māori origins were depicted as more generally Indian. Elsdon Best, a dominant figure in the Polynesian Society and a pioneering anthropologist, was an important advocate of this new synthesis. He popularised it through his published work and also through lecture tours and addresses delivered to the Worker’s Education Association. The other leading luminary of the Polynesian Society, S. Percy Smith, emphasised Māori debt to a generalised Indian culture in a series of articles and books that spanned over twenty years. The great Māori anthropologist and expert on Polynesian culture, Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa) was a proponent of this theory into the mid-twentieth century as well: his popular *Vikings of the Sunrise* (1938) asserted that his Māori ancestors ‘probably did live in some part of India’.

By this time, however, the Indocentric synthesis was being marginalised by the emergence of a new materialist anthropology pioneered in the New Zealand context by Raymond Firth. Bearing the clear imprint of Malinowski’s functionalism, Firth’s *Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori* (1929) set a new agenda for the study of Māori culture. Where Tregear, Smith, and Best constructed a genealogy of Polynesian culture and ‘excavated’ the remnants of Asian practices, Firth stressed the primacy of economic organisation and emphasised the importance of the internal structures and dynamics that formed Māori society. The emergence of this new paradigm, like the earlier debates over the precise location of Māori origins in Asia, is a reminder of the dynamic nature of colonial intellectual life. In this shifting and conflicted environment, Tregear’s Aryan theory was never hegemonic, but rather was one among many
theories of Māori history that framed the development of Māori culture against the backdrop of Asia.

Therefore, careful attention to the provenance and dissemination of this theory transforms our understandings of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier. No longer does it appear simply as a pivotal component within the emergence of a unique national culture, but rather Aryanism is reconceived as an important localised variant of a broader set of imperial discourses that were deeply concerned with the boundaries of race and religion within the empire. Most importantly, this reorientation away from a national history of Aryanism forces upon us a recognition of the centrality of India and India-derived models in framing understandings of global history, of race and religion, and the development of Pacific culture. Aryan theories were part of imperial discourses that attempted to fashion ethnological taxonomies and reveal the fundamental structures of human history. Within this context, racial thought was increasingly important and Aryanism emerged as one of the most powerful, but highly contested, racial discourses within the empire. The two fundamental elements of Aryan theories – that deep connections linked European and Asian culture and that Asia itself was the cradle of humanity – proved highly contentious, whether in South Asia, Britain or on the New Zealand frontier. Belich’s work has done much to undercut the older liberal-nationalist insistence on the superiority of New Zealand’s race relations, but his search for hegemonic racial myths has effaced the intense debates and deep faultlines engendered by the Aryan theory.

The first part of this chapter highlighted the significance of ‘Company Orientalism’ in the emergence of Aryanist discourses within the British Empire and underlined the significance of the web of personal correspondence and print culture in disseminating Jones’s new ethnological model. Sketching these imperial networks in more detail, mapping the contours of this particular imperial social formation, will reveal the patterns of exchange that underpinned the emergence of Indocentric interpretations of Māori culture. The existing historiography on racial thought in colonial New Zealand has paid limited attention to the sociology of colonial knowledge, focusing narrowly on representation and exhibiting only limited interest in the social structures, cultural institutions, and knowledge networks that conditioned the production of racial thought, moulded its reception, and determined its material and political outcomes.

A key starting point for this project is to establish the connections that linked India and New Zealand within the British imperial system. At the start of the twenty-first century, India and New Zealand seem an unlikely pair, linked only by long-established, yet relatively small, Gujarati and Punjabi communities in New
Zealand’s North Island and, more obviously, a common love of cricket. But such a response reflects the conditioning power of traditions of national history and the systematic erasure of transnational connections by nationalist projects that imagine the nation as discrete and bounded. On deeper reflection, however, the existence of strong links between India and New Zealand in the long nineteenth century is hardly surprising given the influence of the East India Company in the Pacific Ocean, India’s special status within the British Empire, and South Asia’s profound impact on British ‘empires of the mind’.

Before exploring three series of relationships between British India and New Zealand that played a key role in the emergence of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier, other domains can be noted where British India directly moulded the developing cultural pattern of the fledgling New Zealand colony. Indeed, political institutions developed by the East India Company provided an important range of models for the construction of British colonial authority in New Zealand prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Most notably, the blueprint for colonisation developed by Captain William Hobson in 1837 was based upon the ‘factory system’ of coastal enclaves initially used by the British East India Company in India. James Busby, the British Resident in New Zealand, discounted Hobson’s plan as he felt the factory model was ill suited to the dispersed nature of New Zealand’s settler communities and trading stations. But Busby also drew on South Asian models, suggesting the creation of a protectorate system where an appointee of the Crown would administer the affairs of New Zealand in trust while traditional tribal leaders were tutored in ‘good government’. Busby envisaged that this protectorate system would eventually envelop the whole country to arrest ‘the miserable condition’ of the people through fair and beneficent government.

India-derived models played an important role at this key moment when the absorption of Māori into the empire was hotly debated and they subsequently re-emerged during the political crisis of the 1860s. In December 1868, Governor G. F. Bowen wrote to the Duke of Buckingham to explain the wars that were wracking New Zealand. Bowen believed that three factors caused the conflict: most importantly the anti-colonial prophetic movements (which Bowen characterised as ‘the Hauhau fanaticism’), the removal of English forces that elevated the confidence of those followers of Hauhau and the Māori King who fought against the colonial state, and the confiscation of ‘rebel’ land. Bowen reflected that the intersection of these three causes exactly replicated the ‘immediate causes of the Indian rebellion’. Bowen continued:

With regard to the first of these three causes, it may be observed that the religious and national fanaticism of the Hauhaus is analogous to the periodical outbreaks of a similar nature among the Malays (who are probably of kindred race with the Maoris), and among the Hindoos and Mussulmans of India. It
may not be altogether impertinent to mention that the ‘lily’ fills the same place in the mysterious proclamations of the Maori King, as the ‘lotus’ filled in the missives of some of the native princes in Hindostan.57

Bowen, who was writing in the wake of attacks on settlers in Poverty Bay by the prophet Te Kooti and his followers, suggested that the Hauhau forces were carrying out atrocities ‘as dreadful as any perpetrated during the great rebellion in India’. Bowen warned against the proposal to withdraw imperial troops from New Zealand, arguing that any withdrawal would be ‘naturally similar to the impression which would have been made on the minds of Nana Sahib and the sepoy mutineers by an announcement of the immediate withdrawal of the English troops soon after the massacre at Cawnpore’.58 Unless the Colonial Office maintained a strong force in New Zealand, the country would face ‘a general rising of the disaffected natives’ which would lead ‘to tragedies as dreadful as Delhi and Cawnpore’.59 The spectres of Nana Sahib and the ‘Mutiny’ were powerful tools for a colonial administrator who was both required to explain indigenous resistance and desperate to maintain resources in the face of ‘native fanaticism’.

If India profoundly imprinted understandings of cross-cultural relationships in New Zealand, it also had a more general impact on the ways in which the New Zealand landscape was imagined, domesticated and imbued with meaning by Pākehā. Settler surveyors like John Turnbull Thomson, convinced that as a supposedly ‘ruinless and ruinless land’ the New Zealand landscape lacked history, inscribed the land with a new layer of place names, incorporating colony into an imperial matrix of meaning.60 Wellington, the capital city from the late 1860s, was named after the Duke of Wellington Arthur Wellesley, a great military hero in south India as well as the vanquisher of Napoleon. Wellington’s suburbs of Khandallah and Berhampore were also testimony to the weaving of India into the local landscape.61 A cluster of cities and settlements in the Hawke’s Bay region, which was settled by Pākehā in the midst of the imperial crises of the 1850s and 1860s, were named after great heroes from British India (Clive, Napier and Hastings) and in the case of Plassey, after the East India Company’s famous 1757 victory. Other notable leaders of the East India Company and British military leaders in South Asia were commemorated in the naming of Lawrence, Havelock North, and even Auckland (the prominence of the name Eden in the city’s landscape commemorates Lord Auckland’s family name).

Beyond these important but broad connections, there were three significant constellations of imperial networks that wove the two colonies together and directly contributed to the emergence of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier. The first of these connections was borne out of the movement of individuals within the empire. Surprisingly strong migration networks linked India and New Zealand in the second half of the nineteenth century. A large number of the
leading figures in the colony’s intellectual and political life had strong South Asian connections and many had begun their careers in either the service of the East India Company or, at a later stage, the Indian Civil Service. New Zealand, with its rapidly growing settler population, mild climate, and vaunted class mobility, was an attractive proposition for Britons who has served in South Asia and hoped to advance their career, build families or retire within the empire. The salubrious climate and attractive seaside setting of Nelson attracted a large number of low ranking ‘India-men’, while a more prominent cluster were concentrated in two branches of the colonial administration: surveying and forestry.

The East India Company (and subsequently the Government of India) employed a large number of British surveyors and a significant group of these surveyors subsequently found employment on the New Zealand frontier. While Joseph Thomas, an influential New Zealand Company surveyor who was subsequently responsible for surveying the lands of the Canterbury Association, served as an aide-de-camp to Sir John Malcolm in India (in addition to travelling extensively in the Americas), New Zealand’s first Surveyor-General John Turnbull Thomson had cut his professional teeth as a Company surveyor in Malaya and Singapore. Thomson’s vision of Māori as part of the ‘Barata’ race was moulded by his extensive experience in Asia and was supported by his impressive linguistic skills which were the product of his studies with the renowned munshi Abdullah Abdul Kadir in the Straits’ Settlements. Another important knot of India-men were prominent in shaping colonial forestry and conservation in New Zealand. As James Beattie has shown, debates over both environmental change in the 1870s and 1880s were energised by a series of important networks that linked colonial scientists in India and New Zealand. Captain Inches Campbell-Walker, formerly Conservator of the Forests for the Madras Presidency, assumed the position of Conservator of State Forests in New Zealand in 1876. This position was created by the 1874 Forest Act, authored by Julius Vogel, a piece of legislation grounded in the systematic collection of data from State forestry programmes, including India and Ceylon, and supported by another India man, Sir John Cracroft Wilson. Consequently, two elite cliques of experienced India hands played a pivotal role in state-sponsored colonial science and were at the very forefront of the colonial project to map and demarcate the land and to police its effective use.

Such forms of migration and mobility were integral to the emergence of Aryanism on the frontier and strong connections to India animated the work of the leading advocates of Indocentric visions of Māori culture. A.S. Thomson, a former military surgeon in the employ of the East India Company and New Zealand’s first historian, noted several cultural parallels between Māori culture and Hinduism, suggesting that Māori ‘had intercourse with men holding the Hindu faith’ during their migration to New Zealand. Richard Taylor, who was the first strong advocate of an Indocentric understanding of Māori cultural
history, found evidence for this connection while visiting India on route to Britain. Alfred Kingcombe Newman, perhaps the most enthusiastic advocate of the newly synthesised Indocentric theory of Māori history in the early twentieth century, also travelled to India to find evidence to support his arguments about Māori origins. For Newman, this trip to Calcutta and Banaras was a journey home: he was born in India and spent his childhood in Madras. It seems that in his adult life India continued to transfix Newman, as he visited India to further his studies of South Asian cultures and also hatched a scheme to export ghee (clarified butter) from New Zealand to India.India retained a similarly strong hold over Trehear’s imagination, even long after the debates over The Aryan Maori had subsided. In a letter written just before his death in 1931, Edward Trehear dreamed about voyaging to Punjab and visiting the ancient home of Māori. Again, this unfulfilled quest was more than scholarly: it was personal as well. Trehear’s father, who worked for P&O, had died in Bombay, while his uncle was one of the first European soldiers killed during the outbreak of rebellion at Meerut in 1857. For men like Trehear and Newman, India was invested with deep significance: it was not only a crucial node within the imperial system, but it also stood at the very heart of their family histories and personal lives. Their inclination to identify India as the cradle of civilisation and to stress the affinities that connected Indians, Māori, and Pākehā seems more intelligible in light of these connections.

These important ties, embedded both in imperial personnel networks and individual lives shaped by the upheaval of migration, were fortified by increasingly dense bodies of information that provided the crucial raw materials for Indocentric readings of Māori origins. At a fundamental level, the rise of Aryanism and Indocentric theories of Māori origins was the product of an emergent imperial print culture that linked both Māori and Pākehā to the wider world of empire. Although historians of communication such as Harold Innis, Anthony Milner, and, more especially, Benedict Anderson have stressed the centrality of print in the creation of nationalist traditions, C. A. Bayly has highlighted how print could fashion important networks that transected national boundaries. The rapid development of newspapers on the New Zealand frontier helped connect the colony to global systems of information exchange. As Rollo Arnold has emphasised, a striking feature of nineteenth-century newspapers in New Zealand was their relative inattention to national developments. These papers, Arnold demonstrates, were marked by both a strong interest in local affairs and a global orientation: even the smallest provincial newspaper would carry lengthy reports of developments within the empire and the latest news from distant parts of the globe. Similar patterns are discernible in Māori language newspapers, as readers of both state-sponsored and independent newspapers were kept informed of the latest developments in Sydney, Delhi, London and New York.
Concurrent with the development of this thriving colonial print culture was the emergence of libraries, athenaeums, and public reading rooms, institutions that served as crucial nodes for the accumulation and distribution of knowledge within the colony. These repositories of knowledge were fundamental to the construction of Indocentric readings of Māori culture. As we have seen, Aryanism was essentially a comparative approach to the study of cultures and these comparative interpretations depended on assembling large amounts of ethnological material from a wide range of locales. In this regard, libraries on the New Zealand frontier played a vital dual role for comparative ethnologists. Firstly, they made a large amount of recently textualised Māori knowledge available to settlers and, secondly, they provided access to collections of material relating to Asia and especially India. Important Indological texts, such as Mill's *History of British India*, William Robertson's *An Historical Disquisition concerning the knowledge which the ancients had of India*, F. Max Müller's edition of the *Rg Veda*, and journals such as *Asiatic Researches* and *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*, were easily accessible in university libraries and athenaeums, while even public libraries in small frontier towns such as Patea (where Tregear began his interest in ethnology) held surprisingly rich ethnological collections. Therefore, the emergence of Aryanism was underpinned by the simultaneity of the development of these institutions on the New Zealand frontier and the growing authority of Orientalism (in addition to the continued interest of the reading public in travel narratives and popular ethnology).

This brings us to the third and final element of the colonial New Zealand’s ‘information order’ that facilitated Indocentric visions of Māori culture: the emergence of religious and learned institutions with strong and direct connections to India. The first of these of was theosophy, a movement borne out of the European encounter with South Asian spiritual traditions that stressed public education, an international outlook, and the value of comparative scientific research into religion and culture. Theosophy thrived in New Zealand at the end of the nineteenth century, attracting many freethinkers, feminists, and social reformers. Not surprisingly, Edward Tregear himself was one of the colony’s leading theosophists, contributing many articles to the leading theosophically-inclined journals *Hestia* and *The Monthly Review*. Tregear was convinced that the ‘religions of the East’ were crucial sources of ‘esoteric knowledge’. Some New Zealanders followed Tregear’s lead and embraced the religions of India as a source of spiritual renewal. F.D. Brown, Professor of Chemistry at Auckland University College, simultaneously attacked the materialism of Darwin, Tyndall and Huxley, and the conservative nature of the Christian churches. Brown asserted that educated people should break free of the domination of Christianity and look to the ‘East’ for ideas that might ‘revivify’ their spiritual life. Edward Toronto Sturdy, the father of New Zealand theosophy drew inspiration from
witnessing Swami Vivekananda debating with Professor Deuseen, a leading German authority on the Upanishads. Sturdy’s faith in India as a source of spiritual truths was confirmed when he acquired ‘a very old translation of the Bhagavad Gita made in the time of Warren Hastings’. In 1886 he journeyed to the Theosophical Society’s headquarters in Adyar, hoping to study with ‘learned Hindus’ as he believed that ‘in the “Gita” there was teaching I had been seeking for so long’. Before dedicating herself to assisting the Theosophist and anti-colonial advocate Annie Besant in India (where she stayed from 1897 to 1938), Lilian Edger argued in 1893 that the authority of the Bible was no stronger than other ‘holy books’. These theosophical connections were a crucial element of the complex tangle of imperial networks that nourished colonial social reform at the close of the nineteenth century and they reaffirmed the centrality of India in New Zealand’s cultural and spiritual life.

While Indocentrism was fostered by this widespread interest in theosophy and South Asian religious traditions, it was nourished in a more immediate way with the foundation of the Polynesian Society in 1892. Three of the leading advocates of Indocentric visions of Polynesian culture – Elsdon Best, S. Percy Smith and Edward Tregear – were pivotal in the foundation of the Society and, in the case of Best and Smith, played crucial roles in dictating its intellectual trajectory. The Society (along with the Bishop Museum in Honolulu) was the central node in the development of Pacific ethnology and a key centre in the ethnological networks that spanned the empire. It operated both centripetally – drawing in and collecting key materials – and centrifugally, disseminating these materials and new paradigms out into the Pacific and beyond. A cluster of Indian networks was central in these webs of exchange and played a key role in moulding the development of Indocentric readings of Māori history. The Society maintained a formal exchange relationship with the Society of Arts of Batavia (which explored Indian influence in Indonesia) and assembled large collections of two Calcutta-based journals, the *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society* and the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. The Society also directly received a range of important works on Asia, including two works sent to Percy Smith by the Bengali scholar Nobin Chandra Das. Most notably, however, the Assam-based ethnographer Samuel Peal (see Chapter Ten), who argued that Māori belonged to a ‘Gangetic race’, established a strong relationship with Smith and Best. Between early 1892 and Peal’s death in August 1897, these three scholars exchanged ideas about ‘primitive’ culture, comparative linguistics and racial migrations. Peal was made a corresponding member of the Society and contributed two articles on the origins of Māori to the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*. But Peal’s legacy was more lasting: on his death Peal bequeathed his manuscripts, word lists, and a collection of 35 Indian dictionaries and ethnographic works to the Polynesian Society. These works provided an important source for future
research on Māori origins and the development of Māori culture. Peal’s work and materials encouraged Elsdon Best’s search for Māori phallic cults and Alfred Newman, who attempted to provide the definitive case for Indian origins in his *Who are the Maoris?* (c.1912), utilised both the books sent by Nobin Chandra Das and Peal.80 These direct connections with India provided valuable raw material – in the form of dictionaries, comparative vocabularies, sketches, and ethnographic essays – that played a central role in the identification of parallels between Māori and Indian culture and location of Māori origins within South Asia.

The existence of a sizeable archive of South Asian ethnographic material, in manuscript and published form, in the library of the Polynesian Society in Wellington underscores both the strength of the networks that integrated the British Empire and the inherent mobility of colonial knowledge. The development of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier was not simply the product of local forces, nor should it be solely read within the narrative framework of national history. This chapter has made clear that such readings erase the exchanges that wove colonies together into a shared space of intellectual exchange. Mapping the contours of this imperial formation is an important step both towards returning colonial New Zealand to the ‘bundles of relationships’ that moulded the colony’s development and, more generally, creating a broader vision of the workings of the British imperial system.

In the place of the long-established traditions of imperial and colonial history, this chapter has argued that Mrinalini Sinha’s notion of an ‘imperial social formation’ is a valuable heuristic tool for reconceptualising the empire. But where Sinha has highlighted the interdependence and mutually constitutive nature of metropolitan and colonial histories, historians must also pay close attention to the ‘horizontal’ connections that linked colonies directly together. Important flows of capital, personnel and ideas between colonies energised colonial development and the function of the larger imperial system. Such exchanges have received only limited attention in the historiography of the British Empire because they transgress the analytical boundaries of both metropolitan-focused imperial history (where the empire is viewed from London out) or histories of individual colonies (where the view is from the colony towards London). Recognising both the strong ‘vertical’ networks that welded Britain and its colonies together and the importance of ‘horizontal’ connections between colonies suggests that the web is a useful metaphor for conceiving of the structure of the empire.

The web metaphor has several advantages for the conceptualisation of the imperial past. At a general level, it underscores that the empire was a *structure*, a complex fabrication fashioned out of a great number of disparate parts that
were brought together into a variety of new relationships. To my mind, the central problem with the 'cultural turn' in imperial history is not the significance attached to representation, but the inability of scholars to develop Edward Said's insistence that Orientalism was a system of circulation. Rather than narrowly focus on the rhetorical construction or ideological context of any given text, there is a need to reconstruct the networks that structured the empire and trace the transmission of ideas, ideologies, and identities across space and time. The web captures the integrative nature of this cultural traffic, the ways in which imperial institutions and structures connected disparate points in space into a complex mesh of networks. Moreover, the image of the web also conveys something of the double nature of the imperial system. Empires, like webs, were fragile (prone to crises where important threads are broken or structural nodes destroyed), yet also dynamic, being constantly remade and reconfigured through concerted thought and effort: the image of the web reminds us that empires were not just structures, but processes as well.

The inherently relational nature of the empire is also underlined by the image of the web. Where so much writing on imperial or colonial history reduces the empire to a series of metropole-periphery binaries, the web reinforces the multiple positions that any given colony, city, community or archive might occupy. Calcutta, for example, might be seen as being in a subaltern position in relation to London, but it in turn might be a sub-imperial centre from where important lines of patronage, accumulation and communication flow out into the South Asian hinterland and beyond to Southeast Asia or even the Pacific. And as we have seen, archives, libraries, and learned institutions functioned as key nodes within these webs, drawing material together, cataloguing and organising knowledge, and disseminating it throughout the system. These institutions played a key role in the circulation of knowledge that was the very lifeblood of the imperial social formation.

But we might go even further than this. If we conceive of the empire not as a single web but as a complex accumulation of overlapping webs, it is possible to envisage that certain locations, individuals or institutions in the supposed periphery might in fact be the centre of complex networks themselves. This was certainly the case with Samuel Peal, whose tireless correspondence from the frontiers of Assam fashioned a complex network of intellectual exchange that reached out to Best and Smith in New Zealand and also to Canada, the United States, the Pacific islands and Australia, incorporating metropolitan figures including F. Max Müller himself. In turn, Best and Smith, Peal's correspondents, themselves occupied a central position in a related web of exchange. The Polynesian Society quickly became a leading centre for the study of Pacific ethnology and its membership and institutional exchange tapped considerable intellectual resources, allowing Best and Smith to assume a position of great influence in Pacific studies. This
intellectual authority exercised from Wellington also reflected New Zealand’s gradual emergence as an imperial power in the Pacific: at once a colony and an imperial power, New Zealand fashioned its own webs of influence in the Pacific with limited input from Britain.

While Calcutta or Wellington could function as imperial centres, this does not amount to an entirely de-centred view of empire. It is crucial to recognise the disparities of power inherent within the empire and that many imperial networks, as well as economic power and imperial authority, were concentrated in Britain itself. Even at the level of intellectual production, there is no doubt that the imperial metropole continued to exercise substantial power as metropolitan learned institutions, missionary and reform societies and, of course, the British government had the ability to exercise considerable influence over distant colonies. Of course, the substantial resources available in London, Oxford or Cambridge allowed for exhibitions, museums and libraries on a scale beyond the reach of the colonies and also facilitated the work of grand theorists such as E. B. Tylor or F. Max Müller. At the same time, it is important to recognise the ability of administrators, missionaries, settlers and indigenous groups in the colonies to construct bodies of knowledge and meaningful networks of exchange: metropolitan interests might have wished to dominate the empire, but they never enjoyed the hegemony to which they aspired.

It is important to underline Sinha’s assertion that by its very nature this imperial social formation was uneven: while formerly disparate locations were integrated into a common space, certain groups had greater influence within this domain and the effects of this interweaving of cultures were frequently unequal. This was certainly the case with the imperial webs that linked India and New Zealand. With a few notable exceptions – such as H. H. Risley’s embrace of tapu as a fundamental element of his racial theory of caste – ethnographic data and analytical models were transplanted from India into the Pacific. Some of these exchanges were via the metropole, whether through Orientalist works published in Britain, the institutional exchanges fashioned by the British scientific establishment, and the webs of correspondence that connected colonial ethnologists such as Tregear to leading British intellectuals such as F. Max Müller. These ‘vertical connections’ to the metropole coexisted with ‘horizontal’ networks that linked India and New Zealand directly and these intercolonial networks thickened and grew in significance as the nineteenth century drew to a close.

If these networks had an uneven spatial reach, deep-seated social divisions shaped them as well. Although South Asian intellectuals played a key role in debates over Aryanism within the empire in the nineteenth century, Māori played a limited role in these discursive structures. While it seems that the renowned scribe Te Whatohoro Jury might have encouraged Best and Smith’s belief in the Indian origins of Māori and, as we have seen, Peter Buck supported
the theory in print, most influential Māori thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century constructed an alternative and competing vision of their place in history. This counter-narrative was diffusionist as well, but rather than identifying India as the homeland of their ancestors, it identified Māori as Tiu or Hurai: Jews, the direct descendants of the Israelites. This appropriation of Old Testament narratives was a radical challenge to the authority of Pākehā knowledge and the very basis of colonisation itself. The Māori prophetic tradition promised that God would directly intervene on the behalf of Māori, his chosen people, and expel Pākehā, restore alienated Māori land and usher in a new age of millennial happiness.

While Māori resisted incorporation into these webs of empire and rejected Indocentric visions of their culture, it was the emergence of both materialist anthropology and a new leftist literary nationalism in the 1930s that undercut the authority of diffusionist theories of cultural development. Although elements of Indocentric interpretations of Māori history remain current in ‘new age’ religious movements in New Zealand and still find some support in South Asia, the new materialist anthropological paradigm fashioned by Raymond Firth reoriented approaches to the study of Māori culture. Cultural analysis was no longer geared towards ‘excavating’ Aryan remnants or identifying parallels between Māori religion and Hinduism, but instead focused on kinship, resource exploitation, and systems of economic organisation. This internalist approach to the study of Māori culture coalesced with a turn to the local in the arts, as New Zealand writers and artists fashioned a modernist realism (grounded in an embrace of vernacular language and local landscapes) as the basis for a new vision of national identity. Within such a context, New Zealand’s relationship with Britain and its empire was increasingly questioned and the strong ties that linked New Zealand and British India in the late nineteenth century seemed less relevant. These webs, once strong, quickly atrophied and the exchanges that had once nourished settler intellectual life were increasingly disregarded as a result of a new vision of the nation’s history. The historical turn to, what Ruth Ross dubbed, the ‘autochthonous soil’ – beginning with the work of J. C. Beaglehole, popularised by Keith Sinclair and now reinforced by a thriving tradition of bicultural historical writing – has erased many of the connections and exchanges that moulded (and continues to mould) New Zealand’s development.

There is no doubt that this new national tradition of historical writing has replaced diffusionist speculations on Māori cultural development with a nuanced image of indigenous social structure. It has also fashioned a complex image of the place of race and racial conflict in the nation’s development. Yet, the unquestioned use of the nation state as an analytical frame for historical analysis has had profound implications, as this re-examination of Aryanism on the New Zealand frontier has revealed. Most importantly, it has worked to downplay New
Zealand’s place within the empire and the ways in which imperial ideologies and racial thought were transplanted to New Zealand, contested by a variety of groups, and reworked into novel arguments in response to local pressures. The template of the ‘island story’, a story of splendid isolation and internal development, which has had such a powerful purchase in British history, has also provided a popular model for the writing of colonial histories. The need to construct a variety of narratives, to unsettle the naturalness of the nation state as an analytical frame, and to map the place of individual colonies within ‘imperial social formations’ is crucial. In characterising the empire as a series of dynamic and interlocking webs, this chapter has suggested another heuristic tool that may facilitate these projects. The web metaphor draws our attention to the complex interplay between the local, the national, and the imperial and underscores the inherently relational nature of the empire. It furnishes a useful starting point for mobile imperial histories and histories of imperial mobility, a way for historians to recover the mobility and exchanges that were so central in the constitution of both metropolitan and colonial cultures. Unravelling these webs of empire may provide one way of revealing the transnational workings of empire and may enable historians to recover the centrality of imperialism in the making of the ‘satanic geographies’ of violence and inequality that characterise our contemporary globalised world.
CONNECTIONS
I identify incredibly strongly with being a New Zealander, but a surprising number of people are in denial. They think a New Zealander can't be anything but a white or Maori.1

Kirsten Wong (1996)

Made in a Wellington community newspaper, this comment by a woman of Chinese descent neatly expresses a crucial tension at the heart of New Zealand’s political economy, cultural life and social patterns. Since the passage of the Treaty of Waitangi Act in 1975, the nation’s public institutions have been reshaped by the new legal power and cultural weight attached to the Treaty, which itself has been reimagined as the nation’s founding document. Biculturalism has profoundly transformed the linguistic and symbolic repertoire of the nation – from Waitangi Day to the regular performance of bilingual versions of ‘God of Nations’ – amidst fierce debates over the relationship between racial and national identity. The passport, perhaps the most crucial marker of New Zealand citizenship and national identity, unequivocally proclaims that we belong to a bicultural nation. The parallel English and Māori texts within the document and the coat-of-arms emblazoned on the passport’s cover (featuring a Pākehā woman holding a New Zealand flag facing a taiaha-wielding warrior under the unifying power of the Crown), underscore both the difference and interdependence of Māori and Pākehā.2 But the power of biculturalism as a state ideology and as a marker of national identity, both at home and abroad, exists uneasily with the reality that New Zealand is, and has always been, a society that contains a complex and hybridised mix of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities. Questions of cultural and demographic diversity and the integrity of the nation have become more pressing over the last fifteen years with reorientation of New Zealand’s economy towards Asia and the nation’s firm incorporation into the circuits of capital, migratory flows and discourses that have been crucial in fashioning an increasingly China-centred Asia-Pacific region.3 The transformation of long-established Auckland suburbs into enclaves of migrants from the Chinese world, the proliferation of Chinese, Japanese and Korean signage in our cities, and the
growing population of pupils of Asian descent in New Zealand schools (both the children of long-settled Asians and the ‘parachute children’ of transnational Asian families) cause considerable anxiety in the public sphere because they implicitly call into question visions of New Zealand as a bicultural nation (or older visions of New Zealand as the ‘Britain of the South’).

This chapter explores the ways in which Māori-Pākehā relationships, especially as formalised through the ideology of biculturalism, have framed debates over Asian migration. Ann Curthoys’s insistence that the history of Asian (and European) migration ‘happened within rather than after a history of colonisation’ provides an important starting point for this chapter. Curthoys’s argument both reminds us that Asian migration to Australasia has a long history which predates the rise of Asian economic power post-World War II and that racial formations in Australasia were not simply the bifurcated product of encounters between European settlers and indigenous peoples. To rework this formulation a little, Antipodean understandings of China and migrants from the Chinese world were never simply the product of an encounter between people of Chinese and European descent, but were rather highly complex and contested cultural discourses that were produced from within the broader context of struggles over land, sovereignty and identity between various colonising groups (including Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking migrants themselves) and pre-existing indigenous communities. It is from within this context that competing images of China and Chineseness are produced in New Zealand, representations which themselves frequently efface the complex social, generational, ethnic, and linguistic differences that are of great significance within these mobile and migrant communities themselves.

This chapter begins by mapping some of these connections, exploring relationships between Asian, Māori and Pākehā ‘values’ in discourses on racial and national identity in New Zealand. From this basis, it then focuses more specifically on the role of historical writing in shaping visions of the nation, examining the ways in which both the historical writing produced by the first generation of Pākehā nationalists and more recent bicultural historiography have framed the national story around Māori-Pākehā relationships. Although separated by almost eighty years, these approaches, which have effectively deprived non-European migrants a place in narratives of the nation, were profoundly influenced by anxieties over New Zealand’s relationship with Asia and Chinese migration. After discussing the place of Chinese migration in the political career and historical writing of William Pember Reeves, the chapter concludes by examining the relationship between history and biculturalism as expressed in academic history, as well as at ‘our’ national museum Te Papa Tongarewa.
The tension between the real heterogeneity of New Zealand communities and the authority of the Treaty has been at the heart of debates on Asian migration to New Zealand. Some leading Māori commentators – secular and Christian, on the left and right – have been critical of increased migration from Asia and of any suggestion that New Zealand should become (or is in fact already) a multicultural society. During the mid-1990s, for example, Bishop Whakahuihui Vercoe consistently questioned the immigration policy of successive governments, arguing that the upswing in Asian immigration was in breach of the spirit of Māori-Pākehā partnership embodied in the Treaty and was instrumental in the marginalisation of Māori ‘in their own country’. This argument was enabled by a reading of the Treaty’s provisions as specifically relating to Britons (and maybe Europeans): the ‘Preamble’ to the English version of the Treaty specifically mentions that it was drawn up in response to ‘the rapid Extension of Emigration both from Europe and Australia’, while the Māori version recognised that ‘there are many of her [Queen Victoria’s] subjects already living on this land and others yet to come’.

In a similar vein, Ranginui Walker insisted in an important 1996 paper that the Treaty provided the framework for Māori responses to Asian immigration, underlining that: ‘Maori leaders abide by the agreement of their ancestors to allow immigration into New Zealand from the countries nominated in the preamble of the treaty, namely Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom.’ As Treaty partners, Māori, Walker argued, expected ‘the government to consult with them’ before migrants from other sources were admitted into New Zealand. Even Winston Peters, whose populist nationalism has been critical of the ‘malignant growth’ of the ‘Treaty industry’ and whose policy statements consistently invoke ‘one country and one people’ and ‘colour-blind policy’, has emphasised both the importance of the Treaty in relation to Māori resistance to immigration and the special threat that immigration poses to Māori. During the 2002 election campaign (just two days after having described the ‘Treaty industry’ as a ‘noxious weed’), Peters delivered an address entitled ‘Immigration or You’ to Tai Tokerau Māori at Otiria marae at Moerewa:

In New Zealand we have to be careful to preserve our unique society... We place our country at risk by bringing in thousands of people whose views are formed by alien cultures and rigid religious practices.... If immigrants are allowed to settle here... we will create a breeding ground for conflict... We have to be very careful about whom we bring into New Zealand and how many we bring in from alien cultures. We also have to ask ourselves how our society will look in the future as a result of these policies and most of all, Maori – the first settlers...
of this country – have to ask themselves the hard question about where they will fit into the picture.10

Peters’s attacks on non-European immigration and his frequent evocation of a nation imperiled during the 2002 election campaign were grounded in a stock of long-established Orientalist stereotypes that picture Asian and Muslim cultures as despotic, fundamentalist and resolutely pre- or anti-modern. Given their complete otherness within Peters’s vision, migrants from Asia and the Islamic world are incompatible with the nation. They are aliens who threaten to introduce religious and ethnic conflict, overrun New Zealand’s schools and public institutions and – in the wake of September 11 – establish terrorist cells.11

It is important to underline that while Peters and New Zealand First have won significant support based on an anti-immigration political platform, his views on immigration, race and New Zealand’s ties with Asia have been fiercely contested. In the case of Asian migration, Peters has been challenged by various political rivals (notably Pansy Wong, Richard Prebble, Rodney Hyde and Ashraf Choudhary), academics (Manying Ip), the Pan-Asian Congress, and on the editorial pages of leading daily papers, especially the *New Zealand Herald*. Most responses to Peters (and defences of Asian immigration more generally) have highlighted the important contribution of immigrants to New Zealand’s economic development and the particular importance of Asian, especially Chinese, capital for the future growth of New Zealand’s economy. What is striking about these debates, however, is that Peters’s fundamental vision of the nation and the centrality of national identity have not been subjected to sustained discussion. In light of the centrality of biculturalism in New Zealand intellectual and political life, there seems to a general reluctance to discuss the questions of ethnicity, race and nationalism that lie at the heart of New Zealand’s often anxious relationship with Asia.

Despite the insistence of many New Zealand business leaders and politicians that New Zealand’s future must be grounded in the Asia-Pacific region and the common interests that unite New Zealand and Asian states, the reality is that within New Zealand a persistent emphasis on Asian difference and otherness remains. This can be seen particularly clearly in discussions of the sources of Asian prosperity and educational attainment. In the bicultural context of New Zealand, discourses on ‘Asian values’ can operate in opposition to both ‘Pākehā values’ and ‘Māori values’. Despite the insistence of Georgina Te Heuheu, the former Minister of Women’s Affairs and Associate Minister of Treaty Settlements, that the respect for ancestors and the importance attached to family mean that Māori and Chinese have ‘much in common’, commentators of various ethnicities and political persuasions have generally identified Asian values and Māori values as antithetical.12 Alan Duff, for example, creates a neat dichotomy between the two, contrasting Māori dependence on welfare,
alcohol, and educational underachievement with Chinese commitment to work, accumulation and education. In fact, he sees these attitudes and social form as an excellent model for Māori development and ‘modernisation’. While Duff’s identification of Chinese migrants as a model minority may reflect his interest in North American racial politics, his enthusiastic support of Asian capitalism as a government-appointed advocate of APEC draws little support from Māori. The strong bonds that have traditionally linked the New Zealand left and Māori activism (albeit connections which continue to be progressively uncoupled), have lead many Māori to cast ‘Asian values’ in a different light. Recent migrants become the face of transnational capitalism, the embodiment of globalisation, a community whose ‘flexible citizenship’ comes at the expense of Māori who are increasingly locked into a position of socio-economic deprivation, characterised by a dependence on wage-labour, welfare and state-provided housing. Māori leaders, from Peters to Ranginui Walker, have intermittently marshalled old fears of ‘yellow peril’ and an ‘Asian invasion’ in their efforts to protect the interests of Māori, especially ‘ordinary’ Māori.

Pākehā and Asian ‘values’ are not quite so neatly dichotomised, largely because for 150 years, commitment to work and self-discipline, qualities celebrated in recent discussions of East Asian productivity, have been central to Pākehā self-image. Many Pākehā contrasted their commitment to work with the ambivalent response to the demands of the clock and the routinised rhythms of work-discipline by Māori (and more recently, migrants from the Pacific). The ‘hard-working’ New Zealand settler, like colonists elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific, has found solace and self-identity in the myth of the ‘lazy native’. But, while this Protestant-tinged work ethic has inclined many Pākehā to celebrate the discipline of the Chinese grocer or fish and chip shop owner, many have expressed unease about other components of ‘Asian values’. In particular, the prominence of Asian educational attainment draws complaints from a Pākehā community that is fearful of competition in the classroom and workplace and frequently prioritises achievement within team sport, where treasured values of mateship are inculcated and reinforced.

Given these real and perceived cultural cleavages, it is crucially important to explore the silences within discourses on national identity. Most importantly, there is a need to ask: what space is there for New Zealanders of Asian origin (or, for that matter, all migrants who reject the label ‘Pākehā’) within the dominant bicultural vision of the nation and its history? This question weighs heavily on many migrants. Kirsten Wong’s comment that opens this chapter neatly articulates the problematic relationship that many Asian New Zealanders have with New Zealand nationalism: they long to belong to the nation, but feel excluded by the authority of biculturalism and the assumption that New Zealanders are either Pākehā or Māori. Manying Ip has articulated a similar argument about the historical
marginalisation of Asian New Zealanders: ‘Being a New Zealander used to mean the person needed to be white or Māori. The Asians were the essential outsiders, kept on the fringe and not allowed to interact with mainstream society.’

Even though Ip grounds her defence of Asian migration in a celebration of the power of transnational Chinese capital and tends to valorise Asians as a ‘model minority’, her comment on the subject position of Asians is important because it underscores two key points. Firstly, like the arguments against Asian immigration elaborated by Peters, Vercoe and Walker, Ip highlights the profoundly connected nature of the colonial past and immigration regimes within the political economy of post-colonial New Zealand. Scholars and politicians have frequently ignored this fact in public and academic debates in other settler societies – Australia, Canada, South Africa and the United States – where indigenous rights and questions of immigration are generally conceived of as distinct and largely unrelated phenomena.

Secondly, Ip raises questions about the place of history itself in imagining race and nation. There is no doubt that historical writing has played a central role in cementing visions of the bicultural nation. A sequence of key works produced by historians, anthropologists and lawyers – most notably Claudia’s Orange’s Treaty of Waitangi, Jeff Sissons’s Te Waimana, Paul McHugh’s The Maori Magna Carta, Judith Binney’s influential 1987 essay on forms of divergent Pākehā and Māori ways of narrating the past and her Redemption Songs, Anne Salmond’s Two Worlds and Between Worlds, Angela Ballara’s Iwi, and James Belich’s The New Zealand Wars, Making Peoples and Paradise Reforged – have radically reimagined New Zealand’s past through a new attention to Māori subjectivities and a conscious prioritisation of Māori-Pākehā relations. Despite the grand narrative of the evolution of the bicultural nation elaborated in these works (especially Belich’s Making Peoples), like all forms of historical analysis and narration, they are partial histories; they utilise a particular archive, order the confusion of the past into narrative, and emphasise certain themes and actors at the expense of others. At a profound level, these bicultural histories are shaped by what they marginalise, gloss over, or excise. In other words, these bicultural versions of post-colonial history writing are not simply unable to incorporate the histories of various groups whose identities and experiences sit uneasily with the bicultural model (such as Asian or Pacific Island migrants), but at a fundamental level rest upon the conscious or unconscious exclusion of those histories.

New Zealand has had significant Asian populations since the 1860s, if not earlier, but the pasts of these communities do not disrupt the dominant bicultural narratives of the nation. While James Belich’s Making Peoples and Paradise
Reforged mark a bold attempt to write a national history on a broad, even global canvas, his treatment of the history of Asians in New Zealand does not mark much of an advance from the earlier landmark national histories produced by Sinclair and Oliver. Certainly Belich suggests that the importance of whaling and sealing in the pre-Treaty period meant that ‘New Zealand’s first imperial market was Ch’ing’, but Chinese gold seekers, railway workers, laundrymen, and small businessmen (or other Asian travellers and migrants) find little space in Making Peoples’ narrative of nation-making, nor unsettle its neat binary logic.18

Although Belich’s work reproduces the remarkable inattention to the experience of Asian communities that is characteristic of New Zealand’s tradition of national histories, numerous historians have documented the history of anti-Asian immigration legislation. To date, however, historians have been content to explain this legislation as simply the product of Pākehā ‘racism’ which was refined in the encounter with Māori and then subsequently directed at the ‘Oriental Other’. Despite the strength of both labour and feminist history in New Zealand, limited attention has been directed towards the role of radical movements in fomenting anti-Asian sentiment and enacting restrictive legislation.19 Nor has the simultaneity of the state’s turn towards exclusion and its provision of greater support and services to its citizens (especially Pākehā) been fully explored by historians. This silence reflects a widespread contemporary unease with the discontents of the nation’s past, as well as New Zealand historians’ heavy investment in the nation and its particular bicultural form that has emerged since the mid-1970s. A rigidly bicultural national historiography can only function through the continued silencing of migrant histories and the active erasure of ethnic identities other than Māori and Pākehā.

This ‘writing out’ of Asia and Asians within the bicultural paradigm of New Zealand history is deeply ironic given that the essential structures of ‘national history’ in New Zealand were consolidated in the late nineteenth century, during the midst of an earlier outbreak of anxiety over New Zealand’s relations with Asia. The active recruitment of Cantonese-speaking miners from the goldfields of Victoria by the Otago Provincial Council and the growth of a substantial community of Chinese miners in Otago (and subsequently on the West Coast) precipitated a series of fractious debates over the ‘character’ of Asians, the regulation of immigration, and the relationships between empire, race and citizenship.20 These debates were part of a broad series of international discussions in response to the expansion of Chinese commercial and migration networks beyond the traditional hubs of overseas Chinese commerce and labour in Southeast Asia to Southern Africa and the Pacific Rim.21

Radhika Mongia has argued that, in response to the ‘threat’ of the expanded mobility of transnational Asian communities in the late nineteenth century, states elaborated new bureaucratic regimes and worked hard to consolidate new visions
of the nation. In other words, national frontiers of settler colonies took shape ‘not prior to but within the context of “raced-migration”’, particularly the movement of non-European peoples to Europe and its settler colonies. The anxieties over ‘raced migration’ that Mongia has charted in her work on Canadian responses to the arrival of South Asian migrants during the first decade of the twentieth century were in many ways anticipated by the complex racial discourses and raft of legislation formulated in the face of Chinese migration to New Zealand in the late nineteenth century.

William Pember Reeves, the leading Fabian Socialist and one of the key architects of Liberal reform, noted in the introduction to his landmark *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (1902) that New Zealand’s ‘interesting experiments in law and administration’ began with the passage of the anti-Chinese Acts of 1881. Reeves – an advocate of women’s rights, compulsory industrial arbitration and perhaps the colony’s leading freethinker – was, however, a central figure in the moulding of an exclusionary immigration regime. He rejected the claims of fellow parliamentarians and journalists who extolled Chinese industry, arguing that while the Chinese migrant was hardworking, he was also ‘dirty, miserly, ignorant, a shirker of social duty, and a danger to public health’. In short, Reeves believed that if New Zealand was to remain ‘foremost in the ranks of civilisation’, it was necessary to keep ‘the scum of the earth out’. Reflecting on the outcomes of this legislation in 1902 Reeves suggested that New Zealand had escaped from the ‘race-fissures’ which troubled South Africa and that the success of the exclusionary regime he was central in fashioning meant that New Zealand cities were not ‘babels of tongues’ and ‘none of their streets’ were ‘filled with dark faces’.

Although contested by some progressive leaders, most notably Anna Stout, Reeves’s arguments reflected concerns shared by many parliamentarians, rural radicals, union leaders and leftist newspapermen. For the New Zealand labour movement, like its Californian cousin, Chinese migrants became an ‘indispensable enemy’ for political mobilisation. Thomas Kelly, a Liberal Member of Parliament from Taranaki, neatly articulated the economic anxieties that were widespread amongst leftist politicians, union leaders, and ‘progressive intellectuals’, when he asked parliament: ‘[I]s it desirable that our workingmen in New Zealand, who are accustomed to a high standard of living and of comfort, should have to compete with men who are satisfied to work long hours for a bare subsistence?’ Samuel Lister, an atheist and republican printer who maintained traditions of artisanal radicalism on Dunedin’s Flat, attacked Chinese owned businesses as a ‘social cancer’ and argued that ‘[t]he Chow is a curse to any country by reason of the filth in which he delights and the vices in which he indulges’. In dismissing ‘Chinese industry’ and attacking Chinese migrants as a threat to settler culture, these arguments worked to shore up the energising myth of colonial society, that New Zealand constituted a ‘working man’s paradise’, where labour scarcity
and high wages allowed workers to accumulate capital quickly, buy a home and invest in land.30

These arguments deployed against Chinese migration – which, as Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse have shown, united both the left and right – can be located in a long tradition of colonial political economy and popular thought that fetishised the young and settled European family, while identifying the mobile and transient single male as a destabilising force.31 Australasian discourses of colonisation, from Wakefield to Vogel, had always identified the Malthusian family as the ideal social unit. Within the profoundly gendered discourses of colonisation, the presence of women was seen as essential to the health of the colony, as they would ensure the maintenance of piety and social order on the frontier. These theories suggested that settler families, which were believed to be much less mobile than single men, would with time create a growing population that identified with their new home. But where Wakefield supported the possibility of Chinese migration to Australasia (as long as that migration was gender-balanced), recognising that cultural values other than Protestantism could potentially underpin the accumulation and work-discipline of a Malthusian family, Reeves constructed a rigid opposition between the white settler family and the male Chinese sojourner.32 In contrast to the settler family, which was committed to economic and social progress of the colony, the Chinese migrant was self-seeking: ‘The men came, to be strangers and sojourners in the land, without families, without capital, without knowledge of the English language or English ways.’33 Reeves, like other settler nationalists, articulated what might be termed a ‘discourse of fixity’, a series of arguments that equated social worth and citizenship with immobility. Chinese sojourners, like Pākehā swagmen and Māori itinerants, were identified as the enemies of the state. Their mobility meant that they were not amenable to the paternalistic reforms of the centralised state, calling the power of the colonial state into question.

In the midst of the depression of the 1890s, this identification of Chinese as sojourners on the margins of society was all the more powerful, and it was mobilised by parliamentarians from across the political spectrum to push through the Asiatic Restriction Bill (1896). William Whitehouse Collins, a Christchurch parliamentarian and freethinker, opposed Chinese immigration precisely because of the mobile, transnational nature of their movement. He asserted that the aim of the Chinese was simply to make as much money in New Zealand and then ‘get away’: they had no interest in the nation, its institutions, or citizenship.34 In a more sensational vein, A. W. Hogg, a powerful spokesman for rural working class interests, argued that the Chinese ‘come like an army of locusts, and get all they possibly can’ before leaving, and suggested that their lack of commitment to New Zealand was embodied in the anxiety of Chinese to ensure that funerary customs were maintained and the bones of the dead were returned to China.35
As a social activist, political reformer, historian and journalist, Reeves fashioned an image of New Zealand as the embodiment of political enlightenment and social progress, marking the colony off from the hierarchical traditions and political inertia of Britain. If this fledgling narrative of social progress (which would be consolidated and celebrated by successive generations of historians) drew important oppositions between colony and the metropole, it was also articulated in opposition to Chinese migrants. While Māori, ‘pacified’ by two extended periods of war and redeemed by ethnological works that suggested that they shared Aryan origins with the settlers, could be assimilated into this story of ‘progressive’ New Zealand (or progressive ‘Maoriland’ as a growing number of artists and radicals preferred), Chinese migrants were denied such legitimacy.\(^{36}\) The popular stereotypes of the Chinese as opium addicts, sex fiends, and socially conservative allowed the erasure of the dwindling Chinese population from the national imaginary, while reinforcing the image of New Zealand as the world’s social laboratory.\(^{37}\)

It is clear then that history writing was an essential tool for the creation of a coherent vision of the nation. Fashioning narratives of nationhood allowed settler intellectuals like Reeves to explore the nation’s sources of identity and the development of the distinctive ‘character’ of its people, a key concern in late nineteenth-century historical writing. Within the New Zealand context, a group of leading radical reformers, including Reeves and Robert Stout, pursued the project of fashioning popular national histories, while leading parliamentary and radical opposition to Asian migration. In response to a phantom ‘invasion of Asiatics’, Reeves’s work consolidated two fundamental traditions in New Zealand historiography: identifying the encounter with Māori as constitutive of a bi-racial national identity and the emergence of ‘social reform’ as embodying the ‘progressive’ spirit of colonial life. These arguments were heavily racialised, as Reeves drew a series of oppositions, not between Māori and settler but between sojourner and settler as politicians worked feverishly to prevent a ‘flood’ of ‘Mongolians’.\(^{38}\)

This tradition of cultural nationalism, grounded in the celebration of New Zealand’s progressive race, gender and industrial relations, has been repeatedly reworked and reconfigured as a framework for the writing of New Zealand history. The professionalisation of history in New Zealand universities in the 1920s and 1930s marked a retreat from a ‘Maoriland’ model as a cohort of English-born historians preferred to imagine New Zealand as an extension of England and its history as part of the development of ‘Greater Britain’. The rise of the literary left either side of World War II challenged this Anglo-centric approach, as historians such as J. C. Beaglehole and Keith Sinclair gradually but firmly reconceived history to the yoke of New Zealand nationalism.

J. C. Beaglehole’s and Ruth Ross’s calls to foreground the ‘autochthonous soil’
in the 1950s marked the emergence of a new period of professional historical writing. Successive generations of New Zealand historians have followed this injunction as they have set about the creation of a coherent image of the nation's past. The fruits of this new interdependence between history and the nation state are embodied in Keith Sinclair’s and W. H. Oliver’s popular histories, produced in 1959 and 1960 respectively. Both of these texts imagined New Zealand’s history as a story of progressive reform, framing the nation’s past around the evolution of the welfare state. Sinclair certainly placed greater emphasis on the encounter with Māori and the importance of racial conflict, but both he and Oliver paid scant attention to the history of New Zealand’s Asian communities. Of little importance in a national story of Māori and Pākehā or ‘social experimentation’, Asian New Zealanders were essentially written out of history, appearing briefly only as the objects of white racism.

From the early 1970s, New Zealand’s national identity and its national history were profoundly reimagined. Simultaneously the product of local developments (the resurgence of Māori political mobilisation in the form of a mass land rights movement) and global currents (Britain’s entry in the EEC in 1973), government policy was radically reshaped and with time ‘biculturalism’ supplanted the dominant assimilationist tradition. In October 1975 the third Labour government established the Waitangi Tribunal to hear Māori claims against Crown actions in contravention of the Treaty, creating an influential public arena for the examination of New Zealand’s colonial past. Māori staked a new claim to political power and cultural respect on their status as tangata whenua (people of the land). Māori activists and academics articulated a discourse of fixity that emphasised the connection that iwi (Māori tribes) had to particular resources and landscapes and claimed a special status for Māori as the indigenous people within the nation state. These cultural and political shifts subjected the progressive myth to sustained scrutiny as the romantic nationalism of the Maoriland tradition was identified by historians and activists alike as a colonial appropriation and a gross act of cultural imperialism. Historians’ celebration of the superiority of New Zealand race relations were vehemently challenged: in the midst of the 1981 Springbok tour, Donna Awatere depicted New Zealand’s past as a racial war between Māori and Pākehā and issued a fervent call for the achievement of full Māori sovereignty.

While Awatere’s goal of total decolonisation remains unfulfilled, biculturalism has become deeply entrenched in New Zealand public life. Historians have been instrumental in this transformation. They have played a particularly influential role in the Treaty claims process, as both the Crown and iwi have employed historians to assemble the scholarly basis for Treaty claims. The continued engagement of historians in this legal process has effectively generated a new approach to New Zealand’s past: a Treaty-based bicultural history. In short,
this paradigm recognised the historical value of Māori customary knowledge, documented the prevalence and power of Pākehā racism and reinforced an image of New Zealand’s past as the process of making two peoples: Māori and Pākehā.

The state has invested substantial economic resources and symbolic significance in this image of the national past. This investment has operated in two major cultural locations aside from the universities and the Waitangi Tribunal. Firstly, it has been pursued through the production of new standard historical reference works. Of particular importance, is the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. The five volumes of biographies have been organised on a bicultural basis: each volume is produced in both Māori and English versions and a separate English-language volume of Māori biographies has also been produced. The completion of the New Zealand Historical Atlas has further consolidated a historical vision of the bicultural nation. This volume fundamentally reimagined the geography of the nation, challenging the Eurocentric provenance of cartographic traditions. Powerful Māori perspectives shape the volume, from artistic representations of the fashioning of New Zealand’s landscape, tracing its transformation in the wake of te ao mārama’s (the world of light – the human world) creation by the primordial parents Ranginui and Papatuanuku. Māori perspectives were further cemented by radically reorienting maps to communicate the geographical perspective of Polynesian migrants sailing southwest to New Zealand for the first time.43

The second, and most important, public domain where this narrative of nationhood is projected to a large national and international audience is the national museum, Te Papa Tongarewa. The museum’s ‘Statement of Principles’ underlines the ideological function of the museum: ‘Te Papa is bicultural – Te Papa provides an environment where both Māori and Pākehā cultures can work cooperatively to achieve the Museum’s Mission.’44 This bicultural mission is most obvious on the fourth floor, devoted to New Zealand’s human history. An exhibition on the Treaty of Waitangi entitled ‘Signs of a Nation’ dominates this floor. A huge copy of the Treaty hangs in a cathedral-like space, while the words of the Treaty adorn the walls. Recorded voices emanate from the numerous poles that dot the room, conveying a variety of the conflicting attitudes New Zealanders hold towards the Treaty. This permanent exhibit is the centre of the museum as it embodies the museum’s mission to promote an image of bicultural New Zealand. As the museum’s website says: ‘This place is sacred, powerful and dignified – a place where the clarity and simplicity of the actual words of the Treaty express the vision of two peoples seeking to co-exist peacefully in one country.’45

‘Signs of a Nation’ structures the spatial organisation of the fourth floor, dividing the space devoted to New Zealand’s human history into two discrete
spheres that are mediated through the Treaty exhibit. On one side, a large series of displays of Māori material culture and iwi histories, together with a marae represent te ao Māori. On the other side of the Treaty exhibit, is a looser, more diverse assemblage of materials, representing non-Māori New Zealanders. Key here is ‘Passports’, a series of displays organised around migration and identity: ‘Focusing on all nationalities other than Māori, this important exhibition presents the objects and ideas the migrants brought with them and examines how they adjusted to the new land.’ While ‘Passports’ includes testimony and material objects from South Asian, East Asian and Eastern European migrants in addition to those from the United Kingdom and Ireland, it fails to adequately communicate the fundamentally different structural position of non-European migrants: the white English-speaking migrant – the Pākehā in the making – remains the normative model. Although ‘Passports’ is about migration and mobility, its lens remains the nation: migrant histories are celebratory, emphasising the successes of particular migrants or immigrant cultural organisations. This emphasis on assimilation and national culture again works to erase ‘sojourners’ – Chinese miners, but also whalers, sealers, and the many migrants who returned home or moved on to Australia or North America.

The history of these mobile groups, who are effaced by Te Papa’s national (and nationalistic) vision, remains largely unwritten. Their mobility means that the records of their experiences are scattered and fragmentary, fleeting traces in a multitude of archives separated by space and language. Historians need to fashion new, imaginative histories of mobility; they also need to be much more critical about the continued ‘contract’ between history writing and the nation state. New Zealand historians, in particular, must recognise that the borders of the nation have always been porous and were constructed, racialised and ‘naturalised’ against transnational flows of Asian migration.

In suggesting that historians interrogate the now paradigmatic bicultural national historiographical tradition, this chapter is not advocating dispensing with either biculturalism or national histories. It is not arguing for a move towards a liberal multicultural history that somehow attaches equal weight to each different community that composes the nation. To adopt such a position would both fail to recognise the irreversible impact of the radical transformation of New Zealand public life around the Treaty and discount the very real importance of works such as *Making Peoples* or *Redemption Songs*. What is necessary, however, is the start of broader debate over the relationship between historical narratives and biculturalism. While collections such as *Histories: Power & Loss* produce rich and sustained discussion of bicultural history and the Māori-Pākehā past, the grounds of historical debate need to be shifted a little, to ask what ideological work does biculturalism perform within New Zealand’s public sphere and how do bicultural histories relate to other forms of historical analysis and narration?
Historians must examine the cultural effects of bicultural history and also bring bicultural historical writing into dialogue with alternative varieties of historical analysis to initiate broader debates over the historical construction of local communities and larger collectivities of ethnicity, race and nation.

Through its examination of the problematic relationship between Chinese migration and New Zealand nationalism, this chapter has suggested the relationship between historical writing and the ways in which we imagine the nation requires critical scrutiny. This does not mean the nation should be dispensed with as a unit for historical analysis, but rather that historians must interrogate traditions of national history in a more critical fashion and be aware of their very real limitations. This chapter has provided one stark example of these limitations by mapping the ways in which national histories, which have typically prioritised Māori-Pākehā relationships, have systematically excluded the histories of non-Pākehā migrants to New Zealand, especially people of Chinese descent. But, as well as critically engaging with national history traditions, there is a desperate need to juxtapose narratives of the nation with histories that are framed around different spatial units (such as local communities or the transnational movement of commodities, peoples and ideas) and communities (the suburb or the city, the church or club, the workplace or social circles).

The work of some Māori historians, most notably Danny Keenan, hint at the radically different sorts of historical narratives produced when the nation is dislocated as the natural site of enquiry, as their iwi and hapū-based histories firmly respect tribal rohe (boundaries) and are grounded in a recognition of the importance of history for a particular kin-based community, not the ‘larger’ body of the nation.51 This need to reimagine the spatial and social frameworks of historical analysis is particularly pressing for historians of Asian migration, who have been eager to validate the experience, and even more fundamentally, the citizenship of their subjects and have understandably been deeply invested in national history. The work of Manying Ip and James Ng, for example, has been geared towards establishing the contribution that Chinese migrants make to New Zealand’s economic development and social life. Alongside this approach, however, we need analytically rigorous histories that deal both with Chinese communities in specific locales (for example, the Tuapeka goldfields or in Dunedin’s southern suburbs) and work that critically examines the relationships across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, focusing, for instance, on Chinese-Māori or Chinese-Pacific Island encounters and relations.52 Most importantly, however, historians need to embrace the challenge laid down by Moloughney and Stenhouse to firmly reconnect the study of Chinese communities in New Zealand to the growing
literature on the Chinese diaspora and to embed histories of these groups in the complex networks, organisations and social patterns that have historically shaped the broader world of the Chinese diaspora. Such a transnational approach, as Adam McKeown suggests, centres ‘mobility and dispersion as the basis from which to begin analysis, rather than as streams of people merely feeding into or flowing along the margins of national and civilisational histories’.

These projects are even more pressing given the reorientation of the nation’s economy towards Asian markets and the prominence of Asian tourists, students, business people and citizens in New Zealand. As we have seen, Te Papa is marketed as ‘Our Place’ – but it is essential to ask to whom exactly that possessive pronoun refers. As a site of national memory, Te Papa commemorates citizens, not sojourners. It celebrates biculturalism, but only by assimilating Asian migrants into the Pākehā past. Ultimately, Te Papa embodies the central disjunction in New Zealand’s place in the global cultural economy. At the very moment New Zealand diplomats champion free trade and insist on a deep commitment to cementing ties with Asia, historians and the state produce a vision of the past that erects cultural borders that insulate New Zealand from Asia and erase Asians from the national imaginary. It seems that in this age of transnationalism, historians remain as deeply invested in the nation state and its boundaries as the authors of anti-Asian immigration laws were in the 1890s.
We live in a nation state where debates over identity and history share a common understanding that Māori and Pākehā are two distinct communities, whose encounters have defined New Zealand’s unique nature. This social vision, which typically sees these identities as stable and unchanging, is constantly reiterated in a wide range of exchanges over race, from racial polemics that are the stock-in-trade of talkback radio to political debates over the Treaty of Waitangi. There are signs, however, that people are challenging this conception of the nation. Most notably, there is growing popular and scholarly interest in Māori-Pākehā intermarriage, its history and its implications for the nation’s future. There has been a similar resurgence in interest in early Pākehā-Māori, those traders, whalers, and runaway convicts who lived with or as Māori in early New Zealand.

But the growing visibility of New Zealanders of Asian descent in political and cultural life has begun to unsettle assumptions that New Zealand is simply defined by Māori-Pākehā relations. At a popular level, several television documentaries have explored the history of Asian migration to New Zealand and the particular challenges of being an Asian New Zealander, themes that have also animated Raybon Kan’s work as columnist and comic. These developments, together with the prominence of Asian language media in New Zealand’s urban landscapes, have made Asians more prominent in New Zealand’s public sphere, forcing even the most reluctant commentators to realise the true diversity of our communities.

So, while biculturalism remains secure as a foundational state ideology, there is a growing sense that New Zealanders are interested in the complexity and richness of the nation’s past. This chapter explores one small but significant thread in the shaping of the nation’s cultural fabric. It examines some of the ways in which Pākehā attempted to educate Māori about the world during the nineteenth century, especially the efforts of government officials, humanitarians and ethnographers to use print culture as an instrument to teach Māori about history, geography and the qualities of ‘civilisation’. The particular focus of the chapter is the images of Asia disseminated amongst Māori through bilingual and Māori language newspapers, which many Pākehā and some influential Māori saw as a key instrument for the reform and modernisation of Māori society.
While reading the place of Asia in Māori newspapers reveals much about Pākehā understandings of Asian cultures and peoples, this essay is not imagined either as simply an exercise in examining Pākehā representations of Asia or as a simple record of Pākehā racism. Rather it identifies these newspapers as being fundamental in developing patterns of cross-cultural communication and as important sites of intellectual engagement between te ao Māori (the Māori world) and European traditions of thought. These texts are extremely valuable sources for historians who wish to historicise the distinctive racial formations that developed in colonial New Zealand. They reveal the powerful discourses that defined civilisation, itemised desirable social characteristics, and delineated boundaries between ethnic, racial, and linguistic communities.

These newspapers remind us that while the categories ‘Pākehā’ and ‘Māori’ were defined and consolidated in opposition to each other, they were also defined through reference to other ‘races’, especially ‘Asians’. Asian cultures were a prominent thread within these newspapers for three reasons. Firstly, New Zealand was colonised by Pākehā at a moment when China, and especially India, had a powerful hold on the European imagination, and the qualities of Asian civilisations were broadly debated in European pamphlets, periodicals, and parliaments. Secondly, as the previous two chapters have shown, New Zealand was a part of a global empire that was underpinned by a series of complex networks that moved people, commodities, cultural products, and ideas between colony and metropole (and vice versa) but also between colonies. Because of the work of these ‘webs of empire’, India and China (a key site of imperial trade, if not a formal colony) were of considerable importance to mid-nineteenth-century New Zealand, and Māori newspapers, like their Pākehā counterparts, carried extensive coverage of Asian trade, culture and political developments. Thirdly, these ‘webs’ also carried Asians to New Zealand and as is well known, these migrants and travellers excited a range of often extreme responses from Pākehā. Māori, meanwhile, also debated the arrival of these new migrants in newspapers. Māori newspapers, therefore, can be used to sketch indigenous responses to Asia and Asians, an issue that has received only scant treatment in the historiography on race and migration to date.

This chapter begins by locating the emergence of Māori newspapers within the broader transformation of Māori identities in the wake of contact with Europeans and the rise of vernacular literacy. These shifts are outlined with some care because it is crucial to understand the colonial context within which Māori learnt about Asia and which shaped Māori understandings of that region and its peoples. In light of this, the first section of the chapter begins by tracing social and political contexts in which representations of cultural difference were produced and contested during the Pākehā colonisation of Te Ika a Māui (North Island) and Te Waipounamu (South Island). The reportage of Asia in
both state- and Māori-run papers is then examined, focusing on the place of civilisation, race and colonialism in the papers. This discussion builds upon Lachy Paterson’s reading of ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’ in the papers, but also suggests some general understandings that might help us to grapple with the place of Asia in shaping cultural and racial formations.4

In an important essay on Māori and colonial modernity, the historian Lyndsay Head observed:

When Europeans stepped into the southern dawn, the people who had thought of themselves as constituting the whole human world found that they were on its fringes. This was a huge – and potentially hugely undermining – perceptual change that opened the relationship between Maori and European.5

The tangata whenua (people of the land) of Te Ika a Māui and Te Waipounamu learned of these new worlds beyond the horizon through a range of encounters and engagements. From their first sustained contact with Europeans, initiated by the arrival of the *Endeavour* in October 1769, the indigenous peoples of New Zealand quickly learnt about European maritime technology, the power of cannon and muskets, the strange ‘hissing’ language spoken by Europeans, and their unusual interest in collecting animals, plants, and rocks.6 They discovered that ships like the *Endeavour* carried a wide range of peoples, including others from the Pacific such as Tupaia, the Raiatean tohunga (ritual specialist), who was a crucial cultural intermediary between Cook’s crew and the tangata whenua. Other ships followed in the wake of the *Endeavour* and Māori soon discerned differences between the various types of the tupua (goblin) or pakepakeha (fair-skinned beings) who arrived from Europe. For example, they noted differences between travellers from England and those from France, ‘Nga Wiwi’ (the ‘oui oui’ people). Through their contact with both French and British naval ships between 1769 and the end of the 1770s, Māori also encountered non-Europeans, including Joseph Bank’s African servants, the twenty-five slaves from Madagascar and Mauritius as well as over thirty lascars who sailed with Jean-François-Marie de Surville’s *St Jean Baptiste* (which arrived in New Zealand in December 1769), and the African cook and slaves who participated in Marion du Fresne’s ill-fated 1772 voyage.7

New Zealand’s subsequent incorporation into British imperial and trans-Pacific commercial networks in the 1790s created a new range of encounters where coastal communities learnt much about the world. The crews of merchant and timber ships, sealing and whaling vessels were by their nature multi-ethnic and as Māori met these vessels they were exposed to the full range of human cultural variation. Crewmen from these ships occasionally deserted and lived alongside
and amongst Māori communities. Trevor Bentley has suggested that Asian and African sailors were often spared by taua (war parties) and that these non-European sailors were accommodated into Māori society more easily than their white counterparts. In 1814 John Liddiard Nicholas, who sailed on the Active accompanying Samuel Marsden and the pioneering Church Missionary Society missionaries to the Bay of Islands, encountered a lascar who had jumped ship from The City of Edinburgh in 1810 and who was incorporated into Ngāpuhi under the protection of the rangatira Korokoro. Runaway lascars were also incorporated into Kāi Tahu Whānui in the 1810s, as Chapter Five shows, participating in raids against European shipping and even receiving moko (tattoos).

From the 1790s, some Māori saw visiting ships as opportunities for them to enhance their knowledge of the world and to increase their mana (authority). Many travelled to Australia, including Tuki Tahua and Ngahuruhuru who were kidnapped by the HMS Daedalus and transported to Norfolk Island under the orders of Lieutenant-Governor King in 1793, but others travelled further afield. Most notably, in early 1826, after loading the St Patrick with timber from the Hauraki-Thames region to sell in Calcutta, the entrepreneurial Peter Dillon agreed to carry the son of the powerful ariki ‘Tokoroa’ and the son of another chief to India. Dillon renamed these young rangatira ‘His Royal Highness Brian Boru’ and ‘His Excellency Morgan McMurragh’, names and titles that became the toast of Calcutta on the party’s arrival in August 1826. From the moment of their arrival, these young Māori received considerable attention and their time in Bengal was extensively covered by the local press. Colonists and Indians alike were fascinated by the appearance of the two chiefs, who quickly adjusted to the pressure of being walking ethnographic curiosities and won considerable favour with their performance of haka and waiata (Māori dance and song) at the Governor-General of Bengal’s residence at Barrackpore.

The sojourns of ‘Brian Boru’ and ‘Morgan McMurragh’ in Calcutta must be viewed within the context of the incorporation of Māori into the maritime networks of the Pacific world and the British Empire. This new form of mobility was a powerful engine for social change: Māori chiefs from both the far north and Murihiku regularly visited Sydney before the signing of the Treaty, while Hongi Hika and other rangatira saw travel as a means of accessing new trade goods, especially firearms. At the same moment that these rangatira seized upon the opportunities presented by trade and travel, other Māori were beginning to embrace both vernacular literacy and Christianity. Missionary activity began in New Zealand in December 1814 and in 1815 the first book in te reo Māori was printed. Although the exact nature and extent of Māori literacy is debated, there is no doubt that at least some Māori agreed with missionaries in identifying literacy as a valued set of skills to be acquired as quickly as possible. Literacy appealed to a variety of different constituencies. It was crucial for the large numbers of
Māori who converted to Christianity in the 1830s and 1840s, especially those attached to the Anglican and Wesleyan mission stations where the ability to read Scripture was regarded as a fundamental skill. Literacy was also embraced at an early stage by both taurekareka (slaves), who were particularly receptive to the teaching of Christianity, and a new generation of leaders who emerged in the wake of the Treaty and were alive to literacy’s value in the emerging colonial order. Perhaps the best estimates of the extent of vernacular Māori literacy come from A. S. Thomson’s exhaustively researched *The Story of New Zealand* (1859), which suggested that approximately one half of the adult Māori population could read Māori and that around one third could both read and write.19

Given the importance literacy assumed in Māori life, it is not surprising that the colonial state, like the early Protestant missionaries, identified the printing press as a powerful engine of social change. But the drive to publish Māori language newspapers was not simply as an expedient tool well suited to local developments in the colony. It also grew out of long established currents in British educational thought and cultural life. Essentially, the emergence of newspapers in New Zealand in the 1840s should be seen as the product of the efforts of British reformers to use education as a means to uplift British workers and colonised subjects alike. The drive for the creation and dissemination of ‘useful knowledge’ was a key marker of the ‘Age of Reform’ that emerged out of Britain’s anxious reaction to revolutionary change in the late eighteenth century.20

In the wake of the revolutions that shook the Atlantic world from the 1770s to 1800, British intellectuals and politicians were aware of the tremendous power of knowledge as an agent of political change. Anxious to protect Britain from the horrors of revolutionary ‘Terror’ while hoping to educate the population of Britain’s growing urban centres, social reformers hoped to cultivate ‘useful knowledge’ as a means of achieving moderate and stabilising social change. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge’s aim to disseminate ‘useful information to all classes of the community, particularly to such as are unable to avail themselves of experienced teachers, or may prefer learning by themselves’ was particularly important in colonial contexts where the British hoped to reform or displace indigenous knowledge systems, but formal educational institutions remained underdeveloped or under funded.21 As Chris Bayly has pointed out, books and libraries simultaneously enabled (and embodied) colonial authority while also becoming markers of refinement, modernity and broad-mindedness for indigenous peoples.22 In many colonies, newspapers became the key medium for the dissemination of useful knowledge and they were seen as a central element in the development of a successful colony’s economic and political life.
In the 1840s, these aims were transplanted to New Zealand as the colonial state harnessed the power of print in its drive to pacify, educate and modernise Māori. This project was summed up neatly by one early newspaper which identified its mission as publishing ‘materials, whether original or select, the best calculated to elevate and enlighten the native understanding and to render the Maori a fit and civilised associate of his English fellow subject’. Te Karere o Nui Tireni was the first Māori language newspaper and the first of many government produced periodicals that aimed to inform Māori about political developments and to introduce Māori to Pākehā ways and European knowledge. Its genesis lay in a discussion between Governor Hobson and George Clarke, a former Church Missionary Society missionary and Chief Protector of Aborigines, over the possibility of producing a Māori gazette. Clarke argued enthusiastically in favour of the production of a government sponsored periodical, suggesting that it would explain government policy and make the intentions of the colonial state clear to Māori, forestalling those individuals who attempted to ‘prejudice their [Maori] minds against H. M. government’. Published initially in January 1842 until its cancellation by Governor George Grey in March 1846 (in the wake of northern war and the closure of Protector of Aborigines’ Department), it was re-established as Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani in October 1871, which ran until 1877. While there was significant debate over the quality of these government sponsored papers, their low price and Māori hunger for information and literacy meant that they were popular. In 1845, Walter Brodie reported that the publication of Te Karere o Nui Tireni was a significant occasion:

One native of a party is generally selected to read the news aloud. When he takes his seat upon the ground, a circle is then formed, and after the reader has promulgated the contents, the different natives, according to their rank, stand up and argue the different points contained; which being done, they retire home, and answer the different letters by writing to the editor... With its emphasis on reading aloud in a communal setting and the structured verbal and written responses to these texts, Brodie’s sketch suggests some of the ways an oral culture moulded responses to the printed word, reminding us that literacy and newspapers did not displace older knowledge traditions, but rather were interwoven with older traditions of oratory and political discussion. This Māori enthusiasm for literacy in general and newspapers in particular resulted in the emergence of a significant number of Māori-owned newspapers. These
ranged from the pioneering *Te Hokioi o Niu Tireni e Rere atu na* (The New Zealand Warbird in Flight to You) produced in Ngaruawahia by advocates of Kīngitanga (the Māori King Movement) to newspapers like those produced by Māori Anglicans, such as *He Kapu Whakamarama* (Words of Enlightenment) and *Te Kopara* (The Bellbird), from the Kotahitanga paper *Huia Tangata Kotahi* (Unite the People) to *Te Whetu Marama o Te Kotahitanga* (The Shining Star of Unity) published from Ratana Pa between 1924 to 1939. Because these papers articulated a wide range of political positions and reflected different regional and religious concerns, they became integral to Māori intellectual life. The news and opinion they transmitted were greatly valued, as one correspondent noted in 1874:

> We are a people who take great pleasure in reading, and in the days when Maori articles in newspapers would come to us, we would blink with delight at new information. How we read the words in the newspaper!

It was through these texts that those Māori who did not travel across the oceans or encounter Asians, began to form an understanding of Asian cultures. From the 1840s, state-sponsored newspapers provided sustained discussions of contemporary world events in the belief that Māori should be familiarised with economics and politics, enabling them to develop a basic understanding of the world. While the majority of the news in these papers focused on local developments and national politics, they did provide extensive coverage of major political crises and conflicts in Asia. Māori, like many subjects of the empire, were provided with detailed accounts of the rebellion that shook British control of north and central India from May 1857. *The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori* provided detailed treatment of the rebellion in light of the editor’s belief that ‘[m]any of our Maori readers have heard of India ... (and) very many of them share in the deep interest felt by their Pākehā fellow Christians, and fellow subjects, in the events which have occurred’. A lengthy article in the same paper in July 1858 reflected on the rebellion, assessing its causes, highlighting the massacre at Kanpur and underscoring the swift reassertion of British authority. It dramatised the capture of the British garrison and civilians at Kanpur (‘Kanapoa’) by Nana Sahib (‘Nana Tahipi’) and the relief forces’ discovery, under the command of Havelock (‘Hewiraka’), of the ‘perfidy’ (‘nanakia’ – treachery) of Nana Sahib in his ‘murder’ (‘kohuru’ – murder by stealth) of the captives. The article concluded by stressing the inconstancy of the sepoys (Hipo), while emphasising that British rule was once again secure thanks to the loyalty of both the ‘nobility’ (‘nga rangatira’) and ‘peasants’ (‘nga tangata i whenua nou’). Almost a year later, in June 1859, the same paper reported that ‘the war which has for some time
past been raging in India is all but extinguished’, highlighting the ‘clemency’ of the Crown and rapid progress of the ‘pacification of the Indian Empire’. This sustained discussion of the rebellion in Māori newspapers between 1857 and 1859 presented Māori readers with a detailed image of British India, while stressing the ultimate durability of British rule and British military power. In the wake of the Northern War (1845–6) and in a context of intense political discussion amongst Māori leaders, there is no doubt that Māori readers would have been alive to the tacit warnings against resistance conveyed by this reportage. On occasions these messages were made explicit: in April 1858, Te Karere o Poneke, edited by Walter Lawry Buller, used the rebellion in India to highlight the negative outcomes of any further racial conflict in New Zealand.

Where the Indian rebellion of 1857–8 loomed large in state-sponsored newspapers of the late 1850s, famine provided the key lens through which both Pākehā- and Māori-owned newspapers of the 1870s viewed Asia. Te Wananga (The Forum), published under the authority of Henare Tomoana and Karaitiana Takamoana, provided detailed discussion of the famine that devastated northern China in the mid-1870s, outlining the failure of the Chinese state, celebrating the ‘Christlike’ efforts of missionaries to ameliorate the suffering inflicted by the food shortage and the need for greater charity to help famine relief. In this vivid report, Te Wananga created a picture of rural China where ‘people’s faces are black with hunger’, women and children were openly sold, suicide and infanticide were common, and where travellers stumbled over ‘corpses laying rotting by the highway’. Later in that year, it advised its readers that the famine had not abated and that some seven million had died. Te Wananga’s great rival, the government’s mouthpiece Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani, also provided detailed discussion of the initial outbreak of famine in India during 1874, recounting the colonial state’s attempts to provide assistance and providing sustained treatment as the famine spread and grew more severe over subsequent years (some six million died, particularly in south India, between 1876 and 1878). In response to this coverage, various Māori readers wrote to Te Wananga offering donations to assist famine victims. Tana Wananga from Napier recounted that he was ‘shearing sheep when we heard of the famine’ and that he was forwarding some cash. Porikapa Tamaihotua of Ngāti Parakiore donated a total of 8 pounds 19 shillings on the behalf of his friends, noting that money came from a range of iwi (tribes): Ngāti Maru (seven contributors), Ngāti Manawa (two contributors), Ngāti Te Whatu-āpiti (three contributors), Te Arawa (one contributor), Ngāti Mutuahi (two contributors), Ngāi Toroiwaho (five contributors) as well as from the Pākehā boss of this group. Porikapa’s accompanying letter to the editor stressed that through this charity, ‘we have given expression to our love to the people of India’ and this charity was in keeping with the Bible’s injunction to ‘Love One Another’. Subsequent issues of Te Wananga kept track of the famine and the
global charity effort that Māori were part of. Like the state-sponsored papers, *Te Wananga*’s reportage of events in Asia drew on a range of international sources and publications. In its attempt to assess indigenous opinion on the possibility of South Asian soldiers serving alongside British troops in Europe, for example, it presented a range of opinion drawn from Hindi and Urdu newspapers.

While major political occurrences in Asia were well documented, these newspapers provided only limited accounts of Asian migration. They did report on the movement of Chinese labourers across the Pacific, but provided little discussion of Chinese or Indian migrants to New Zealand and largely avoided (with some notable exceptions discussed below) becoming embroiled in the fierce debates over race and immigration that periodically flared in English-language newspapers. This silence can be attributed to three factors. Firstly, all of the newspapers were published at sites in the North Island, which were distant from the initial sites where Chinese migrants clustered. Secondly, given the anxieties unleashed by the wars of the 1840s and 1860–72, government-run newspapers emphasised the need for amity between Māori and Pākehā and were reluctant to offer broader discussions of racial conflict within New Zealand. Thirdly, Māori-owned newspapers produced discussions of national politics that primarily focused on issues relating to land. And, given their broader economic interest in the rural sector and the development of Māori farming in the North Island, discussion of Indian and Chinese migrants seemed peripheral.

The most sensational account relating to Chinese migration was provided by *Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani*. It recounted that in 1858 some 350 Chinese migrants to Australia (‘nga tangata heke o Haina’), carried on the Bordeaux-registered *St. Paul* from Hong Kong, were shipwrecked along with a small European crew on Rossel Island in New Guinea. In April 1875, Narcisse Pierre Pellatier, who was a young cabin boy in 1858, was rescued from Cape York. He had been marooned by the captain and crew of the *St. Paul* as they sailed to Australia, leaving the Chinese migrants on Rossel Island. Pellatier and the one Chinese survivor recounted a sensational story of violence and cannibalism in New Guinea. *Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani* told its readers how the European sailors were terrified of both the Chinese and local islanders, suggesting that the inhabitants of Rossel Island had ‘eaten most of the Chinese two by two, in the most methodical manner’.

In fact, any broad reading of the newspapers suggest that many Māori readers would have associated Asia with commerce rather than migration. Markets and the movement of goods were a core element of these texts, especially in the 1840s through to the 1860s. Reports of trade with Asia assumed prominence in coverage, with the movement of ships to and from New Zealand from Colombo, Shanghai, and Calcutta being recorded. Of particular note are *The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori*’s discussions of ‘experimental’ export of potatoes to Ceylon in May 1856, which would have been of considerable interest to Māori, given that
they remained key agricultural producers in the 1850s, and the possibilities of trading timber to China in return for silk and tea. Tea, a commodity greatly valued by Māori from the 1830s, was routinely associated with China and there is no doubt that Māori knew where this commodity came from. Although the detailed reportage of the famines of the 1870s somewhat offset this emphasis on trade with Asia, the general impression of Asia created by both state- and Māori-run newspapers was one of economic sophistication and the importance of cities like Canton and Calcutta in international trade.

Frequently these news reports began by briefly contextualising the story for Māori readers. A report in *Te Manuhiri Tuarangi and Maori Intelligencer* on treaty negotiations between China and England in 1860, for example, opened by noting ‘[a]s few of our Māori readers know anything about China, or the causes of the war, we propose to give them now a short description of this vast Empire’. The report proceeded to locate the geographical situation of China (it ‘spreads over the Eastern slope of the table lands of Central Asia’), stressing that it would be difficult for Māori to imagine the reach of the empire or the size of the population. The article explained the climate and fauna, highlighting the exotic (reindeer (‘reinitia’) and elephants (‘erepata’)), and extent of Chinese commodity production, including ‘wheat, sugar, tea, coffee, silk, cotton’ (‘te witi, te huka, te ti, te kawhi, te hiriki, te miro’).

Perhaps the most notable sequence of this kind of educational article was produced by *The Maori Messenger* which provided a serialised treatment of ‘GEOGRAPHY, THE WORLD WE LIVE IN’, presenting its Māori readers with an overview of the world and its cultures. This condensed geography provided a simple sketch of various lands, their main topographical features, urban centres and populations. India, for example, was introduced to Māori readers in the following way:

India is a very large country. The people there are black ['He mangu te kiri o te tangata']. It is bounded in the north by the snow mountains of Himalaya. These are the highest mountains in the world. Two great rivers rise there, the Ganges and the Indus. The Ganges flows to the East and the Indus to the Southwest. At the mouth of the Ganges is Calcutta. It is the chief town of the English. There are a great number of towns belonging to the people of India, large fine cities...

There are two other large cities built by the English. Madras on the Southeast coast, and Bombay on the West.

But these very general accounts of culture and geography also communicated key information about the ways in which people in these distant lands lived,
including their diet, their religion, and the goods they produced:

There are plenty of cows in India. The milk and butter is used as food, but the Hindus will not eat the flesh. According to their religion, the cow is a very sacred animal. Sugar and cocoanuts and coffee are grown there and many other good things which are only found in these countries.46

Māori-owned papers followed similar patterns of cultural contextualisation. On the occasion of a visit by a group of Indian soldiers to New Zealand (after they had visited Australia to mark Federation), Te Pipiwharauroa: He Kupu Whakamarama used this visit to provide its readers with a brief outline of Indian society, describing its population, its Hindu and Muslim communities and the observance of caste.47

By the time of this report in 1901, Māori readers were already able to access extensive treatment of Asian religions, especially Hinduism. The Maori Messenger’s discussion of India in September 1855 ended with a dismissive characterisation of Hinduism. This account drew on critiques of South Asian religious traditions formulated by early nineteenth-century critics of the East India Company’s policy of ‘religious toleration’, who were particularly vexed by sati (widow burning) and the Company’s role as patron of the great Jagganath temple in Orissa:

The people of India are idolators. They worship huge idols. The largest of these has three faces and many hands. These idols are kept in temples and gardens by the priests ['tohunga']. One of the idols is named Juggernaut ['Jaganaata'], every year there is a great feast held in honor of him. The idol is taken out of the temple and placed on a very high car, and dragged a great distance to another temple. Thousands of people go before and follow after the idol, and some of these throw themselves down under the wheels and [are] crushed to death. They think this a good death to die and that the God will be favourable to them in the next world. Some of the Hindus torment themselves day by day for years. They think that such torments here will make them sure of living happily after death. One of the customs of the people formerly was when a great man died to burn his body and in the fire and make his widow burn herself also. They did not think it right that the wife should outlive her husband, a great pile of wood was laid and then the relatives of the widow led her to the side. She herself climbed up on it and laid herself quietly down by the body of her husband. The relatives set fire to the wood and they were burnt together. This custom has now ceased. The English have persuaded the people to give it up.48

Three years later, within the context of a discussion of the rebellion in India, The Maori Messenger characterised Muslims as believing ‘in a false prophet called Mahomet’ and Hindus as a community ‘who worship abominable idols, birds, beasts, and fishes, and almost everything under the sun’.49 Conversely, the same
 CHAPTER THREE

paper presented a more positive image of Chinese: ‘The Chinese are a peaceful, and very industrious people, it is very fertile country, and they cultivate everywhere, even nearly to the very tops of the hills’.

These discussions of Asian cultures were central in producing a key opposition that framed portrayals of cultural difference in the Māori newspapers: the division between civilised peoples and ‘native’ peoples. As Lachy Paterson has stressed, within these nineteenth-century newspapers the term ‘Māori’ was extended to encompass other indigenous peoples in the Pacific Ocean, the Americas and Africa. This extension of the word reflected its original meaning, as prior to contact with Europeans ‘māori’ denoted naturalness and the ordinary state of things. In identifying Native Americans, Pacific Islanders and Filipinos as ‘Māori’ communities, ‘native peoples’ were implicitly contrasted with those communities who were described as being ‘civilised’ or ‘sophisticated’. It must be noted that in state-run newspapers ‘civilisation’ was not simply a code for Europe. The large-scale, urbanised and literate societies of the Middle East, South and East Asia were also recognised as being civilised, even though they were not Christian. In 1855, for example, The Maori Messenger informed its readers that:

The Chinese have been for a great many generations, a Civilised people. They have had Schools of their own, where all the people of the country are taught to read and write their alphabet is quite different to ours, they have long known how to Print, to weave Silk and to follow most other European trades ... There are two forms of worship among the Chinese, one part of the people worship Idols, the others the Spirits of their forefathers, none of them follow such an evil form of Idolatory, as the Hindoos do, but it is by the Gospel alone that they can grow to be a really great people.

Although this passage implicitly identified Europe as the ultimate source of ‘civilisation’, as it misleadingly suggested that print and silk production were essentially ‘European’, many articles stressed that Asian societies possessed the attributes of civilisation. Several articles published in the 1850s emphasised the number and size of Asian cities: in 1878, for example, Te Waka told its readers that ‘there are no less than seventy-five thousand walled cities in China’. Another key marker of ‘civilisation’ sustained these cities: the regular production of an agricultural surplus. The state of Māori agriculture was a constant concern in state-run newspapers and this emphasis on agriculture as an index of civilisation carried particular weight at a moment when Māori agricultural production, which had been central to the life of the early colonies, was diminishing. Te Waka suggested that:
From the earliest accounts of Eastern nations it appears that agriculture has at all times been understood by them in considerable perfection, as they were always supplied not only with necessaries but the greatest luxuries of life.

In China in particular, Te Waka stressed, cultivation was strongly encouraged and even undertaken by the emperor himself. The other key sign of civilisation was the ability to marshall a large army. In 1858, The Maori Messenger recalled that the Maratha army that defeated the ‘Great Mogul’ consisted of some ‘200,000 cavalry, 20,000 infantry, and 100 pieces of artillery’. In a similar vein, Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani informed its readers that the Chinese army had some 651,677 men and 7,157 officers, a figure that was over twelve times the total Māori population.

Although Persians, Indians, Chinese and Japanese were identified as being civilised, they were nevertheless inserted into racialised hierarchies. In 1855, The Maori Messenger suggested that: ‘The people of India are very dark, nearly Black, but they have not the flat noses or curly hair of the African Negro.’ The same article continued on to suggest that ‘[t]o the East of Tartary lies China, the Chinese are not black or even so brown as the Maori, their Skin having a yellow tinge in it, but those in the Northern or cold parts of China, are of a much lighter color’. However, discussions of indigenous peoples – those people who the term ‘Māori’ might be applied to – placed greater emphasis on their racial identities. As small-scale societies with no or limited traditions of literacy, indigenous communities were racialised in a more straightforward manner and greater attention was devoted to their physical appearance. In 1855, The Maori Messenger offered a detailed discussion of Borneo, stressing a division between the trading communities who settled on the coast and the ‘aboriginal inhabitants’ who dominated the interior. It continued on to discuss various indigenous tribes, especially the ‘Biadjos’ of southern Borneo. The Biadjos, The Messenger told its Māori readers, ‘are tall, stout and well-shaped and their women are said to be fair and handsome’. However, this tendency to prioritise physique as an index of the sophistication of indigenous peoples was qualified by an awareness of the porousness of racial boundaries and the malleability of racial categories.

In 1862, Te Karere Maori offered an introductory survey of the demography of Southeast Asia. Timor, it asserted, ‘is inhabited by four principal races’. These consisted of the ‘original natives, who resemble in many respects the Eastern negroes’, the Malays (‘nga Marei’), the Chinese (‘Hainii’), and mixed race peoples, such as the ‘black Portuguese’ (‘nga Poatuki keremangu’), produced out of the intermarriage between the Portuguese and the ‘original natives’.

Although categories of biological race were prominent within these state-produced newspapers, Christianity remained a key tool for explaining cultural difference, reflecting the close connection that many editors had with the
Protestant missionary tradition or with Protestant churches. Under the editorship of Walter Buller, the renowned ornithologist and son of the noted Wesleyan missionary James Buller, Te Manuhiri Tuarangi and Maori Intelligencer published a series entitled ‘Ancient Scriptural History’ or ‘Nga Korero o Namata’ (Stories of Ancient Times). These articles suggested that Genesis remained a framework that could be used to understand the peopling of the world: ‘On the dispersion of men from Babel, they carried with them the knowledge of God to several countries ... According to the opinion of some, Noah went away to China, Ham to Africa, Japheth and his children moved off towards Europe, whilst Shem and his offspring continued to reside in Asia, which was the original residence of mankind.’ The third installment discussed Noah and his children and clearly identified each son as the founder of a particular racial lineage: ‘Japheth is the ancestor of the inhabitants of the West, of Europe; Ham, of the tribes residing towards the South, and in Africa; – and Shem, of the Jews, of the dwellers in Asia, and towards the rising sun.’

Māori-owned newspapers also tended to produce visions of cultural difference that placed considerable emphasis on race. Writing in Te Pipiwharauroa: He Kupu Whakamarama, Apirana Ngata contrasted the ‘Pakeha, a white people: the Chinaman yellow’. Physique provided a basic guide for Māori readers to imagine Asian peoples they were unlikely to encounter and frequently functioned as a rough guide to the people’s qualities and character. In 1899, for example, Te Pipiwharauroa: He Kupu Whakamarama explained to its readers that the people of the Philippines (Piripaina) ‘appear like the Chinese, for their island is near China.’ But as Lachy Paterson has observed, Māori discussions of cultural difference were rarely simply framed by race, but instead drew upon long standing values associated with colours such as red and black and understandings of the qualities of a rangatira and the importance of rank as well as Christian ideas.

One important contrast between Māori- and Pākehā-owned newspapers was the open discussions of racism in Māori-edited papers. Te Pipiwharauroa: He Kupu Whakamarama, for example, bluntly noted in April 1901 that ‘some Pakeha hate the native peoples, calling them “black niggers”’. The contrast on the issue of race can be seen in their treatment of anti-Chinese sentiment in Te Korimako and Te Pipiwharauroa. Te Korimako, which was established by the American philanthropist W. P. Snow and edited by S. J. Edmonds, detailed the restrictions imposed on Chinese migrants in Hawai‘i and offered support for the imposition of the Poll Tax in Australia and New Zealand:

The Chinese are swarming to the colonies of Australia and New Zealand although they have been weighed down with (the tax of) ten pounds for each of them. That people will never stop coming. This is what the people of these colonies fear, that soon these lands will be destroyed by these people who are
not very well liked by the Pakeha peoples. If a law is not made to keep them off, those sorts of people will destroy these settlements, and poverty will strike the people of these lands. Because (the Chinese) are a people who work for very little reward, and are able to do so because most of their food is rice, that food costs little, the Pakeha not being able to live on that food but the Chinese flourishes on that food. Likewise that people is put down for their filthy living and the terrible sicknesses which strike that people in the many places they have lived in, there are the people called lepers, the disease of all the diseases that people fear. Perhaps that race is approaching 400 million.70

In contrast to this emotive justification for immigration restriction (which played on Māori anxieties about disease and depopulation), Te Pipiwharauoa generally handled such issues in a more temperate manner. In 1905, it treated Joe Kum Yung's murder by Lionel Terry quite dispassionately. It noted that Terry had been ‘tramping’ around the country ‘distributing his book objecting to the Chinese living in the territories of England’. It continued on: ‘While he was in Wellington he shot an elderly Chinese without cause. However, he said that it was to awaken the Pakeha to dislike the Chinese.’ The report concluded with the brief but pointed observation: ‘He may be mad.’71 Two months later, the same newspaper reported that Terry’s defence for the murder was ‘that it was proper that he murder him because soon the Pakeha would be trodden under by the Chinese’. It noted that Terry’s sentence had been commuted from execution to life in prison, where he would die ‘because he had become mad from the strength of his hatred for the Chinese’.72

In many ways it is appropriate to end this chapter with Lionel Terry, whose court case became a major cause célèbre and whose frequent escapes from South Island mental hospitals gained for him the status of a minor folk hero. As a flaxen-haired racist and murderer, Terry, of course, embodies the very worst features of the racialised landscape of nineteenth-century New Zealand. But, as John Stenhouse and Brian Moloughney have suggested, Terry’s career only tells us so much about the place of cultural difference in the colony.73 Building on Stenhouse and Moloughney’s work, this chapter has traced a series of ongoing debates over Asia and Asians that shaped ideas about race and civilisation in colonial New Zealand. These exchanges were politically important within a colony where there was racial conflict, competition over resources, disputes over the impact of immigration, and anxiety surrounding intermarriage. In reconstructing discussions of Asia and Asians in Māori language newspapers (both Māori- and Pākehā-run), it has illuminated a largely neglected aspect of
New Zealand’s colonial past. By mapping some of these debates, this chapter has
further confirmed the great value of these publications as sources for cultural
history, as well as underscoring the significance of Asia in colonial mentalities.
This discussion has identified some of the key ways in which Pākehā officials,
editors, and intellectuals understood Asia and those aspects of Asian cultures
that these newspapermen believed to be useful in their drive to ‘prepare’ Māori
for modernity. By reading Māori responses to these Pākehā-run publications, as
well as examining the place of Asia in Māori-owned papers, this chapter provides
some insights into the transformation of Māori mentalities during the nineteenth
century. This was a time of course when ‘Māori’ identities were fluid. While
many came to define themselves in certain contexts through their ‘Māoriness’,
this broad identity existed alongside and frequently jostled with other forms of
identification: kinship ties (whakapapa), kinship groups (whānau (family) and iwi
(tribe), but especially hapū (subtribe)), political allegiance (including Kīngitanga),
denomination (Anglican, Wesleyan, Catholic, or followers of prophetic leaders).
Of course, as this chapter has shown, many of these identities, but especially the
notion of ‘tangata Māori’ itself, were defined against other groupings including
both Pākehā and Asians. Within this context of rapid social change, Māori
newspapers became crucial elements of intellectual life and political debate.

At the broadest level, the material presented here suggests that historians need
to open up their approach to New Zealand’s cultural history. There is no doubt
that the Treaty’s central role in state practice and as deployment as a framework
for social justice has been crucial to the transformation of New Zealand culture
since the mid-1970s. Yet Treaty derived frameworks cannot illuminate all of the
texture and struggles over identity at the forefront of both public and private life
in the colony from the 1840s on. Historians of New Zealand need to produce a
broader range of histories that cast light on the complexity and richness of the
nation’s many pasts. In order to achieve an adequate appreciation of the place of
Asia in the making of New Zealand, historians need to build on existing work and
further examine the history of market gardens, temples, sports clubs, language
schools, restaurants, and rituals, as well as producing histories of families, local
social groups, community organisations, and biographies of influential Asian New
Zealanders. How these activities, groups, and institutions played out at local as
well as the national level needs to be reconstructed: in other words, both the
common features and particularities of locations as diverse as Caversham and
Howick need to be established. This chapter implicitly suggests that scholars
must also begin to focus their analytical gaze more firmly on encounters across
‘community’ boundaries and scrutinise interaction between various Asian groups,
encounters between Asians and Māori, relationships between Asians and other
migrants, as well as continuing to assess the changing pattern of Asian-Pākehā
relations. Although nineteenth-century Māori newspapers document the rising
power of race and the calcification of community boundaries, they also record moments of genuine human sympathy and compassion that transcended cultural difference, as we have seen in Te Wananga's account of Māori initiatives aimed to assist famine victims in India and China. We need to fashion histories that accommodate both this kind of empathy and the Poll Tax levied on Chinese migrants between 1881 and 1934, that can do justice to both ‘Brian Boru’ in Calcutta and Lionel Terry, and that are committed to articulating the complexity and richness of New Zealand’s many pasts.
A substantial body of emerging scholarship aims to reconstruct the centrality of Asia in the making of New Zealand national culture. Several essays and edited collections have gone beyond the pioneering work of scholars like Ng Bickleen Fong, James Ng, Hew McLeod, Kapil Tiwari, Manying Ip and Jacqueline Leckie, which recorded the development of migrant communities and emphasised their development as distinct ‘sub-cultures’ within a political environment shaped by an assimilationist ideology. Conversely, the new work – primarily produced by scholars working from within Asian Studies – has stressed the importance of the connections that these groups maintained to their homelands even as they have engaged in conversations over race and nationality within New Zealand. This recent scholarship has claimed that Asian places, peoples, and practices have been pivotal in making ‘New Zealand culture’. Of course, as Chapter Two demonstrated, that culture has frequently worked to exclude Asians, denied cultural visibility to non-European migrant groups in general, and has defined Asians as being outside the bounds of the nation or even as a threat to the project of nation-building. One important move within this scholarship has been to insist that these linkages are not a recent phenomenon driven by the resurgence of Asian economies over the past two decades, but rather that the manifold exchanges between Asian and New Zealand societies have long and complex histories.

This chapter sets out to extend this line of argument by focusing on the place of South Asia in the debates, practices, and institutions that shaped the uneven cultural and intellectual terrain of New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The evidence presented can be fruitfully read alongside the previous two chapters, the next chapter on an Indian sailor who settled in New Zealand, and Chapter Ten’s discussion on the connections between an Assam-based tea planter and the Polynesian Society.

This chapter’s principal aim is to recover the significance of South Asia in a range of domains within the developing colony, including economics (India’s place in the history of colonial consumption), religion (the ways in which South Asian religious traditions have figured in debates over faith, practice, and the limits of rationality), and politics (debates over the political rights of Asians and
their place within the nation). This evidence sheds new light on South Asia's place in shaping the social patterns, cultural assumptions, and political landscape of colonial New Zealand. But even as this chapter emphasises the important place of India in the making and remaking of New Zealand colonial society, it stresses that these engagements were not direct and simple encounters between two nations, but rather that they were enabled by institutions and structures that were rarely national in character. Instead, these forms of interdependence were the products of international trading systems and commodity markets, the operation of imperial networks that stitched together Britain and its various colonies, and the efforts of religious groups to share knowledge about the state of religious change on a global scale.

Charting these interactions delineates the ways in which these particular forms of exchange fed into practices that were understood as characteristic of New Zealand's colonial culture and energised debates over the nature of the national community. The evidence suggests that while India was a significant cultural, intellectual and spiritual touchstone for settler culture in New Zealand, thinking about India opened up many of the tensions of colonial culture. India and Indians were subject to fierce debate within the colony because they revealed what Jeffrey Cox has termed 'imperial faultlines', the points of contradiction, ambiguity and conflict where competing cultural visions of empire-building and civilisation were laid bare. Such an approach captures the nuances and complexities of colonial society, while firmly embedding that culture's development within the broader institutional, economic, and intellectual networks that enabled the operation of the British Empire at a global level.

Tea was fundamental to British imperial culture. From the eighteenth century on, tea was embedded in many domains of imperial life. Tea cultivation was a central testing ground for colonial science's claims to authority, as Chinese plants and knowledge were transplanted to India and cultivated with great care by small groups of planters and botanists. In imperial economics, tea was a crucial element in the long-distance trade that was the empire's lifeblood. At the same time, growing European consumption of tea also drove the massive transformation of South Asia's economy as large areas were transformed into tea plantations and massive labour forces were assembled (and strictly policed) to produce the highly-valued commodity. Tea was a crucial element in imperial politics: the tea house was an important social site in the political transformations of the eighteenth century; for more than two centuries the tea trade was a contentious issue in commercial relationships between Britain and its colonies; and the regulation of the importation of tea and the operation of the tea market were recurring
concerns in domestic British politics. Tea drinking also had profound cultural outcomes. During the later eighteenth century and early nineteenth century it was a significant marker of a culture of politeness and functioned as an engine that helped drive the emergence of a culture of consumption in Britain. As the nineteenth century progressed, volumes of imported tea continued to grow and cheap forms of tea became a foundation of working-class diets as well as an integral component of working-class sociability.

Against this backdrop of the centrality of tea in British imperial culture, it is hardly surprising to find a large body of evidence that attests to the manifold importance of tea in colonial New Zealand, evidence that Brian Moloughney and myself have previously gestured towards. Jock Phillips has questioned the significance of work that endeavours to demonstrate the role of the various regions of Asia in shaping New Zealand’s economy, social patterns, and intellectual history. In particular he queried the importance of the origins of commodities in the history of consumption. Such an argument is grounded in a narrow reading of the possibilities of cultural history as well as revealing a very strong investment in the primacy of an insulated, self-contained national history. Punjab, Gujarat, and Guangdong are of little relevance to a national history organised around the Treaty of Waitangi and the unfolding of British/Pākehā and Māori relationships.

Most obviously, the origins of commodities matter because these commodities were not simply free-floating agents, but rather they reached the New Zealand market through a particular range of transportation networks and commercial connections. Flows of commodities were central in creating, reproducing, and reshaping economic and political relationships, especially for a colony like New Zealand, which had a relatively narrow manufacturing base and remained heavily dependent on its import trade. Discounting the cultural origins of commodities effaces the importance of these transnational relationships that underwrote the colonial economy.

Moreover, that line of questioning ignores a rich tradition of work in the historiography of consumer cultures that focuses on the significance of cultural origins, and the substantial primary evidence that suggests that selecting particular commodities or commodities with a specific provenance has been a crucial element of the culture of capitalist consumption. The particular purchase choices that an individual made frequently functioned as a social marker of discernment, of ‘taste’. Patterns of consumption reflected the economic constraints of an individual or family, but they also had a performative function, where education, cultural sophistication, and economic security were displayed in the semi-public transactions with merchants and shopkeepers, and in the consumption of these commodities in a social setting.

Tea consumption was an important element of food culture, sociability, and
the projection of status in colonial New Zealand. Statistical evidence attests to the centrality of tea in the colonial diet. Early Europeans active in Australasia drank about six times as much tea as their counterparts at home in Britain, and during the 1860s and 1870s, New Zealand colonists were the most avid tea drinkers in the world. In 1878, the average colonist consumed 11.05 pounds (or 5.02 kilograms) of tea per annum, roughly two-and-a-half times the volume used by the average Briton (4.66 pounds or 2.12 kilograms per annum). By the 1890s, this consumption per person had reduced and stabilised at just over 6 pounds (2.73 kilograms) per annum. This level of consumption lagged behind the Australian colonies, but was well ahead of all other British colonies, with, for example, New Zealanders consuming 73 per cent more than Canadians (3.69 pounds or 1.68 kilograms per capita per annum) and some 36 per cent more than the average consumption of tea in the United Kingdom (4.7 pounds or 2.14 kilograms per capita per annum). A decade later, tea consumption in New Zealand had grown again in both real and relative terms, with an average consumption of 6.8 pounds per capita (3.8 kilograms) per annum, a figure that brought New Zealand closer to its trans-Tasman neighbour. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, tea consumption remained high in global terms and New Zealand settlers consistently outstripped their relatives in Britain when it came to imbibing tea.

Colonial writers and journalists felt that the colonist’s passion for tea was a significant feature of the colony’s cultural landscape. An anonymous 1909 essay (in Progress) that examined the colonial passion for tea suggested that had tea ‘become very popular’ in New Zealand, that ‘its use is practically universal’. The author claimed that colonists in New Zealand, consumed, on average, ‘seven times per capita the amount consumed per capita in England or Scotland’. This exaggerated claim, which amplified the already significant divergence between the volume of consumption at ‘Home’ and in the ‘Colony’, served to underscore both the economic and social significance of tea consumption.

Foreign travellers also dwelt on the popularity of tea in colonial New Zealand. The American writer Edgar Watson Howe was struck by the colonists’ attachment to tea (and horse racing), recording the ‘astonishment’ of people when he turned down the offer of a cup of tea. John Murray Moore, a doctor and fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute, celebrated the healthiness of the colony and took cheer in the ubiquity of tea, observing that in the colony there had been a ‘general substitution of tea and coffee for wine at afternoon calls and evening parties’. Many travel texts observed that tea, butter, cheese and mutton were at the heart of colonial food-ways: the robust tannins of teas from India and Ceylon seem to have been a valued complement to the fattiness of the colonial diet.

Even though tea drinking was firmly embedded in British cultural practices and debates over national identity when New Zealand was colonised by large
numbers of British migrants, this process of internalisation never erased tea's strong connections to Asia and 'Asian-ness'. Indeed, the popularity of tea in Britain was closely connected to the popularity of Chinoiserie and the orientalisation of British material culture, a shift in taste that was obvious in the popularity of porcelain as well as the growing prominence of Asian motifs and images in British material culture. Tea's intimate connection with Asia remained strong in colonial New Zealand, where a precise language of style and regional origin was a key element in the marketing and consumption of tea.

From the 1850s on, New Zealand tea advertisements routinely emphasised both the variety of teas on offer and their place of origin. The place of origin was particularly significant as the period between 1850 and 1880 saw a marked shift away from the consumption of Chinese teas towards teas cultivated in India and Ceylon. In part, this was a result of the higher yield of 'steep' produced from a pound of South Asian teas compared to Chinese teas. It also reflected the rapid expansion of the tea industry in South Asia and the growing weight of imperial trade networks that focused on that region (a reorientation that colonial commentators were well aware of). New Zealand tea importers, local wholesalers and retailers emphasised the distinctions between teas from China and India, using regional names to market their blends in New Zealand. Particularly important here was Nelson, Moate and Co., a New Zealand-based company that dominated the national tea market and was a prominent player in the broader imperial tea trade. By 1908, Nelson, Moate and Co. had the capacity to handle four million pounds of tea per annum or two-thirds of New Zealand's total tea consumption. The company's success reflected its ability to read the nuances of local tastes and demands, as a senior figure from the Company explained to the Evening Post: ‘Different towns have different tastes in regard to tea, and even different parts of one city will have entirely different ideas on the subject.' While the New Zealand market was not quite as variegated as the British market, which was marked by divergent preferences according to class and region, variations in colonial taste did structure Nelson, Moate and Co.'s operations: ‘[W]hile one tea would be a great success in, say, Christchurch, it would not suit Auckland.'

It is crucial to recognise that these complex distinctions were also driven from South Asia as the Government of British India, tea planter associations, and individual tea planters worked hard to educate New Zealanders about the range of teas produced within South Asia for the imperial market. The Government of British India, for example, presented a very large range of teas at the New Zealand Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1865. This display gave colonists a chance to examine the Assam teas that they were becoming familiar with: eight distinct varieties of tea were sent from eleven Assamese production sites. The Government of British India also used the Exhibition as an opportunity for New Zealand settlers to learn about the tea being produced at newer sites.
of production. It sent examples from six varieties sourced from six different plantations in Cachar (a recently developed region within Assam); five varieties from three Darjeeling plantations; four from two Dehra Dun plantations; and a similar range of varieties produced by planters based in Kumaon and Garhwal and from Kangra in Punjab.23

In a similar fashion, at the 1889 New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, the Planters’ Association of Kandy ran a ‘Ceylon Kiosk’ which provided exhibition-goers with a chance to sample teas from a range of Ceylonese plantations and the opportunity to experience the ‘Orient’ itself in a carefully constructed tea house, adorned with Tamil script and staffed by South Asian waiters dressed in Ceylonese costume.

The cumulative effect of the marketing and packaging of South Asian tea by local companies and these initiatives driven from South Asia was to embed in the colonial imagination a sophisticated set of qualities that were associated with different varieties of tea and with different tea producing regions. Darjeeling teas were seen as high quality, possessing a richness and full-bodied flavour but with a degree of subtlety that was not found in teas cultivated in Assam.24 Ceylon teas were generally understood to be delicate and sophisticated: their consumption was a marker of both the affluence of the individual consumer and an indicator of the wealth of the community as a whole.25

The contrasts between these varieties and regions of origin were one set of differences that shaped the culture of tea in colonial New Zealand; another was a broader opposition between these ‘fine teas’ and the ‘cheap teas’ that were a large component of the tea market. These cheap teas were valued because of their affordability, and were packaged typically without any marker of variety or place of origin.26 Comprised of ‘tea dust’ and ‘fannings’, cheap tea was seen to be very robust, but lacking in subtlety and sophistication.27 It was the kind of drink associated with urban labourers, shepherds and farm workers, and swagmen: it was a marker of working-class culture and masculinity. It was used in ‘Māori tea’, a strong brew made without milk and sweetened not with highly refined white sugar, but with treacle or any other sweetener at hand.28 Of course, it was also the basis of ‘billy tea’, that quintessential frontier beverage defined by its cheapness, strength, and sweetness. Billy tea was not gently steeped in a fine porcelain teapot but rather was vigorously boiled together with sugar in a billy over a fire, being gulped from a pannikin instead of from dainty china. Its improvised quality and strength meant that billy tea was redolent of an authenticity and rawness that was seen to embody the distinctive quality of the colonial frontier, in contrast to the sophisticated consumption of varietal teas in urban settings.29 This divergence was nicely articulated in Laurence James Kennaway’s poetic exploration of the colonial diet in the 1870s:
Poured out as tea into fairest of cups – snow-white with gilt edging –
Sweetened with lumps of sweet crystal, creamily mingled and modified,
Soothing the mind and the palate, and gliding refreshingly downwards.
And it presents itself fiery raw, from rusty tin pannikin, –
Tasting of solder, in bright new can just made by the tinman, –
Boiled in the pot that is drunk from, – or poured from gigantic tin tea-pot,
Milkless and scalding, and raw, and blackened with tea by the fist-full.30

Kennaway’s verse reminds us that the culture of tea was a key element in the articulation of both class and gender identities in colonial New Zealand. South Asian varietals were markers of affluence, knowledge, and cultural distinction. By the late nineteenth century, fine teas were also associated with the cultural values promulgated by the Temperance movement. Advocates of temperance were particularly concerned with working-class alcohol consumption and attempted to cultivate the consumption of tea in the place of beer and liquor. ‘Tea parties’ were an integral element of the temperance reforming project and were a key site for a form of sociability that was seen as morally uplifting. Temperance halls were constructed and outfitted with the particular needs of these events in mind.31

The place of tea in the connections between gender, taste and the politics of reform is nicely encapsulated in a 1903 advertisement for Suratura tea, a Ceylon tea marketed in New Zealand. The advertisement was very clear on the tea’s origins and quality: ‘Suratura Tea is a pure Ceylon tea, and is guaranteed not blended with Indian, China, or any cheap or inferior teas.’ The importance of tea within the highly gendered culture of temperance is suggested by the dishevelled middle-aged man featured in the illustration with his collar springing loose, his waistcoat stained and his umbrella broken. The text scrawled in undisciplined handwriting at the foot of the advertisement makes clear the source of this rejection of respectability, and also suggests that consuming Suratura tea would elevate the drinker in keeping with the expectations of his restrained and cultured wife. The text reads ‘No more–hic–Wishkey–join Prohibition–hic–Party gimme Tea–dear old Suratura–wife drinks it–hic–I’ll drink it’.32 Here fine tea was seen as a powerful weapon against the lure of alcohol, an engine for moral reform, and an instrument for social uplift.

These attributes, however, were contested. Within the empire the social value of tea had long been contentious. From the eighteenth century, critics of tea identified it as an ‘oriental luxury’, a drain on the British economy and a key feature that drove the long-standing imbalance in Britain’s terms of trade with Asia. For some commentators, tea was also a social evil, one that fed addiction, underpinned potentially disruptive forms of female sociability (the gossip of tea parties), and was an ‘expensive and pernicious’ drain on family finances.33
Variations of these arguments were reworked in the late nineteenth century by colonial social reformers and, more especially, by critics of the Temperance movement. Charles Fox, a member of the Royal Statistical Society, railed against tea drinking as a ‘national proclivity’, which he identified as a pernicious addiction to a powerful stimulant. This taste for tea, Fox argued, was ‘doing much to overstock our asylums in this age of haste, tension, and overstrain’. These anxieties were also articulated in Australia and New Zealand. Thornhill Weedon, a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and the Compiler of General Statistics for Queensland, argued that throughout Australasia, ‘the excessive use of this stimulant which now obtains is in its results as productive of as much mischief as is the abuse of alcohol’.

Newspaper editorialists and letters to editors routinely discussed the question of the social effects of tea consumption, and these debates largely focused on the figure of the middle-class female who was addicted to tea. Some of these debates drew on British sources: several New Zealand papers reprinted or summarised an 1888 *Lancet* article on the effects of the ‘vices of civilisation’. The article worried that respectable young women were being debased by ‘excessive tea-drinking, sipping eau-de-cologne, and an addiction to sensational novel reading’.

The deliberations of Britain’s ‘Inter-departmental Physical Deterioration Committee’ also identified ‘excessive tea drinking’ as a central factor in the physical and moral decline of certain sections of the British population and a source of ‘national degeneration’, an argument that was picked up by New Zealand newspapers. These critics were particularly concerned about the popularity of Indian teas that supposedly contained more ‘excitants’ than Chinese teas.

Whereas such arguments dwelt on the social consequences of tea drinking, others focused on the physical effects of excessive tea consumption, including its possible links to various forms of cancer. Colonial newspapers, especially those opposed to the claims of temperance reformers and suffragists, carried stories on the dangers of tea drinking and the role of tea in the downfall of middle-class women. These articles, which can be found in the New Zealand press from the 1870s through to the 1920s, reveal the ways in which this South Asian produced commodity had come to be loaded with cultural and political significance.

The significance of tea was also a recurring concern for parliamentarians who struggled over the regulation of the tea trade and the tariffs that could be imposed on this most popular commodity. Tea was central in the heated parliamentary debates over taxes and tariffs that regularly erupted from the 1870s on. In 1895, for example, the economics of tea were fiercely debated when the Liberals attempted to reorganise the nation’s customs regime. The reforms proposed to reduce the tariff on tea by three pence per pound in recognition of the special place of tea in working-class lives. But this was an initiative that effectively targeted a long-standing source of income for the state and would
deprive the Government of £50,000 in duties and was therefore seen to have far-reaching economic and social effects. MPs Duthie and Allen questioned the value of this move, arguing that this was a misguided initiative, especially when new taxes were going to be levied on imported fruit, arguing that fruit was a ‘greater necessity’ than tea. Others argued that a differential tariff on tea should be imposed in order to protect the ‘great many young people employed in packing tea’, suggesting that a higher tariff should remain in place for teas packed outside the colony.

This debate about the tea tariff and who benefited from it rumbled on in Parliament for some time, reflecting the centrality of the tea trade and tea consumption in colonial life. Finally, in 1903, the Seddon Government passed the Preferential and Reciprocal Trade Act, which removed the duties on tea, but only if it was cultivated within the British Empire. This legislation consolidated the public’s strong preference for South Asian teas over tea from China, and Chinese tea was firmly and finally pushed to the margins of colonial food-ways.

These debates are a reminder that South Asian tea was a crucial element of the political economy of the empire. The avid thirsts of Australasian colonists for Ceylon and Indian tea also shaped the economic and political order of the empire. Contemporary observers were aware that the colonisation of Australia and New Zealand, the growth of those colonial populations, and the centrality of tea in their patterns of sociability, were powerful spurs to the tea industries of Ceylon and India. At the same time, colonial commentators argued that the commercial connections to South Asia that were the outcome of the trade were integral to New Zealand’s economic development. Gildroy Griffin, for example, argued in *New Zealand: Her Commerce and Resources* (1886) that ‘[t]he importation of tea into this colony has become a very important trade’. He also suggested that the growth of this trade was an important component of the colony’s economic growth and had made it ‘absolutely necessary to increase its steam service’.

Such arguments reflected the commercial significance of the tea trade and the broader economic influence of South Asia on New Zealand. In 1900, for example, the British-controlled territories of South Asia were the colony’s fourth most significant source of imports, behind the United Kingdom, the Australian colonies and the United States. Products imported from India, Burma, and Ceylon eclipsed the value of those coming into New Zealand from British-controlled territories in the Pacific, were over ten times the value of imports from Canada, and of 22 per cent greater value than all the goods imported from continental Europe (including Russia and Turkey).
If trade with South Asia and the consumption of South Asian commodities were the subject of intermittent debates in colonial New Zealand, South Asian religions were a central reference point in contests over the meaning of empire, the authority of Christianity, and the nature of religion itself. This section focuses on three issues: first, debates over the impact of South Asian cosmology and practices on Pākehā religion; second, New Zealand support for missionary work in India; and third, the role of the missionary movement in shaping public understandings of South Asia.

The central claim is that South Asia loomed large in the spiritual and intellectual lives of Pākehā colonists who, like their counterparts in Europe and North America, saw India as a source of intellectual stimulation and spiritual revivification. While this new ‘Oriental Renaissance’ was a transnational affair that encompassed France, Germany, Britain, North America and Australasia, it found particularly fertile soil in New Zealand, where heterodox religious practices and alternative forms of spirituality enjoyed popularity and power that were unsurpassed in the Anglophone world. As this section makes clear, however, these new religious influences were openly contested as their growing public profile mobilised church leaders and also caused concern amongst the ‘diffusive’ or ‘implicit’ Christians who were a large element in colonial society.

A widespread interest in ‘oriental wisdom’ energised settler debates over cosmology and experiments in devotional practice between the 1870s and the 1920s. Any reading of colonial newspapers from this period reveals the manifold forms through which this enthusiasm was made manifest: teaching of Asia’s great texts and sages, the centrality of India in the comparative mythology, discussions ranging from the value of astrology to the possibilities offered by ‘occult’ knowledge, and the embrace of vegetarianism. The Theosophical Society was the primary institutional site for this kind of engagement with Asia. Edward Toronto Sturdy, the father of New Zealand theosophy, drew inspiration from witnessing Swami Vivekananda debating with Professor Deuseen, a leading German authority on the Upanishads. Sturdy pursued a developing interest in Hinduism and his faith in India as a source of spiritual truths was confirmed when he acquired ‘a very old translation of the Bhagavad Gita made in the time of Warren Hastings’. In 1886 he journeyed to the Theosophical Society’s headquarters in Adyar (in Madras), hoping to study with ‘learned Hindus’, as he believed that ‘in the “Gita” there was teaching I had been seeking for so long’.

Colonial theosophists like Sturdy argued that Indian traditions offered a set of ethical insights and devotional practices that were superior to Protestantism. Lilian Edger, an intellectually adventurous graduate of Canterbury College who
became a prominent figure in Indian theosophy from 1897 to 1938, argued that the authority of the Bible was no stronger than that of other ‘holy books’:

It has also been said many times that all which stands the test of times is truth – and I would point out to you that the Vedas, which was [sic] written as early as 4000 B.C. is still the religious book of Brahminism and having thus stood the test for three times as long as our Gospel narrative may fairly claim to contain some elements of truth.53

Theosophical societies flourished in the late 1880s and 1890s and these institutions built strong connections to the movement’s international networks, networks that were ultimately centred on Adyar (present day Tamil Nadu). The individual branches of the Society organised reading groups, discussion circles, and public lectures as well as giving their members access to library collections and reading rooms. They also coordinated the visits of leading theosophists to New Zealand, including those of the co-founder of the Theosophy Society, Colonel Olcott, and the leading theosophist and proponent of Indian nationalism, Annie Besant. These were great and controversial occasions, subjected to sustained analysis by journalists, preachers, and the urban middle class.54

The claims of theosophists and their challenge to the authority of Protestantism sparked intense debates. Most notably, Dunedin’s Reverend James Neil launched a withering attack on the notion of samsara (the cycle of transmigration) after the death of his own daughter: ‘What is my hope now? That she will be reincarnated in another earth-life and become ... a miserable sinner, an atrocious Turk.’55 Neil’s passionate attacks on notions like samsara and nirvana that were drawn by theosophists from Hindu and Buddhist texts illustrate that theosophy was seen as a real challenge by many Christians, and that sustained engagement with Asian religious traditions was not simply an esoteric exercise but in fact raised fundamental questions about the human condition for Victorian New Zealanders.56

Theosophists and publications such as The Monthly Review saw the scholarly study of Indian religions – often through the developing field of ‘comparative religion’ – as a source of spiritual enlightenment (through analysing ‘ancient wisdom’) and a vehicle to challenge the authority of the Bible.57 They envisaged the creation of a new rational or ‘logical religion’, which would combine ‘Faith, Science, Social Progress in a “threefold” cord’ and facilitate the ‘continued and progressive Evolution’ of New Zealand. This religion would be openly eclectic and syncretistic: ‘a logical religion, a religion that the followers of Christ, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Mahomet and Jesus can combine together in’.58

This synthesising impulse, which reduced Christianity to the same level as all other religions, was rejected by many Christians. James Neil, for example, attacked the newfound interest in the religions of the ‘East’ in his pamphlet Spiritualism and Theosophy Twain Brothers of the Anti-Christ. He described
theosophy as a corrosive social force because it reduced ‘Jesus to the level of man’ and ‘the Bible to the level of other books’. Neil argued that ‘the so-called sacred books of the East called the Vedas’ contained some ‘moral teaching’, but this was overshadowed by ‘silly stuff and sinful teaching’, whereas the Bible was both a source of spiritual truth and the ‘cause of our national greatness’.59 Neil was also concerned that the increased interest in Hinduism arising out of theosophy could be morally dangerous. He argued that while Annie Besant would ‘pour forth a flood of eloquence on the wisdom of the Indian religion’, she ‘kept quiet on its abominations of burning widows ... and of the cruel bestiality of child marriage’ which, he claimed, characterised the moral depravity of Hinduism.60

Other Christians followed Neil’s lead and attacked the ‘otherness’ of ‘Eastern’ religious traditions. Negative readings of Hinduism, which depicted India as a hotbed of immorality where infanticide, polygamy and idol worship flourished, were deployed in the defence of Christianity as an ethical system.61 Neil’s pamphlet expressed the widely held concerns of the Christian community: that this sudden interest in Indian religions amongst ‘progressive’ circles threatened the authority of the Bible and the Protestant churches. It would also promote a new immorality in New Zealand. That this line of argument was forwarded by a figure like Neil – whose involvement in leftist politics, career as a herbalist and chemist, and interest in alternative medical remedies could be read as representative of the social background of many who were drawn to the ‘ancient knowledges’ of the East – reveals the complexity of colonial New Zealand’s intellectual and religious landscape.62

Most colonial Christians did not identify India as a source of spiritual renewal; rather they saw it as an ‘abode of darkness’, a land that was waiting for the ‘Good News’ and that cried out for the social and spiritual uplift that were seen as the inevitable outcome of committed evangelisation. From the 1870s, New Zealanders were actively involved in South Asian missionary work, as ordained missionaries, teachers, doctors, nurses, missionary administrators, fund-raisers, and financial supporters. While the missionary movement’s relationship to imperial policy and the social values that underpinned industrial capitalism remain fiercely contested, there is strong evidence that suggests missionary activity was an important aspect of New Zealanders’ participation in imperial enterprise, including in British India. Hugh Morrison has observed that the British Empire ‘provided a physical and ideological framework’ for settler Christians who were devoted to advancing Christianity’s global reach and that ‘India, in particular, was viewed in terms of a trusteeship, the spiritual welfare of which was partly the responsibility of New Zealanders as empire citizens’.63

By the close of the nineteenth century, women were especially prominent as supporters of missionary activity and as active agents in the mission field. Recent work on women’s involvement in New Zealand missionary work in India
has highlighted the particular ways in which gender encoded understandings of the colony’s relations with India: New Zealand women were joined to their Indian counterparts by ‘imperial sisterhood’, as these sisters had been cast down by Indian society and required the protection and tutelage that their Christian sisters in New Zealand could offer.\(^{64}\)

Some of the connections between missionary work and settler attachments to the imperial project were laid bare in a lengthy *Evening Post* article published in 1909.\(^{65}\) This article examined social and political change in South Asia, drawing on a detailed interview of W. H. George, a New Zealand businessman who had travelled extensively throughout India. George’s travels allowed the *Post* to reassure its readers of both the stability of British India and the benefits attendant to Britain’s colonial authority: ‘The bulk of the people Mr. George found to be satisfied with British rule, recognising that under no other control would they have such opportunities for a peaceful livelihood.’ George stressed the particularly positive outlook of Christian missionaries and the constructive work they were undertaking. While George had encountered ‘many pessimists on the future of India’ amongst the whites resident in India, such scepticism of Indian capacity was not to be found within the missionary community, despite the slow progress of their work. George himself identified the ‘Hindu character’ as a substantial barrier to any improving scheme: ‘The Hindu character was entirely unreliable. There was practically no such thing as truth among them.’ Hindu corruption only threw the morality and piety of missionaries into high relief. George highlighted the good works of a New Zealand missionary, John Takle, whose incorruptibility gained him great esteem and respect amongst the Indian community in which he worked.

This type of report reminds us that the missionary movement played a central role in shaping New Zealanders’ perceptions of other cultures and contemporary developments on the global stage. Missionary work was a key concern in popular Christian magazines and newspapers and it was also widely reported upon within colonial daily and weekly newspapers. These reports connected New Zealanders to the efforts of their fellow citizens in Indian mission fields and informed them about the progress of British and Indian religious reformers. Pandita Ramabai’s work with widows, children, and women, for example, was discussed at great length in papers such as the *Otago Witness*.\(^{66}\)

Missionaries were themselves powerful conduits for knowledge and cross-cultural interpretation. A clear example of this was John Takle, the figure at the heart of the *Evening Post* story. He served under the auspices of the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society in Bengal between 1896 and 1922. Takle gained an international reputation as an influential evangelical commentator on Islam, but also shared his very particular understandings of South Asian society with New Zealand audiences through lecture tours. During a trip home to New Zealand
in 1902–3 to recover from illness, Takle gave a lecture on the ‘Abominations of Hinduism’ in Wanganui.67 ‘His object was threefold: (1) To disabuse the minds of those who thought those religions stood in worthy relation to Christianity; (2) to give some idea of the religion of the Hindus; (3) to confirm their Christian faith.’ Takle’s aspiration was to challenge the authority of the kind of textual Orientalism associated with Max Müller. As the Wanganui Herald reported, ‘so much had been written and said about the glories of the sacred books that he thought it was time something was said by one who lived in India’.68 The versions of Hindu texts circulating in the West, Takle argued, were ‘bowdlerised editions’, which painted a positive image of Hinduism because they omitted ‘the monstrous deities, the monstrous philosophies, the monstrous theologies’. Takle believed that there were ‘rays of truth’ embedded within Hinduism, but in these were the ‘vestiges of traditions and primitive revelations handed down from the childhood of the race’. He depicted contemporary Hinduism as a corrupt and degenerate distortion of the original insights of the Vedic faith and attacked the positive readings of Buddhism that were popular in some circles. Takle suggested that Sir Edwin Arnold’s positive assessment of Buddhism in The Light of Asia was fundamentally misleading: Buddhism’s models for social organisation were simply the product of the changing sexual appetites of Gautama Buddha. As a young man, ‘Takle argued, Gautama was committed to ‘a life of sensuality’. His retreat from the world of the flesh did not reflect any great moral or spiritual insights, but rather his exhaustion. Takle told his Wanganui audience that Buddha ‘did not retire to his asceticism until he had become an “exhausted voluptuary”’. While Takle suggested that Islam was superior to both Buddhism and Hinduism (‘the most pernicious system of religion ever known’), it was not a faith that elevated converts as, Takle argued, it ‘catered to all the animal in man’.69 After leaving Wanganui, Takle travelled to New Plymouth where he put forth a similar set of arguments, again claiming that Hinduism’s ‘abominable idolatry gave the lie direct to the Holy character of God’.70

These tense exchanges over the nature of religion intersected with a wider set of debates within the colony over the connections between cultural difference and political rights. Jacqueline Leckie’s pioneering work on the White New Zealand Defence League and anti-Indian racism together with more recent essays by Barbara Brookes, Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse have illuminated the connections between anxieties over the effects of Asian migration and projects of social reform and nation-building.71 This final section of the chapter offers a reading of these debates that emphasises the ways in which these national debates over race and citizenship were the product of the empire’s broader cultural
terrain being (re)racialised, and how these conflicts within New Zealand were at least in part a response to the growing ability of South Asians to contest the inequalities of the imperial order.

The following discussion places heavy emphasis on print culture. Newspapers were central instruments in shaping political discourse and were at the heart of intellectual and political practice within the colony. They were both important lenses through which colonials apprehended the world, and forums for the shaping and contestation of political rights and allegiances. Moreover, newspapers functioned as intellectual distribution points that collated local news while also presenting a selective distillation of international news culled from wire services, British papers, and extensive networks of correspondents.72

The starting point for the argument here is the insistence that state practice, political imaginations, and public debate within any individual colony were never fully self-sufficient, nor wholly independent from the larger imperial political formation. More precisely, both colonial governance and popular politics were energised by what might be thought of as sets of ‘horizontal’ political connections, that is, colony-to-colony relationships which operated in a fashion that was relatively unmediated by the imperial metropole. The exact configuration of these kinds of relationships varied for each colony and also shifted markedly over time but, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, some important debates and flows of ideas connected New Zealand to India (as well as to other colonies like Canada and the Australian and Anglophone colonies of Southern Africa). As we shall see, these kinds of connections did not necessarily suggest political equivalence, equality or compatibility between colonies, but rather reflected the integrative work of imperial media networks, the internationalisation of state practices, and the long-standing practice of the adoption and adaptation of legislation between colonies.

Important horizontal connections existed between colonies that were as demographically and politically different as India and New Zealand. As Chapter Eight shows, the colonies were firmly linked during the anxious imperial politics of the 1860s when British sovereignty appeared fragile in the wake of a series of rebellions and wars across the empire. Indeed, the colonial Government in New Zealand drew upon military support from British India to shore up its authority with two regiments of troops, who were about to be sent back to Britain from India, being deployed to New Zealand in 1863.73 In turn, some commentators in British India looked to New Zealand for lessons in how to manage indigenous dissent and open rebellion. The *Bombay Gazette*, for example, presented its readers with a discussion of race relations under the headline ‘A Lesson from New Zealand’ and the *Gazette* suggested the cooperation between the settlers and ‘friendly’ Māori was a potent model for colonial warfare that could be productively deployed throughout the British Empire.74
During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colonial commentators were very aware of the complex forms of interdependence that connected the empire into a large, but frequently fraught and fractious, political landscape. They were particularly aware of India’s political centrality in the empire as a whole and worried about the implications of this. Even local newspaper readers were encouraged to reflect on this situation. In 1900, an unattributed article in the *Waimate Daily Advertiser* assessed ‘the peril on the Indian frontier’. The *Advertiser* told its readers that Britain’s position in India was ‘in a sense stronger than it was twenty years ago; but that of Russia is much more threatening. Her railways enable her now to mass tens of thousands of men at Kushk within striking distance of Herat.’ Worried that Britain had ‘played a gambler’s game of bluff’ in its defence of India, the *Advertiser* offered a series of suggestions for shoring up Britain’s interest in South and Central Asia, including improving frontier communications and doubling the number of British officers serving with native troops and enacting a series of reforms that would ‘entirely reorganise the native army’. The relevance of all of this may have initially seemed distant and abstract to the Pākehā settlers of South Canterbury, but the article concluded by suggesting that if Russia advanced into India, it would be necessary to ‘throw a mass of Imperial troops into India’ and this would ‘mean money, and plenty of it’. India’s defence was a responsibility that had profound economic consequences for the empire as a whole. This was just one of many stories that the *Advertiser* carried during 1899 and 1900 which focused on the centrality of India in imperial military culture and its pivotal role in Britain’s strategic position on the global stage. Written against the backdrop of the South African war and anxieties over India’s northwest frontier, this reportage reveals the settler’s very strong sense of vulnerabilities of the empire and the extent to which a small dominion like New Zealand was affected by developments in major imperial centres like India.

Colonial editors were concerned with imperial defence and the implications of international conflicts for New Zealand, but newspapers produced in rural towns, provincial centres and the major cities also offered lengthy reports and editorial comments on the rise of anti-colonial nationalist movements, especially in India. From its foundation in 1885 through to the winning of independence in 1947, the Indian National Congress, its policies, personalities, and struggles were reported on at great length. New Zealand newspapers repeatedly reported on Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghose, Surendranath Banerjea, Dadabhai Naoroji, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and the Indian nationalist vocabulary—*swaraj* (self-rule), *swadeshi* (of one’s own country), *satyagraha* (truth force) and *ahimsa* (non-violence)—were also introduced to New Zealand readers. This kind of reportage underlined the competing agendas and visions of the nationalist movement, the growing popular support that such leaders could
tap, and the ability of Indians to formulate and articulate a range of critiques of British colonial rule.

Such understandings of Indian politics were not simply culled from wire services or filtered through the lenses of British newspapers. The 1909 Evening Post article mentioned earlier, ‘Swadeshi and Other Things’, which drew on an eyewitness account from a New Zealand businessman, W.H. George, reported that the conflicts unleashed by the Partition of Bengal in 1905 had largely abated and that the swadeshi movement itself was less disruptive of life in the bazaars.77

But most settlers – who were themselves cognisant of the conflicts borne out of the powerful mix of cultural difference, economic competition, and political inequality that dictated the basic contours of the imperial order – realised that such claims were open to dispute. They were also increasingly aware that the challenges to British rule in India had broad implications for the ways in which the empire as a whole operated and how cultural difference was managed. In light of these anxieties, the editors of the Evening Post offered a set of critical reflections on the development of swadeshi, the growth of Indian nationalism, and the implication of these developments for New Zealand. The Post suggested that the heart of the swadeshi movement had traditionally been built around ‘inflammatory orations’, but it had now evolved into a sophisticated political instrument: swadeshi was an ‘avowed, well-organised, and persistent attempt to boycott and destroy British trade in India’. The Post offered some grudging admiration for the success of the movement, framing it as the product of both British education and the economic advantages to the low wages paid to Indian workers, while damning the character of Indians. It highlighted what it saw as the pernicious qualities of this nationalist innovation:

The spread of education, especially of technical training, had prepared the native craftsmen to supplant the English engineer, whom he had long been understudying. The methods of European work are well known to them; the markets of this world are open to them, the wealth of India lies not in European, but in native hands; the native worker can live for one-fifth of the cost of the Englishman and to him the depressing influences of the climate has no drawbacks. When to these natural and economic advantages, are added the sentiment of national co-operation on political lines, the movement becomes an irresistible [sic] one. It is already widespread in its operations, and from the very nature of things permanent in its duration. It is a movement which appeals alike to the cupidity and vanity of the Asiatic.78

The Evening Post underlined the economic threat posed by this political movement:
The native labourer thinks he is fortunate, in earning 8d to 10d a day for ten hours’ work, and the cotton being locally grown, is thereby cheaper in first cost to the Indian manufacturer. The same remarks apply with equal force to the manufacture of boots and shoes. Hides are plentiful and labour cheap, hence an excellent pair of boots can be purchased for 4s to 5s; and it must be only a question of time before these products of black labour find their outlet in the Australasian colonies. The black man may be excluded from the colony, but his wares will come. In any scheme of intercolonial free trade, the industrial development of India must be borne in mind with its immense natural resources, and illimitable supply of cheap labour, now organised, and backed by ample capital.79

These anxieties over the power of the Indian economy and ways in which the existence of cheap ‘black’ labour in India would ultimately affect the larger imperial economic system shaped another related set of debates within colonial New Zealand about the relationships within the empire, cultural difference, and citizenship. Whereas the Evening Post was worried about the consequences of ‘intercolonial free trade’, a more urgent and certainly more consistent set of fears were expressed in debates over Indian migration and the place of South Asians within New Zealand society.

Here it is worth pausing for a moment to reflect on how New Zealand historians have thought about cultural difference. Race is the central organising category in our national historiography and it has been common to view the history of race (and cultural difference more generally) in New Zealand through the lens of prejudice, offering a reading of race and racism as attitudinal.80 However, it is more useful to think about racial categories in New Zealand as not simply the product of the ‘Pākehā mind’, but rather to read the production and contestation of difference as part of a broader set of processes through which social identification and political community were defined. The consolidation of both race and religion as meaningful cultural constructs and social categories was the outcome of a set of quite uneven, but nevertheless potent, global forces during the nineteenth century. The status of both race and religion as seemingly universal categories by 1900 were connected to the economic changes enacted by capitalism’s global reach, the aggressive territorial aggrandisement of European empires and, perhaps most importantly, the consolidation of the nation state.81

Cultural difference encoded understandings of social organisation and political allegiance in colonial New Zealand. In our particular context, the gradual development of the nation state in New Zealand was enabled and shaped by two fundamental (and interrelated) forces that formed the modern world: first, aggressive empire-building in order to extend sovereignty and to open up new resources and markets for exploitation and, second, the unprecedented
movement of peoples over long distances. New Zealand historiography has explored the first of these issues in considerable depth, but questions of mobility and migration have received less attention and have largely been imagined with particular reference to population flows from Anglo-Celtic northern Europe. Adam McKeown has reminded us, however, that the century following the 1840s was marked by extensive and widespread mobility of human populations and that the migratory flows of people from India and southern China rivalled that of Europeans. The massive outflow of indentured labours from Indian port cities and the growth of Tamil, Gujarati, Sindhi, and Punjabi diasporic communities (as well as the expansion of Chinese merchant and labour networks) reshaped the demographic, economic, cultural and political map of the world, especially in Southeast Asia, the Pacific and the western part of the Americas.

Waves of migrating movement were a key spur to the extension of state power over the mobility of populations, and were fundamental in shaping new ideas about the nature and primacy of nationality. Radhika Mongia has made the important observation that the ‘notion of a nation as a territorially and demographically circumscribed entity’ took shape within the particular context of ‘raced-migration’, or the movement of non-European peoples to Europe and its settler colonies. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British settler colonies and the United States produced a raft of legislation and new state practices that produced new definitions of citizenship and political rights, innovations that underscored the powerful linkages and symmetries between racial boundaries and visions of nationhood.

These processes were at the heart of New Zealand politics and intellectual life from the 1880s on. As we have seen in Chapter Two, William Pember Reeves suggested that New Zealand’s pioneering and progressive social reforms began with 1881 legislation that restricted the movement of Asians into New Zealand. Reeves was a colossal figure in the colony’s life, an influential advocate of women’s rights and compulsory industrial arbitration, a noted historian and poet, and the colony’s leading freethinker. Yet, at the same time, he was also a central figure in the moulding of an exclusionary immigration regime: a complex tangle of legislation that was primarily aimed at excluding people of Chinese origin, but which also significantly restricted the rights of South Asians.

Reeves’s prodigious work as a writer and politician helped establish the central scripts of New Zealand nationality. He identified the settlers’ encounters with Māori as constitutive of a unique bi-racial national identity and stressed that the power of enlightened ‘social reform’ had installed a progressive spirit at the heart of this fledgling national community. These arguments were heavily racialised, as Reeves drew a series of oppositions not between Māori and settler, but between sojourner and settler, as politicians worked feverishly to prevent a ‘flood’ of ‘Mongolians’ and ‘Hindoos’ from swamping Māori and Pākehā alike.
While Reeves’s poetry offered eloquent reflections on the nature of colonial life and the transformations enacted by the imperial project, as a politician he deployed the bluntest language of race. When addressing the Workers’ Union Conference at Temuka in 1895 he proclaimed, ‘New Zealand was a white man’s country, and a white man’s country it ought always to be’.

Even though Reeves was well aware that South Asians enjoyed full rights as British subjects, he nevertheless identified Indians as part of a broad and generalised threat to progressive settler culture. He contended that societies that had admitted Indians and other ‘coloured peoples’ were riven by ‘race-fissures’, the ‘babel of tongues’ that resulted from non-white migration, and had been overrun by ‘dark faces’.

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that ‘Undesirable Immigrants’ was a common headline in colonial newspapers between the late 1880s and 1930s. This phrase recorded the state’s attempt to control the demographic basis of the nation, but it also reflected the ways in which racial and religious difference had encoded the popular understandings of nationality as well. While this headline did occasionally focus on criminals and the mentally ill, overwhelmingly it reflected a concern with the movements of South Asians and Chinese. Occasionally these threats could be merged together to create an image of a nation imperilled. In 1895, his constituents in Hokitika challenged Premier Richard Seddon over the Undesirable Immigrants Bill. In defending the Bill against their criticisms (which largely focused on a provision that required migrants to carry with them at least £20), Seddon highlighted the multiple demographic hazards that endangered New Zealand. The legislation responded to threat of ‘the Asiatick hawkers, who were a danger and nuisance to the country’. But it was also a necessary measure because there were proposals circulating that would make New Zealand ‘the dumping ground of the slums of London’ and ‘fill the country with the outcast Jews driven from Russia’.

Indians were thus routinely invoked as imperilling the nation and journalists, editors, and politicians urged vigilance in the face of the ‘threat’ that they posed. In 1914, under the headline ‘Hindu Invasion’, an anonymous correspondent for the *Evening Post* wrote a lengthy account of the consequences of Asian migration across the Pacific, focusing on the impact of Indians in Vancouver and Fiji. His opinion piece began: ‘Keep New Zealand white. Would that we in Canada had done so. Too late, it seems, we now realise that we have lost the glorious heritage that was once ours.’ These words, attributed to a ‘prominent Vancouver citizen’, opened a detailed report on the politics of migration in British Columbia. The Post’s readers were told:

Canada – British Columbia in particular – is up against a serious problem in connection with alien immigration. Already there are quite a number of Hindus in the State. Many of them are working in lumber camps in the country,
and in Vancouver itself there is quite a colony of them. They work in the huge lumber yards which flank the shores of the harbour, and – this is where it hits the whites – they are content to work for about a dollar and a-quarter a day. Thousands of Europeans to-day are pacing the streets of Vancouver, and other cities vainly looking for work, and many of them have been crowded out of their positions by the employers’ preference for the cut-rate Hindu. The black alien waxes sleek on a remuneration which to the white does not represent a living wage. As in the case of the Oriental, the Hindu’s standard of living is very low. In one lumber company’s yard at Vancouver seventy Hindus, employees of the firm, are herded together in a rambling shack, scarcely fit for ‘animals to live in’.92

This argument drew on long-standing fears of the dangers of labour competition from non-white workers and echoed well-established arguments made in North America, Australia, and Britain itself that the presence of Asians would undermine the interests of the white working-class. But what is striking about the Post’s piece is the way in which it played on the supposed variations in cultural capacity within South Asian communities on the basis of regional origin and caste to underscore the particular threat posed by Punjabi migration. Where many journalists, labour leaders, and politicians argued against migration from India on the basis of cultural difference, stressing the unassimilable nature of Indians, the writer for the Post suggested that the less different Indian groups were, the greater threat they posed. He argued that British Columbia faced a profound difficulty because most of its South Asian populations had their roots in the sophisticated communities of north India: ‘The average Hindu located in Vancouver is of a high type. Punjabis predominate. Unlike the lower caste Hindus and other aliens, many of them – one only has to view them in the street to confirm this impression – are intellectual men, and of fine physique.’93 Lacking neither mental agility nor physical prowess, the Post predicted that these Indians would quickly rise to power and influence:

Gifted with an ox-like patience, the Hindu in Vancouver, backed with the knowledge that he is a British subject, is merely beating time to what he considers the yoke of the white man’s oppression. Once the law declares on his side he will come boldly into society and freely assert his rights. He will not be treated like a dog, as many of his fellows undoubtedly are at present. He will amass wealth – he has a national propensity for this – will acquire land, enter into business, and seek, and obtain, employment in professions and trades as well as in the ranks of unskilled labour.94

The Post contended that the rapid advance of ‘Hindus’ was even clearer in Fiji where the migrants were from communities of lower status. These indentured
labourers had quickly set aside their ‘humble capacity of a coolie’ to become landowners, traders and retailers, allowing them to quickly assert their control over the commercial life of Suva. The dangers posed by South Asian migrants were expressed most vividly in cartoons that underscored the connections between ‘otherness’ and sexuality. ‘Hindoos’ were regularly imagined by settler cartoonists as a dark and unassimilable threat to the nation; a threat that had a strong sexual component. A 1920 cartoon from the New Zealand Observer entitled ‘Asiatick Influence’ imagined Asian migration in the form of an ominous turbaned shadow lurking over a colonial cityscape; this ‘Hindoo’ figure was dark and menacing, its shadowy form and elongated fingers conjured up associations with the sexual menace of vampirism. This kind of image reflected a tendency to imagine the nation in gendered terms: the colony was imagined as a female, vulnerable to the threats posed by alien outsiders, an image that played on deep-seated imperial anxieties over the sexual vulnerability of white women. Such images communicate the power of sexuality as a vehicle for articulating cultural difference, but also that nations are ultimately exclusionary collectives whose coherence rests on the inscription of community boundaries. In early twentieth-century New Zealand, Asians were how the ultimate boundaries of nationality were set, as they represented the points beyond which ideas of cultural and political community would not stretch.

Despite rhetoric that stressed the fundamental equality of all imperial citizens, it was very clear by the 1920s that South Asians occupied a position within the empire that was (to borrow from Hugh Tinker) ‘separate and unequal’. Colonial states like New Zealand worked hard to extend and define their powers and exercising control over immigration was a powerful way for colonial politicians to enlarge the power of the local state apparatus. At the same time, immigration policy was a key instrument – both in real demographic and in symbolic/cultural terms – for the definition of the national imaginary.

In the period that this chapter has explored, South Asians were consistently identified as a challenge to the political authority of the colonial state and as a very real threat to the national community. These discourses on nationality were framed in starkly exclusionary language, yet they were remarkably supple. Editors, cartoonists, social reformers and parliamentarians could bend them in order to stress the fundamental cultural difference between Indians and New Zealanders, to emphasise the cultural sophistication of Indians in order to invoke fears about the political stability of the empire, to underscore the challenge that Indian goods and labour posed to the future of New Zealand’s economy, and to remind ‘white’ New Zealanders of the dangers posed by miscegenation and the
sexual threat that migrants from the ‘Orient’ posed. These arguments were an important feature of the colony’s cultural landscape, as they played a crucial role in defining the qualities that were seen as integral to citizenship and in inscribing the boundaries of the political community.

One of the great ironies and contradictions of the imperial order was that although Indians were central in delimiting the boundaries of the colonial nation state, ideas about India and Indian-ness were woven through the fabric of colonial culture. Even though there was never a large number of South Asians in the colony, India was a pivotal reference point in colonial intellectual culture. It was woven through local debates over the meaning of empire, the responsibility of colonials to support missionary work, the authority of Christianity, and the claims of new heterodox religious movements. The discussion of the history of tea in this chapter has also shown that connections to South Asia were a crucial element in colonial food-ways and the culture of consumption. Taking the history of consumption seriously opens up new ways to think about the connections between different colonies and focuses our attention on those aspects of everyday life that were important in community building and the articulation of social taste and discernment.

In traversing a range of domains – the economic, the cultural, the religious, and the political – this chapter has highlighted both the important role that India played in the development of New Zealand between the 1870s and 1920s, and the contradictions and contestations that arose out of the connections between the two colonies. Taking seriously the kind of evidence presented here requires historians to think about new ways of framing the histories of these islands and the peoples that have settled here (both briefly and permanently).98 These new histories must be attentive to both the constructed nature of national boundaries and their porousness; they must balance an awareness of cultural engagement as well as directly confront histories of exclusion; and they should grapple with the uneven nature of the processes in space, time, and social location. Such an undertaking is a challenging venture, but it is a pressing project and one that requires a willingness to examine new questions, utilise neglected sources, and to reimagine what New Zealand history might be.
Understandings of cultural difference shift in time and place. They are made and remade: shifts in economic organisation, influxes of population, new religious ideas, and political upheavals can transform the ways in which particular communities define themselves and how they understand strangers or foreigners. This chapter explores how ideas about cultural difference developed in southern New Zealand during the nineteenth century. Its particular focus is a sailor of South Asian origin who jumped ship off the Otago coast in 1814. He was named ‘Te Anu’ by Kāi Tahu Whānui, the Māori iwi (tribe) that exercised mana (authority) over the region. In reflecting upon Te Anu's life in New Zealand, including his incorporation into Kāi Tahu through marriage, this chapter highlights the limits that archives impose on historians. Reconstructing cross-cultural perceptions during early contact is difficult as there are no written records from Kāi Tahu observers at the time that neatly record how they made sense of outsiders. After exploring Te Anu's ambiguous position in Kāi Tahu history, the final section of the chapter uses another South Asian man, Edward Peters, to highlight how colonisation ultimately marginalised Kāi Tahu ways of thinking about belonging and community.

Where Kāi Tahu definitions of community were structured by the primacy of genealogy, colonial culture often prioritised religion, race and nationality as the key matrices that defined an individual's capacity, character, and political status. But, as the chapter makes clear, mobile individuals like Te Anu, who travelled across the uneven cultural terrain of Britain's global empire in the early nineteenth century, moved in and out of very specific cultural orders and found themselves occupying very different social positions in each imperial location. Even as British ethnologists were increasingly ordering knowledge about cultural difference and the category of race was gaining greater currency across the empire as a whole, substantial and important variations in conceptualisations of cultural identification on the ground in specific colonial locations remained the norm.

Within New Zealand historiography it has been customary to understand both colonial social relations and the broad pattern of national history as being defined by the encounter between Māori and Pākehā. Historians have fashioned
a genealogy of the bicultural nation, where the distinctiveness of New Zealand is located in the relationship between the tangata whenua (people of the land), who came to define themselves as Māori, and European colonists, who with time have increasingly seen themselves as Pākehā. This is a striking vision of the national past. Whereas most national histories narrate the development of a homogeneous national culture rooted in a common language or some unified national character, these works suggested that national identity in New Zealand was produced out of the interaction between two distinct peoples, Māori and Pākehā, and that these identities continue to shape ‘New Zealand identity’.1

Of course, the appellations ‘Māori’ and ‘Pākehā’ implicitly convey a dichotomised understanding of the past. As a noun ‘māori’ refers to things that are ‘normal’ or ‘ordinary’, but as the collective noun ‘Māori’ for the tangata whenua, it underscored the fundamental difference of New Zealand’s first Polynesian settlers from the strange newcomers, as well as stressing the affinities that were seen to be common to previously disparate hapū (subtribes) and iwi (tribes). Conversely, ‘Pākehā’ was derived from ‘pakepakeha’, the term that some tangata whenua applied to the visitors who arrived from Europe in 1769 on HMS Endeavour: ‘pakepakeha’ were fairy folk. This use of this supernatural term for the newcomers to the shores of Te Ika a Maui (the North Island of New Zealand) emphasised that their appearance, ways of talking and acting, and technology were surprising, alien, fundamentally different.2 By the 1810s it seems that a significant number of tangata whenua were beginning to think of themselves as being Māori as well as belonging to whānau (family), hapū and iwi. While the term ‘Pākehā’ entered into currency around the same time, its history as an identifier has been even more fraught and it was really only in the 1970s and 1980s that a significant number of New Zealanders of European descent adopted the term as a self-identification.3 Nevertheless, these terms have structured the writing of New Zealand’s history by academics for the last four decades and they carry a tremendous analytical burden. Yet, as Erik Olssen pointed out almost two decades ago, the history and limitations of these identities have not been fully explored.4 In fact, even the most historically dynamic accounts of identity formation such as Belich’s Making Peoples invest ‘Māori’, and especially ‘Pākehā’, with a cultural authority and teleological certainty that they never possessed during the nineteenth century.

The development of the Māori-Pākehā dyad is not the primary concern of this chapter. Rather, it attempts to open out an understanding of the production and ordering of cultural difference during New Zealand’s incorporation into the British Empire, by examining how individuals who were neither European or tangata whenua were understood. In many ways, this approach complements recent work by historians that has both rematerialised the longevity of Asia’s influences on the making of culture in New Zealand and the ways in which Asian migration generated important debates over race, nation, and citizenship.5
TE ANU’S STORY

focusing on men of South Asian origins, this chapter reminds us that racialisation helped determine the standing of non-European migrants as well as shaping the identifications and experiences of tangata whenua and newcomers from Europe. Examining the history of these in-between groups adds depth to our understanding of racialising processes. It also significantly reveals the ways in which historical writing ordered around clearly demarcated Māori and Pākehā identities masks the complexities and ambivalences that were a basic condition of cross-cultural encounters in the polyglot, multi-ethnic, and culturally confused world at the most distant edge of Britain’s vast empire.

‘Te Anu’ is a shadowy individual who appears briefly and elliptically in the archives. Beyond this name given to him by Kāi Tahu, we know little about this man with any certainty. We do not know his original name, birthplace, age, nor is there any real evidence that suggests what community of faith he belonged to, what his mother tongue was, or, if he was a Hindu, what his caste affiliations were. In other words, we have scant biographical scaffolding for this man and we lack almost all of the information that historians or anthropologists of South Asia use to locate individuals within the contours of the social order.

The strongest clues to his life story come from the ethnographer and historian Herries Beattie, who assembled an extensive archive of narratives relating to Kāi Tahu cultural practices and historical knowledge. Several of Beattie’s informants told him about a man named Te Anu who had lived in the Foveaux Strait region in the far south of New Zealand’s South Island. In a 1931 newspaper article, Beattie summarised what his informants had told him about this man: ‘He was not a Maori, having been a takata-pora (sailor) on one of the sealing ships, and there is some slight doubt as to his nationality. One of my informants considered he was a kanaka, another that he was a lascar from Calcutta, while another said he was fairer than most Maoris, and was probably a Hindu.’ While there was no consensus amongst Beattie’s informants about Te Anu’s origins, they were more confident about one key point: that he had been effectively incorporated into their world. Beattie noted that Te Anu had been ‘tattooed by his new friends ... and was provided with a wife, and had a son called George Turi, but there are now no descendents of his left’. One of the informants that Beattie drew upon for this account was Tame Parata, the influential Kāi Tahu leader and parliamentarian. Before his death in 1917 Parata told Beattie about Te Anu, recounting a narrative from his ancestor Te Matahaere about Te Anu and telling Beattie that he could remember Te Anu living at Colac Bay and giving Beattie the name of Te Anu’s son.

Later in the chapter we will return to Parata’s account, using it to explore
how Kāi Tahu made sense of cultural difference. But before we examine in what ways Te Anu might have been conceived by Kāi Tahu and, in particular, whether he might have been racialised, it is possible to use archival evidence to supplement the narratives that Beattie collected about Te Anu. Even if these materials do not allow us to learn a great deal about Te Anu’s background or his character, they do make the forces that brought him to southern New Zealand very clear. In the ships’ logs, newspaper reports, and narratives of exploration that recorded early cross-cultural contact in southern New Zealand, the name ‘Te Anu’ does not figure. Instead, this man appears as a nameless ‘lascar’ who jumped ship from the sealing vessel Matilda in 1813 or 1814.

The Matilda travelled the commercial routes of the southern Pacific, which had been opened up by the new wave of British empire-building that developed as Britain’s Atlantic empire was plunged into crisis by the revolutionary war in the American colonies. India and Australia became two key hubs in an expansive trading complex that linked the Pacific and Indian Oceans as British imperial aspirations ‘swung to the east’ in the late eighteenth century. Following the foundation of the colony of New South Wales in 1788, the southern Pacific became an important sphere for British commercial interests and colonial merchants based in Port Jackson (Sydney) drew commodities from the Pacific into this imperial trading system, while simultaneously bringing significant flows of goods from entrepôts in India and China into Australasia. Even though southern New Zealand was not formally incorporated into the British Empire until 1840 and the systematic colonisation of Otago did not begin until 1848, from the 1790s it had became an important frontier of these imperial commercial networks. The southern parts of Te Wai Pounamu (‘The Greenstone Waters’: New Zealand’s South Island) were quickly woven into the shipping routes and markets that made up what James Belich has termed the ‘Tasman World’ and its coastlines became an important extractive frontier. Sealskins were valuable commodities in China as well as Britain and they helped colonial merchants pay for the large quantity of Asian commodities they purchased. The coasts of Murihiku – the region south of the Waitaki river – also furnished the shipping companies, sealing and whaling magnates, and Port Jackson merchants with timber, flax, pork and potatoes to supplement the cargoes of ships plying the Tasman, which enhanced the profitability of sealing and whaling. But even as Murihiku provided merchants with a means of squaring their terms of trade in Asia, the sealers and early whalers who worked the Murihiku coast were themselves avid consumers of Asian commodities, especially Bengal rum and Chinese tea.

Some of the ships that worked these routes were crewed by ‘lascars’. ‘Lascar’ was a term initially applied to the locally recruited camp-followers, regimental servants, and low status labourers connected to the British East India Company’s armies, but it was more commonly used from the late seventeenth century to
designate South Asian maritime workers. Important work in South Asian military and social history has revealed the ways in which labour recruitment produced new ways of defining social belonging and generated new forms of collective identification. The early modern military market, for example, shaped the emergence of ‘Rajput’ as a potent signifier of military prowess that operated throughout South Asia. There is also significant evidence to suggest that military recruitment and regimental discipline extended and regularised understandings of both Sikh and Gurkha identity under colonial rule in the late nineteenth century. All of these categories marked off certain individuals (and the larger collectives they were believed to belong to) from other South Asian groups: in other words, these categories were invested with meaning through their difference from other specific South Asian groups or from South Asians more generally.

Being a lascar was not an hereditary form of identification and lascars could be from a variety of religious, regional, linguistic and caste backgrounds: just as the early modern military labour market in South Asia produced new forms of social identification, recruitment into maritime labour also produced a new form of social identification. In other words, no lascars were born, all were made. While lascars were also produced by the recruitment of maritime labour, this category was primarily deployed in opposition to Europeans, especially European sailors, rather than against other South Asian groups. In a very real way, the concept of a lascar was the outcome of growing European involvement in the commercial world of the Indian Ocean and the calcification of European imperial regimes in that region. The qualities of lascars were measured against British sailors in travel narratives, newspaper reportage, political debates and ethnographic narration. Therefore ‘lascar’ was an imperial identity, an identification that highlighted the particularities of a collective within the larger terrain of the imperial social formation, and a category that was often implicitly and explicitly defined against whiteness.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the term lascar routinely referred to maritime labour gangs who were hired collectively to work on European-run ships in the Indian Ocean and further afield. Typically these workers were recruited by a ‘serang’ (headman, essentially a labour contractor), who functioned as the key intermediary in the Indian Ocean labour market. While European captains resented the ability of the serangs to negotiate what they saw as high wages for lascars, these South Asian sailors were typically paid about half the wages of European sailors and less than free black sailors: they were also significantly cheaper to provide for than whites. There is evidence to suggest that they remained a relatively vulnerable group of workers, disliked by their European competitors and subject to violence and ill-treatment onboard ship.

It seems that the hardships of shipboard life were the immediate spur to Te Anu’s settling amongst Kāi Tahu. In late 1813 and early 1814, Te Anu worked the
southern coast of New Zealand as a crewman on the brig *Matilda*. Under the command of Captain Samuel Fowler, the *Matilda* sailed from Port Jackson to Hobart then to southern New Zealand to collect sealskins to carry on its voyage to Tahiti and then onto its ultimate destination of Canton.18 The crew aboard was largely made up of lascars. According to the *Sydney Gazette*, initially eighteen lascars manned the *Matilda* along with two Europeans, although at least one other European, Robert Brown, joined the vessel while it was in southern New Zealand.19 While the *Matilda* was off the coast, supplies ran low and according to Samuel Fowler’s own account in the *Sydney Gazette* the ‘lascars were emaciated by fatigues they had before been unaccustomed to; and being for a length of time without vegetables, or fresh provisions; having then but a few gallons of water left’.20 Fowler suggested that this hardship was the reason for the desertion of six lascars who stole a ship’s boat, but Jules de Blosseville, who visited New Zealand in 1824 with J. L. Duperrey on the *Coquille*, suggested that these men jumped ship because of their ‘ill-treatment’ (*mauvais traitement*).21 Fowler dispatched Robert Brown and a crew of six men to pursue these ‘deserters’. Neither group fared well. It seems that three of the six deserters were killed and eaten by a Kāi Tahu group, perhaps somewhere near Bluff.22 The Wesleyan missionary Charles Creed later collected a Kāi Tahu narrative that recorded the fate of Brown’s party, who were attacked just north of Moeraki, then killed and eaten. Two of Brown’s men survived this initial attack and travelled south for two days before they too were killed and eaten near the mouth of Pleasant river.23

Te Anu was therefore one of three survivors of the initial party of lascars that abandoned the *Matilda*. In the later 1810s and early 1820s several Europeans recorded meeting a lascar during their voyages along the south coast. While we cannot be absolutely certain that Te Anu was one of these individuals, there is clear evidence that for Beattie’s Kāi Tahu contacts, like Tame Parata, Te Anu was the only significant survivor.24 The fate of the other two lascars is unclear. Jules de Blosseville suggested that all three were alive for a time as he heard that the three surviving lascars had taught Kāi Tahu how to dive to cut the cables of European ships and suggested to the takata whenua the effectiveness of attacking after heavy rain had rendered European firearms useless.25

But earlier, in 1817, Captain James Kelly of the *Sophia* encountered just one of the lascars at ‘Small Bay’, a location that Kāi Tahu knew as Whareakeake and colonists subsequently called ‘Murderer’s Beach’. When Kelly arrived at the settlement with a small party of six men he was conveyed to the whare (house) of the local rakatira (chief), probably Te Matahaere, Tame Parata’s ancestor. There he was ‘saluted by a Lascar, who told him that he had been left there by the brig *Matilda*. In addition to glossing over his own desertion, the lascar informed Kelly that Robert Brown and his crew had been killed and eaten before offering his services to broker an agreement for the sale of some potatoes from the rakatira
to Kelly. Kelly noted that the lascar ‘appeared familiar with the native language’ and it is likely that Kāi Tahu valued this lascar because of these skills. As the conversation between the lascar and Kelly drew to a close, Kelly and his men were suddenly attacked; four of the party was able to escape, but three were killed on the beach. Kelly swiftly launched a vicious and bloody reprisal, killing three local women who were on board the Sophia as well as sixteen local men. He then destroyed forty-two waka (canoes) and set fire to up to six hundred whare at the largest Māori settlement on the south side of Otago harbour. It is possible, perhaps, to read the lascar’s mention of the killing and eating of Brown’s men as a coded warning to Kelly. The limits of the archive are such that the lascar’s motivations are uncertain; but it seems very likely that there was some degree of premeditation in the attack on Kelly and his men. This lascar may well have been Te Anu, given that Tame Parata recalled a significant connection between Te Matahaere and that particular lascar.

It is also probable that it was Te Anu who met Captain John Kent of the cutter The Mermaid in Otago harbour in July 1823. This lascar was amongst a party of two hundred armed men, who Kent described as a ‘wild savage set’. The lascar, who spoke to Kent in his ‘little English’, told Kent that he had been ‘cut off’ from the Matilda and that the other lascars ‘had all been eat’. Given that this encounter was close to Whareakeake and the party of warriors that the lascar accompanied from the north into the harbour, there is good reason to believe that this is the same lascar that Kelly met in 1817. This impression is reinforced by the similar way in which the lascar both in Kent and Kelly’s narratives concealed his desertion from the Matilda. Kent noted that the lascar ‘seemed very contented’ with Māori and again recorded the key role he played as an intermediary in cross-cultural trade. The aim of Kent’s voyage was to explore the possibility of constructing an expanded and regularised flax trade with southern New Zealand and the lascar was willing to help him pursue this goal, offering Kent his assessment of native use of flax and Kāi Tahu capacity to source and dress flax on a commercial scale.

The lascar Te Anu disappears from the historical record after 1823, only to reappear again in the later 1840s. All of the remaining references link Te Anu to the Foveaux Strait region. This southward move fits with Te Anu’s connections to the Whareakeake community. The settlement at Whareakeake was abandoned some time after Kent’s 1823 visit and the rakatira Te Matahaere himself moved to the mouth of the Oreti river on Fouveaux Strait to be close to the muttonbird islands, a crucial resource base for Kāi Tahu. It is likely that Te Anu made a move to the south around this time as well. In July 1847, the German missionary Johannes Wohlers recorded that: ‘One of the local men [at Stewart Island] is a lascar from Calcutta who came to New Zealand thirty years ago in an English ship and remained amongst the natives. He had his face tattooed and in his whole way of life had become a New Zealander.’ Five years later Wohlers wrote to the
former New Zealand Company surveyor and agent Frederick Tuckett explaining, in response to Tuckett’s query about the lascar, that ‘[h]e is getting an old man’.  

Herries Beattie’s 1931 account offered two anecdotes that suggest that Te Anu was a significant figure in southern Kāi Tahu engagements with modernity. The first of these stories suggest that Te Anu, like a significant number of Kāi Tahu men in the middle of the nineteenth century, travelled across the Tasman to the Australian colonies. Beattie recorded that he was told:

Te-anu went across to Sydney in the old whaling days on a pora (ship) belonging to the whalers. When he came back to Murihiku he told the people of the wonders he had seen. He said that some day the people who were listening to him would see coming across the great ocean of Kiwa [the Pacific Ocean] ships without sails but with smoke above them and a large fire inside them to make them go. Then, he said, there were engines which ran over the land, and each engine as it ran belched up smoke through its nose.

Establishing the veracity of this story is difficult as there is no significant discussion of a lascar from southern New Zealand visiting Sydney in either New South Wales or New Zealand newspapers in the middle of the nineteenth century. This is, of course, negative evidence, but given the significant coverage afforded to non-white travellers in the Australian colonies it seems unlikely that the travels of Te Anu, a South Asian man, with a full moko (tattoo), and capable of speaking English and Māori in addition to his mother tongue, would have garnered no attention at all. If Te Anu did in fact visit Australia, it is hard to place his voyage in time. Beattie’s suggestion that it occurred during ‘the old whaling days’ would place the trip in the later 1830s or early 1840s. The first steamship launched in Australia was the Surprise in 1831, but regular steamship services only developed around 1850. Beattie’s narrative also alludes to steam engines, but the first railway did not open in New South Wales until 1855. Perhaps these dates suggest that if Te Anu did visit Sydney around 1840, the news he brought back of steam power was information he gleaned through oral reports or through second-hand newspaper accounts. Another possibility, of course, was that Te Anu’s knowledge of trains and steamships was entirely drawn from whalers and sailors, with whom he was able to converse in English, and he then transmitted this information to his Kāi Tahu acquaintances who assumed that this knowledge about Australia was the product of Te Anu’s own experience.  

A second significant facet of Beattie’s narrative suggests the likelihood of this visit occurring before the middle of 1840. Beattie told his readers that his Kāi Tahu informants recalled that:

Te-anu described a factory he had visited. He said that each man’s hours were marked in a book and that the totals were entered into another book and each
week the wages were paid out according to the figures in the books. The Maoris thought this book-keeping system was wonderful, and they called it ‘wanaka’, a word meaning the keeping of secrets and preserving of the knowledge necessary to any undertaking. It is a word handed down from days of old for the lore of the tohukas (priests and men of knowledge).33

In May 1840, James Watkin established the first mission in the southern South Island at Waikouaiti and his missionary endeavours brought many Kāi Tahu into sustained contact with literacy and printing for the first time. The sense of wonder in Beattie’s narrative about the uses of literacy seems more commensurate with the 1830s, when Kāi Tahu had fleeting and intermittent contact with these new skills and technologies in the semi-literate worlds of coastal whaling stations (see Chapter Six). This is opposed to the post-missionary world of the early 1840s, when native teachers, European missionaries, and printed texts quickly became a routine part of the Kāi Tahu world.34

But regardless of whether Te Anu actually experienced first-hand the technologies and skills he explained to Foveaux Strait Kāi Tahu, he was firmly connected with modernity in their minds. When the first train ran from Invercargill to Bluff in 1867, local Kāi Tahu remembered Te Anu’s words ‘from long before’ and named the engine ‘Te Anu’.35

In terms of the archives of cross-cultural contact in the south of New Zealand, Te Anu is a ghostly figure. His faint presence in the records was not simply the outcome of the general logic of imperial archives – where people are individuated and archived because they are connected to state sponsored or controlled processes, or figure prominently because of their implication in some public controversy – but was a particular consequence of the specific information order generated by maritime activity.36 As the next chapter demonstrates, sealing and whaling, like other imperial extractive endeavours, were highly dependent on reliable information about the location, quality, and scale of particular resources. Sealers and whalers generally aimed to restrict the flow of information to their competitors, the public, or government authorities about their current and potential extractive sites. Moreover, many of the workers in these industries were non-literate and operated in a primarily oral world. This means that the textual archive produced by these extractive industries is meagre and the records that do survive provide little if any reliable biographical detail.

But within the fragmentary traces that record this man’s life in Murihiku there are some hints that allow an exploration of the ways in which Kāi Tahu understood this outsider. One clue, perhaps, is the name that Kāi Tahu gave to
the newcomer. This name perhaps suggests the difficulties that the lascar faced settling in the damp and windy maritime climate of southern New Zealand as it is possible to read his name as ‘the Cold One’.37

Whakapapa (genealogy) traditionally ordered the Kāi Tahu world and it is a powerful force that continues to shape social memory and pattern historical narratives. While takata pora (‘ship people’, Europeans and other non-Māori newcomers) could never be Kāi Tahu, they could be incorporated into the iwi through marriage. These men have come to occupy significant positions in the iwi’s history because of the significance of their economic activities, their role as the fathers and grandfathers of the large families they created with their Kāi Tahu wives, and as the source of surnames that came to be seen as distinctively Kāi Tahu, such as Howell, Palmer, Wybrow, Russell, Bragg, and Apes. The abiding significance of takata pora is suggested by the carved pou (posts) in Te Rau Aroha marae at Bluff. Stylised carved images of these men adorn the internal face of the exterior wall of the marae’s whare-tipuna (ancestral house) Tahu-Potiki. But it is revealing that around the poutokomanawa (large centre post) that stands in the middle of the space are larger carved figures representing key Kāi Tahu women who married takata pora and gave rise to families that belong to the marae. These images of the takata pora represent the newcomers within the established conventions of Māori carving, suggesting their absorption into the Kāi Tahu world. At the same time, however, they are not individuated in the same way as the female figures and their harpoons and the tools they hold underscore their origins from beyond Murihiku. The significance of these takata pora in Kāi Tahu history, according to Michael Stevens, a Kāi Tahu historian from Bluff, is that these newcomers were central in the creation of the distinctive mixed modernity that framed Kāi Tahu life from the middle of the nineteenth century on.38

At a primary level it is whakapapa which determines Te Anu’s place in Kāi Tahu historical consciousness. Because Te Anu seemingly had only a single son, George, with his Kāi Tahu wife and George died childless, Te Anu does not remain a significant figure in Kāi Tahu memory in the way that a whaler like John Howell, who had two children with his first wife Kohikohi and then seventeen more with his second wife, the Kāi Tahu woman of mixed descent Caroline Brown. Moreover, George Turi’s status as a childless man means that both he and his father faded from Kāi Tahu memory relatively quickly. This social memory has been sustained through oral culture and, more recently, by the narratives recorded in the architecture and decoration of marae, but it has also been nourished by print culture. One document has been particularly important to defining the genealogical underpinnings of the iwi. This is the list of Ngāi Tahu kaumātua (elders) who were alive in 1848. The initial basis for this document was a record that was prepared by the Māori Land Court in 1925, a list that was revised and extended by a Ngāi Tahu Census Committee in 1929. George Turi was
not on either list. George was forgotten because his father and his unnamed Kāi Tahu mother were not powerful and neither Te Anu or George produced a large family that was able to ensure that their names and memories lived on. While other Kāi Tahu families were able to fight battles to add their names to the 1848 kaumātua list during the 1920s and the 1960s, there were simply no descendants to struggle for George Turi to be added to the crucial archive that defined tribal membership. This is a potent reminder of the connective power of whakapapa and the ways in which historical consciousness and genealogy are intertwined in the Māori world. This connection is made clear in the whare-tipuna Tahu-Potiki where the takata pora figures are surrounded by a continuous painted representation of aka-pohue, a creeper present in the Bluff area, which stands as a metaphor for whakapapa’s sinuous quality, its ability to expand, connect and envelop. But while Te Anu was incorporated into Kāi Tahu through marriage, his line ended with George Turi and this truncated family history meant that Te Anu and George were not capable of creating the genealogical connections that were central to defining status and significance in the Ngāi Tahu world.

While whakapapa governed the ways in which individuals like Te Anu and George Turi might be positioned in Ngāi Tahu tribal memory, how did Kāi Tahu make sense of the outsiders who appeared off the southern coasts during the early years of cross-cultural engagement in the south? During the early nineteenth century, Kāi Tahu frameworks for making sense of cultural difference were not racialised. It seems most likely that the primary category that Kāi Tahu used to frame Te Anu was ‘takata pora’. After all, this was the term that it seems both Te Matahaere and Tame Parata used to describe him. This was the common term in southern New Zealand for designating the newcomers who began to arrive in the 1790s and it remained in wide currency until the 1890s. It has been common to see this term as a direct equivalent for the term ‘Pākehā’, which was used as an appellation for newcomers by Māori in the northern portion of the South Island and the North Island. But in fact, the term ‘Pākehā’ was adopted quite late in the far south and ‘takata pora’ was not only the default term for the whalers, sealers, and sailors, but it also conveyed a quite different sense of cultural difference. Evidence from the north suggests that local peoples understood Captain James Cook and the officers and crew of the Endeavour as fundamentally different. They appeared so strange and marvellous that they were initially called ‘tupua’ (goblins), ‘pakeapekeha’ (fairy folk), or ‘atua’ (supernatural beings). As I have already suggested, the unusual appearance, language and behaviour of these outsiders encouraged local communities in the north to contrast themselves with the strange outsiders that visited their world. They began to call themselves ‘tangata Māori’ (the ordinary people), and with time ‘Māori’ became the term commonly used by both native and stranger to designate the first people that had made their home in the islands of New Zealand.
But where the derivation of ‘Pākehā’ stressed the fundamental otherness of the newcomers, beings that did not seem to be even human, the term ‘takata pora’ instead emphasised the worldly origins and maritime associations of the newcomers in the south. Takata pora were the ‘people of the ships’, strangers who were especially associated with the world of the ocean and with a European maritime technology that had a significant impact on the Kāi Tahu imagination. Since Te Anu was understood to be takata pora it suggests that this category was not restricted by somatic characteristics, it was not an indigenous equivalent to ‘whiteness’. While the common equation of ‘Pākehā’ with ‘white’ may encourage us to be surprised at the extensiveness of the category ‘takata pora’, it is a much less surprising construction if we are fully aware of the innately cosmopolitan, polyglot and multi-ethnic nature of early nineteenth-century maritime culture.

The sailors, sealers, and whalers that washed up on the shores of Murihiku between the mid-1790s and 1830s were not simply British, nor only colonials from New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land. Rather, they were an extremely diverse array of men who reflected the truly global nature of the maritime labour force that were drawn into New Zealand waters. Vessels registered in a variety of locations visited southern waters from the 1790s through to the 1840s. Ships registered in Australian colonies predominated; significant numbers of British and New England ships and vessels registered in Spain, France, the German-speaking lands, and India also anchored in the south. While managers of whaling stations along the southern coast were typically British or from the Australian colonies, the work forces employed in whaling, like those involved in sealing and maritime work in general, were multi-ethnic and polyglot. As a result of these movements of ships and people, Kāi Tahu encountered an array of Europeans and non-Europeans who they designated as ‘takata pora’. A significant number of these men married into Kāi Tahu communities. In addition to English-born whalers like John Howell and Edward Weller, Australian-born whalers like William Palmer, Americans such as Lewis Acker, and Europeans including the Portuguese-speaking Manuel Goomes and Joseph Antoni married into Kāi Tahu families. An important cohort of men who were not European established relationships with Kāi Tahu women too. Amongst them were William Apes, a Native American of Pequot descent, and Thomas Chaseland, whose mother was an Aboriginal. The history of these men and their families illustrates that Te Anu was not a unique case, but rather belonged to a broader dynamic of cultural accommodation as new mixed-race families emerged as a key feature of the cultural landscape of Murihiku from the 1830s. As the work of Angela Wanhill and Atholl Anderson has shown, this tradition of cross-cultural engagement gave the iwi a distinctive demographic base, and Michael Stevens has demonstrated that a distinctive form of mixed modernity developed within many of these families. These transformations had long-term consequences and, in particular,
made the question of ‘half caste’ property rights a pressing concern for both the iwi and the state.\(^50\) The ready incorporation of non-Māori into iwi had a powerful effect on the ways in which some other Māori communities thought about Kāi Tahu. One of Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole’s North Island informants in the 1940s expressed these concerns bluntly:

> The Chinese are alright to have around the district as long as they don’t get married to the Maori. But it’s not right to have Maori children around the place who are half-Chinese ... As a matter of fact that’s why I don’t like the South Island Maoris very much. They are all mixed up in their blood. You get Maoris there mixed with everything like Moriori, Chinese, Japs, Niggers and Pakehas. All this mixing is not right because it is spoiling the Maori blood.\(^51\)

Such arguments point to intermarriage as a defining feature of Ngāi Tahu history, a pattern that was seen to set the iwi apart from most other Māori groups. Hana O’Regan has highlighted the ways in which this divergence has encouraged a persistent questioning of Ngāi Tahu authenticity and Māoriness.\(^52\)

The argument forwarded by the Beagleholes’ informant suggests that race had gained considerable traction as a way of explaining the world for Māori themselves by the middle of the twentieth century. That transition was undoubtedly a complex one that played out unevenly in time, space and social standing. In the far south, race did become more important for Kāi Tahu thought in the later nineteenth century, but its rise was a consequence of a complex and particular confluence of forces, including the changing population of the colony, the particular demography of the iwi and the shifting registers of public debates over culture and civilisation.

The cosmopolitan world borne out of maritime culture and interracial intimacy did not simply evaporate in 1848 when the new Otago colony was established. The logics of systematic colonisation, which rested on the opening up of land that had previously been under Kāi Tahu control for occupation and ‘improvement’ by incoming colonists, quickly marginalised Kāi Tahu, both demographically and politically. But significant elements of the old maritime culture of the takata pora remained. In some locations, the dynamics of the world of maritime work, what James Belich has labelled ‘crew culture’, were redirected to the land.\(^53\) Most notably, John Howell, the influential head of the Jacob’s river whaling station and founding father of the colonial town of Riverton that developed out of that station, drew on his maritime workforce as he developed the lands he held along the south coast and in the interior. When he developed Fairlight station, the work was overseen by George, his son from his marriage to Kohikohi, who supervised
a party of station hands recruited from Riverton that comprised ‘Maoris, half castes, two aboriginals, a Negro, [and] an Irishman’. But such diverse bands of workers became less common in the 1850s as waves of colonists arrived in Otago. Although the Otago Association and then the Otago Provincial Government both failed in their aspirations to recruit migrants initially and primarily from Scotland, the colonists of the 1850s were much more homogeneous than the typical mix of workers attached to an early 1840s whaling station. These new colonists quickly swamped Kāi Tahu Whānui and, as the demographic preponderance of respectable Anglo-Celtic colonists grew, the significance of the multi-ethnic and polyglot bands of men that were common along the littoral of southern New Zealand in the late 1830s and 1840s was also eroded. Notable pockets of this ‘crew culture’ remained in some port communities like Halfmoon Bay, Riverton and Bluff, but in the city of Dunedin and in the fledgling towns that emerged in the 1850s the socio-economic order was understood to rest on the shoulders of pious and hardworking Scottish Presbyterian and English Anglican colonists.

During the 1850s and 1860s the other distinctive element that marked early maritime culture in the south – intermarriage between Kāi Tahu women and newcomers – continued to be a defining feature of Kāi Tahu life. In other words, intermarriage was not simply a feature of life in the early stages of contact, but rather it continued to shape the composition and cultural life of the iwi into the late nineteenth century. Angela Whanalla has shown, for example, that newcomers from Ireland as well as the United Kingdom and continental Europe continued to marry women of Kāi Tahu descent and establish new mixed-descent families throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. But the steady growth of the colonial population in the 1850s, the success of experiments with pastoralism, and the flood of Chinese, British, and Australian men seeking gold in the early 1860s, meant that these mixed-descent families no longer enjoyed a position of economic or cultural significance. In fact, the land purchases that made colonisation possible and the thrust of government ‘native policy’ saw the south’s many mixed-descent families occupying tenuous positions in the colonial economy. No longer key brokers in pivotal maritime endeavours, mixed-race and Kāi Tahu workers faded into the economic background. Gold seemed to signal the eclipse of the distinctive maritime world of the mixed-descent families: the incoming colonists looked towards the colonial interior. They were far less concerned with the bounty of the ocean or the riches of the coastline as they saw mining, pastoralism, commerce and nascent industry as holding the keys to colonial development.

These economic and demographic shifts meant that as colonisation progressed, racial anxieties increasingly focused on those individuals and groups that seemed unable to melt into the colonial order of things, as so many members of Kāi Tahu were believed to have done. Visiting African-Americans and South Asians, for
example, were subject to considerable attention and discussion. Non-whites who hoped to settle in the south for any length of time were subject to particular debate. The Dunedin Chamber of Commerce actively recruited Chinese miners from Victoria, however, from the arrival of the first of these miners in 1866 there was a sustained and frequently vociferous debate over their cultural qualities and their place in colonial development. In Dunedin, which boomed on the back of the gold rush, particular concerns developed over the clustering of non-white colonists in particular parts of the city: the desire of Cantonese and Lebanese colonists to build concentrated networks of stores, social sites and dwellings fed anxieties and fuelled both agendas for social reform and popular racism. The area where both communities settled at the southern end of the central city became known as the ‘Devil’s Half Acre’, a site which many colonists imagined as the home of heathenish religious customs, gambling, prostitution, and opium consumption. A particular concern was the ways in which the supposedly loose morals of these non-white men would threaten the sexual fidelity of white women, fears that were stoked by the local press conjuring up images of ‘opium orgies’ involving Chinese men and white women.

Within this context, it is worth noting that the next South Asian man who settled in Otago was explicitly racialised in ways that were quite different from Te Anu’s incorporation into Kāi Tahu Whānui. Edward Peters leapt into prominence in the colony in the late 1850s, after arriving on the vessel Maori in the early 1850s, presumably as a crew member. Peters prospected for gold in the relatively unexplored interior of Otago in the late 1850s, and in 1859 made a significant discovery of gold. This find was noted in the Otago Witness, which recorded that Peters was ‘a native of Bengal’ and that he was seeking a reward that had been offered by the provincial government for the finding of gold. Peters’s claim was denied.

In 1861, a newly arrived prospector from Tasmania named Gabriel Read explored a locality near Woolshed Creek. Read had heard that a miner named ‘Black Peter’ had made a find near this site, and in May 1861 Read drafted a letter to the Otago Witness recounting the success of his own prospecting in the area, triggering a fully fledged ‘gold rush’. While Read was immortalised as the discoverer of gold in Otago, his breakthrough was dependent on the earlier work of ‘Black Peter’, or Edward Peters.

In the context of this chapter, two things are important to note about Read’s letter. Firstly, by 1861, as a South Asian man, Peters was popularly known as ‘Black Peter’. This label is particularly significant given that by 1861 attitudes towards South Asians throughout the empire had hardened in the wake of the Indian rebellion of 1857–8 and for the first time it had become a common practice to use the terms ‘black’ and ‘nigger’ to describe South Asians. These epithets were potent ways that Britons in India and at ‘home’ in Britain inscribed a clear social
distance between ruler and ruled, and were significant elements in arguments that offered Indian inferiority as a justification for British colonial rule with new force after the rebellion.60 Peters was explicitly and reductively racialised in a way that Te Anu never was. Secondly, because it seems that Edward Peters was non-literate, he was unable to use the colonial media to secure the renown that Read was so successful in capturing. He had no recourse to the written word to contest the provincial government’s dispensing of the reward for discovery to Read, or to challenge the ways in which he himself was racialised. Late in his life an active campaign to secure financial support for Peters was launched by some prominent colonial officials and a social reformer from Balclutha named Christina Mitchell, but these supporters continued to call Peters ‘Black Peter’. Peters’s place in the colonial social world was defined by popular understandings of biological race, which placed him at the margins of an order that was increasingly shaped by ideas about ‘whiteness’.

While the stories of Te Anu and Edward Peters are quite different, they share two important similarities. Firstly, both men remained mute within the colonial archive; others narrated their histories and their social positioning, not them. In both cases this voicelessness means that it is very difficult to reassemble their life stories, and it is impossible to reconstruct how they themselves viewed the world around them and how they reacted to the ways in which they were seen and treated by others. Secondly, colonial sources do not individuate them in ways that would have been meaningful in their home societies. We cannot be completely confident of their place of origin and the regional culture that they grew up in, we do not know what their mother tongue was, we cannot know what gods they worshipped, nor can we be confident of what caste they belonged to. These social markers would have defined their social standing and would have shaped their experiences before they left their ancestral homes; but once they entered the maritime world of imperial shipping, their status shifted abruptly.

Te Anu the lascar joined other South Asian sailors in occupying a subservient position in an imperial maritime division of labour that determined status, pay, and supplies on the basis of race. His social standing changed abruptly again when he jumped ship in New Zealand, where Kāi Tahu saw him as a ‘takata pora’, a category that was used to delineate a basic division between the newcomers from across the ocean and themselves, the ‘takata whenua’, the people of the land. In time, South Asian men who arrived in southern New Zealand were not seen as ‘takata pora’, as colonial racial categories displaced the social vision of Kāi Tahu. The contrast between the racialisation of Edward Peters in Otago in the 1850s and the earlier incorporation of Te Anu into Kāi Tahu Whānui reminds
us of the profound cultural shifts that resulted from systematic colonisation. The growing dominance of the racial categories that stood near the heart of colonial consciousness was the product of a range of very specific circumstances: demography, geographic marginalisation, and the relatively smooth incorporation of Kāi Tahu into colonial society. This particular transformation was part of a much broader shift in understandings of community and cultural difference during the nineteenth century. As many lands and communities were absorbed into imperial regimes, local ways of ordering cultural difference were displaced by a new stress on race and religion as two fundamental and universal categories for making sense of human variation. Empire-building was a powerful engine that produced increasingly homogenised understandings of human heterogeneity. The ascendency and growing systematisation of race as a category of analysis, and as a meaningful social identity in the middle of the nineteenth century, was the outcome of a host of the kinds of racialising moments that this chapter has explored. Race rarely entirely displaced localised traditions of defining social relationships – cultural systems that governed the operation of cultural relationships, such as whakapapa or caste, were increasingly drawn into dialogue with racial thought. The limits of the archive mean we can never know how Edward Peters or Te Anu might have explained their own social locations and understanding of cultural difference, but thinking carefully about their stories helps us to recover some of the complexity and contingency of earlier racial formations.
EMPIRE
In popular memory, as well as historical scholarship, the sealers and whalers who worked along the southern coast of New Zealand are represented as free-spirited, unrestrained working-class adventurers, men who took to the sea and embraced the challenges of dangerous physical work beyond the settled frontier of empire. This image has slowly taken shape as heated public exchanges over the nature and consequences of colonialism have unpicked, even reversed, earlier readings of sealers and whalers. The colonists who flooded into Otago in the 1850s and 1860s frequently argued that the formal establishment of the Free Church of Scotland colony in 1848 enabled the ‘improvement’ of the region and its peoples. By stressing the connections between systematic colonisation and improvement, these colonists were setting themselves apart from two social collectives. First, and most obviously, they were emphasising the superiority of their cultural order to that of the takata whenua, the people of the land, Kāi Tahu Whānui. But secondly, the idea that systematic colonisation, based on the theories of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, brought order and civilisation was an argument targeted at the earliest whites who had made their homes in the south: the sealers and whalers. Critiques of these maritime workers fortified the self-image of the sober, hard-working colonists of the Presbyterian-dominated colony. Where post-1848 colonists valued hard work, thrift, education, and restraint, whalers were seen as uneducated, uncivilised, and fundamentally unrestrained, a group whose lack of discipline was made obvious through their use of alcohol and the sexual relationships they established with Kāi Tahu women.

But where Victorian commentators saw this profligacy as a marker of moral weakness, this rejection of the norms of polite and respectable colonial society has enabled a more positive re-evaluation of these sealers and whalers. Recent works stressed their willingness to cross cultural boundaries and establish interracial relationships, emphasising the mutual benefits that resulted from marriages between Euro-American newcomers and the women of Ngāi Tahu Whānui. As David Haines has noted, this new scholarship has tended to see
sealing and whaling as ‘a period of mutual reliance and relatively benign race relations’.5 Because the sealers and whalers did not share the Victorian values that have been seen as defining colonial culture in New Zealand, they are framed as antiheroes: men who rejected conventions of restraint, respectability and religiosity for the egalitarian conventions of a rough and ready mateship grounded in gruelling labour and an energetic culture of song, drink and manly liberty.6 Such an image has been particularly alluring for the many families that descend from the whalers, who can feel more at ease with their ancestors. This was because whalers were supposedly sceptical of the values of Christianity and capitalism that have been seen as underwriting the colonial order and impelling the dispossession of Ngāi Tahu.

These oppositions between men of the sea and the values of the dominant culture are not unique to New Zealand historical writing. In fact, recent work on the culture of the sea has mobilised such dichotomies to powerful effect, using them to foreground the distinctive ship-board culture created by both common sailors and pirates, who resisted prevailing understandings of race, class, gender, and nation, as they articulated a radical democratic challenge to the hierarchical and exploitative order that was calcifying in Europe and North America. Most notably, Marcus Rediker – invoking E. P. Thompson and Christopher Hill – has argued against elitist versions of maritime history that celebrate great captains and imperial heroes. Rediker instead advocates a ‘people's history of the sea’, which shifts focus ‘from the names of kings and admirals to workers black and white, male and female, of many nations, races, and ethnicities’.7 Even though Rediker and his co-author Peter Linebaugh have recognised the centrality of sailors to the operation of British sea-power and the development of British capitalism, they draw a clear distinction between ‘landed society’ and the world of the ‘deep sea vessel’, which was ‘isolated from any landed society and its dominant patterns of social life’.8 This insistence on the self-contained nature of the ship cannot be applied with confidence in the case of Australasia, as this chapter will show it underplays the important forms of interconnections with ‘landed society’ that supported sealing and whaling operations.

Nevertheless, Rediker and Linebaugh’s recognition of the double nature of the ship – as both an ‘engine of capitalism’ and a ‘setting of resistance’ – is an important starting point.9 This chapter explores that doubleness and seeks to complicate romantic or celebratory readings of these maritime workers, which see them as not only embodying nascent working-class resistance to capitalism, but also as ante-colonists as well. In this reading, sealers and whalers were men whose work was either unconnected to or at odds with the project of colonisation and its attendant social codes built around Protestant piety, disciplined economic behaviour, and the idealised British Christian conjugal family. That interpretation is challenged here. By offering a careful reappraisal of the place of writing and communication in these
enterprises, this chapter rematerialises neglected connections between sealing and whaling and the larger histories of capitalist expansion and empire-building. At the heart of these dynamics was a very particular culture of communication where writing served many functions: it could be deployed to help establish and secure whaling stations in the face of cross-cultural conflict; it was central to daily operation of whaling stations and vessels; it was used to shape the flow of sensitive commercial information; it was a tool that could be used in struggles between workers and managers; and it was an important instrument for those sealers and whalers who turned away from the sea themselves and remade themselves as pioneering colonists. In its exploration of these forms of ‘littoral literacy’, this chapter demonstrates that even though these workers were subject to coercion and exploitation from captains, ship owners, and powerful merchants, their own economic behaviour and social practices irrevocably entangled southern New Zealand and Kāi Tahu Whānui within the webs of empire long before formal colonisation began in the south in 1848.

Sealing developed in southern New Zealand in the early nineteenth century after the depletion of the rookeries that lined Bass Strait between the Australian mainland and Van Diemen’s Land. The Port Jackson merchants who had driven the rapid working-out of the Bass Strait rookeries, turned their attention to southern New Zealand as a new frontier ripe for exploitation. In Dusky Sound during 1792–3 a party of sealers from the Britannia – whose majority owners Samuel Enderby and Sons had received a three-year licence allowing them to take seals from New Zealand – confirmed the quality of the rookeries and collated important information about the coastline, its resources, and its potential to furnish timber and food stores. By 1806, sealing was proceeding at pace and in that year the Nantucket-registered Favourite brought 60,000 seal skins from southern New Zealand to Port Jackson. Sealers worked the Fiordland coast, along Foveaux Strait and Stewart Island, but they also pushed much further south to the Antipodes Islands and initial forays were launched to Auckland and Bounty Islands. By 1810, sealers were also working Macquarie and Campbell Islands in the southern ocean. From 1812 until 1822, there was a marked downturn in sealers working the New Zealand coast after several Māori attacks on sealing gangs in 1810–2. There was a significant revival from 1822, but these later sealing voyages also pursued other commodities that could be sold into Australian markets (including dressed flax, timber and potatoes and salted pork). Declining seal stocks meant that by the early 1830s sealing went into a sustained decline and it was overtaken by shore-whaling as the chief extractive industry in southern New Zealand.
Where missionaries and naval officers produced detailed accounts of their visits to New Zealand, sealers left a thin and patchy archive. Sealing vessels did not keep logs, nor was it customary for sealers to maintain personal diaries or to write letters. In fact, only two significant narratives survive from sealers who worked in New Zealand. One short and very general text by the Danish sealer Jørgen Jürgensen offered some fleeting observations of his activities in Fiordland in 1804 and 1805. John Boultbee, the well-read son of a substantial Nottinghamshire landowning family, produced a much lengthier text. Boultbee's literary memoir, with its references and allusions to Sir Walter Scott, William Cowper and Shakespeare, was written after he settled in Colombo, Ceylon, in 1834 and offered a detailed and reflective account of sealing in southern New Zealand between 1826 and 1828. It was only intended for private circulation as a manuscript, but was finally published in 1986. It is a valuable narrative that reveals a great deal about the routines and rhythms of sealing life, the tensions within sealing gangs, and the often-anxious encounters with Māori communities. However, this was essentially a private text. Boultbee's literacy and his literary taste was unusual – a party of sealers he met suggested that he was a 'Swell's Son run out' – and his text never circulated beyond his kin.

At a broad level, the reluctance to record the details of sealing voyages reflected the background of the sealers themselves, yet was also produced by the desire of Port Jackson merchants to restrict the flow of information about their expeditions. As Ian Smith has noted, amongst the key sources for reconstructing the development of sealing are public records of shipping recorded in the newspapers of various ports, but he observes that these records typically only reported the intended destination of the vessel in broad terms and were often very general, elliptical or misleading. Moreover, the legal restrictions theoretically governing sealing operations – including the regulations of 1805 – meant that Sydney merchants, who sent their vessels to southern New Zealand in contravention of such regulations, had an active interest in not producing a potentially incriminating textual record. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that sealing vessels were routinely caught up in conventions that shaped the operation of colonial shipping and commerce. Before sailing, the master and crews of vessels leaving the Australian colonies were named in official notices issued under the authority of the state in newspapers. This procedure was designed to ensure that any claims or demands against these individuals were presented and resolved prior to the sailing of their vessel. Consequently, newspaper accounts of ships entering and leaving ports were the most significant public record of this industry and remain invaluable for historians, but these are at best a partial archive. Vessels that moved in or out of ports where there was no local newspaper have left little or no archival trace, nor can we be certain about the movement of ships where the local newspapers suspended publication (such as Port Jackson for parts of 1807 and 1808).
While ship owners and merchants had little interest in publicising their activities, and sealers themselves were rarely enthusiastic writers, sealing did make important contributions to the development of the body of imperial knowledge. The sealing gangs that worked the coasts of southern New Zealand and its offshore islands played an important role in fashioning a cartographic archive that enabled the exploitation of the region’s resources. Although Captain James Cook skirted the southern coast in March 1770 during his running survey of New Zealand, he believed that Rakiura (now named Stewart Island) was connected to the South Island. Sealers added depth to the cartographic archive built up by Cook. It seems that O. F. Smith, a crewman on the *Favourite*, presented Governor King with a detailed map of the southern coastline of New Zealand’s South Island in 1806, which also detailed the contours of the strait that separated Rakiura from the South Island. Because the regulations that governed imperial trade prevented whaling south of latitude 43° 39’S (the southern boundary of the colony of New South Wales), King restricted access to this knowledge.21 While this information did not circulate freely in New South Wales, Michael Stevens has suggested that knowledge of these southern waters was carried back to New England by the *Favourite* and this perhaps drew other American-registered vessels to southern New Zealand.22 Governor Joseph Foveaux, who had strong connections to shipping and sealing interests, eventually shared this cartographic knowledge in 1808 and he encouraged the extension of sealing in New Zealand.23 Amongst those supported by Foveaux was John Grono, a former sailor who became an influential farmer, shipbuilder and sealer. After Grono returned from southern New Zealand on a sealing expedition on the *Governor Bligh* in March 1809, he furnished a written account of this strait between Rakiura and the South Island to the *Sydney Gazette*. This was the first public reference to a waterway, which Grono named ‘Foveaux Strait’. He described it: ‘36 to 40 miles in width, and a very dangerous navigation from the numerous rocks, shoals, and little islands with which it is crowded.’24 The information furnished by Smith and Grono was an important spur to a series of expeditions sent to exploit the rookeries of southern New Zealand in 1809 and 1810.

So one of the key imperial contributions of the sealing voyages was the production of the charts and maps which detailed the southern coast of New Zealand’s South Island, Foveaux Strait, its islands and harbours, and the subantarctic islands to the south: they helped Euro-americans to know the sea as well as the country.25 The basic shape of these southern waterways was slowly established through Smith’s 1806 map, the American Eber Bunker’s 1809 map of the ‘South End of New Zealand’ (produced after his sealing expedition in Foveaux Strait and along the southwest coast), and a sequence of maps of varying detail produced by W. L. Edwardson in 1822–3. These maps were an important template for the composite map produced by the British Surveyor General’s Office in 1832, which
in turn was a crucial guide for those Britons who were interested in the imperial value of southern New Zealand. And sealers’ knowledge remained important long after sealing ceased. The landmark map of the South Island published as a frontispiece to Edward Shortland’s *Southern districts of New Zealand* (1851) drew upon an 1838 Admiralty chart and a map of the island’s interior drawn for Shortland by the rakatira (chief) Te Huruhuru in 1844. But its rendering of the southwest coast was taken from a sketch map by ‘intelligent settler’ and sealer Edward Meurant, who developed a first-hand knowledge of the southwest during ‘several years’ of occupancy.

Sealing expeditions also played an important role in deepening Australian and British knowledge of the Māori settlements of the far south, communities which had limited and fleeting contact with Cook. In 1803, after the return to Port Jackson of the *Endeavour* under Captain Joseph Oliphant, the *Sydney Gazette* announced that the skins procured by the *Endeavour* were of high quality. Moreover, Oliphant reported ‘the Natives of New Zealand to be very friendly, and ready to render every assistance he could possible require. This peaceable and amicable disposition has manifested itself in several instances ... [and] his report of the hospitality he met with here will be productive of a confidence that may prove highly benefic to the British mariner in the Pacific Ocean.’ When the sealer Robert Murray arrived back in Sydney in 1810, he conveyed important information about the extent to which the southern Māori dialect varied from North Island conventions. It was reported that while in the south: ‘Mr. Murray became tolerably conversant in the native language which he describes as totally different from that of the Bay of Islands, although the people of both places dress much alike, and are nearly similar in their manners.’ Murray also reported that Foveaux Strait communities grew potatoes ‘which with their mats they exchange with the sealers for any articles they choose to give in exchange, preferring iron or edged tools, none of which they had ever before had in their possession’. These kinds of reports suggested that Kāi Tahu Whānui communities were eager for opportunities to trade, they were happy to engage with strangers, and they would help facilitate the further exploitation of the resources found on their lands and in their waters.

This did not always prove to be the case. Sealing in southern New Zealand was dangerous: on at least five occasions Māori attacks on sealing gangs resulted in deaths and in one famous case in 1810, Jimmy Caddell was captured and detained by the rakatira Honekai. Against the backdrop of these often tense relationships with Kāi Tahu communities, writing was an important tool that could be used to warn about the dangers of contact and help protect the security of sealing gangs and their skins. This is clearly shown by a slate that was left by a sealer from the *Samuel* in Grono’s Cave near Preservation Inlet in 1822–3 to warn about potential dangers: ‘Richard Jones Esq owner John Dawson master beware of
the natives plenty at Preservation. This hastily scratched message exemplifies the anxieties engendered by operating beyond the formal margins of empire and the ways that writing might provide the kind of basic information central to protecting vulnerable commercial bridgeheads. Writing also was a valuable tool for sealers who sought to communicate their movements in the months or years that could separate being deposited on the coast and being collected by a vessel returning to the Australian colonies. When a party of sealers were left with scant supplies off the Otago coast in 1809, they left a written note in a bottle they placed on the top of their store of dried skins on an island they called the ‘Isle of Wight’ (probably Moturata or Taieri Island). They also carved directions into a wooden board, so that if a crew arrived to collect them they would be aware that they had relocated to another island.

Writing was an even more important tool for the management of the sealing enterprise. The onshore labourers who supported sealing in the vessels’ homeports were paid daily wages and these were at times specified in writing. Written articles of agreement also defined the basic terms of sealers’ service, specifying their provisioning and defining their ‘lay’ – their share of the value of the skins and oil that were purchased back by the ship owner at the completion of the voyage. Owners and merchants also maintained registers that recorded the indebtedness of workers and accounts were made of the charges that sealers ran up beyond the basic provisions they were provided with. These careful tallies of the high costs sealers faced for any goods they consumed were a crucial instrument that allowed capitalists to offset the cost of labour. Writing also allowed owners and managers to fix upon business strategies. For example, the influential merchant and ship owner Charles Hook wrote to Robert Campbell, his partner, in 1810 explaining that he had kept the discovery of Macquarie Island secret. This would allow Campbells, Hook & Co. to send extra gangs to the island before their competitors became aware of its resources. Hook also hoped that by purchasing vast amounts of salt – which was routinely used in the preservation of skins – he could gain a competitive edge over rival sealing interests.

Writing was a significant element in the conflicts between managerial interests and workers that were an endemic feature of the enterprise. Despite their low rates of literacy, sealers were willing to assert their rights and to stress the responsibilities that ship owners and company managers had towards their workers. They saw the written articles of agreement which defined the terms of their service as binding documents, launching petitions and bringing cases to court in New South Wales when they believed these contracts had been violated. Out of these cases came a significant public interest in the conditions of maritime labour. Newspapers like the Sydney Gazette dwelt on the suffering of sealers and publicised their very poor conditions of work.
Shore-whaling emerged as the primary form of Australian and Euro-American commercial enterprise along the southern coasts in the 1830s. By 1838, a long network of coastal processing sites and trade depots had been established. Where sealers were highly mobile, camping in caves or under rough temporary shelters, shore-whaling stations were more elaborate and produced more sustained cross-cultural relationships than the often fleeting and fraught encounters that characterised sealing. While each of these sites had their particular character as a result of geography, climate, and the timing of their foundation, all of these stations shared three common features. First, at some level, the stations were dependent on the willingness of Kāi Tahu leaders to protect the whalers’ operation. Ultimately, these whalers operated in a Māori cultural world where neither the courts of New South Wales or British law had effective purchase. The whalers were subject to chiefly authority and the traditional instruments of maintaining order in the Māori world, especially the use of plunder and violence as a means of maintaining the social order when it had been imperilled by some infraction. Secondly, these stations were multi-ethnic and polyglot sites, where Australian, British, American and some non-white whalers worked alongside large numbers of Kāi Tahu men. Some of these newcomers established sexual relationships with Kāi Tahu women and became the heads of new mixed-descent Kāi Tahu lineages. Thirdly, these stations were places where new cross-cultural economic relationships were established. Kāi Tahu became wage labourers as pilots, boatmen, and labourers. They also became avid consumers of new commodities, especially Chinese tea, Indian tobacco, and (in some cases) Bengal rum. At the same time they sold large amounts of potatoes and pork to supply the stations, visiting ships, and colonial markets in New South Wales. They also provided dressed timbers, processed flax, and even jade for distant markets.

While many of the functions that writing was put to within the sealing enterprise were carried over into shore-whaling, writing was of greater importance in the whalers’ world than that of the sealers. At a basic level, this reflected the greater sophistication and complexity of whaling. Shore-whaling required far greater capital investment, it was dependent on the more regular movement of ships, it required much more substantial outlays on labour, plant, and stores, and whaling required a significantly larger workforce to capture and process whales for bone and oil. While whalers were slightly more literate than sealers, workers on shore-whaling stations infrequently mastered all of the skills of literacy. In fact, it seems that both the background of the whalers drawn to New Zealand – and the interests of the Sydney merchants who drove the development of shore-whaling and were keen to restrict flows of commercially sensitive information – meant that few whalers were able to read and write. Whereas sailors and whalers
drawn from New England had very high literacy rates and the ability to read and write was widespread amongst the sailors in both the British navy and merchant fleets, literacy was unusual amongst common whalers working in southern New Zealand. Whaling captains preferred not to recruit experienced merchant seamen who were seen as potentially troublesome due to their strong sense of sailor’s rights. Whaling work was unpopular within the maritime labour force in colonial Australia and that was especially the case with New Zealand, which was seen as particularly dangerous after some highly publicised killings of sailors and sealers in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. As a result, whalers tended to be young, inexperienced, and represented the least skilled and most vulnerable segment of the colonial labour force. It is hardly surprising that the traditions of letter writing that were deeply ingrained amongst New England deep-sea whalers did not develop on New Zealand shore-whaling stations.

Nor did the managers of these stations in New Zealand encourage that kind of practice. Like the merchants who drove the development of sealing, they worked hard to restrict the flow of information about the size of their gangs, their location and their success. Knowledge about the behaviour of whales, the geography of the southern coast, and the disposition of local communities was essential to the successful operation of a station and a key determinant in the creation of commercial advantage. In this context, ship owners, moneymen, and station managers did not want information to reach competitors or the colonial press through letters and diaries. This reminds us that at a fundamental level, imperial extraction depended on controlling the circulation of information.

These pressures mean that although shore-whaling produced a deeper textual record than sealing, the archival traces produced by whaling operations is scant when viewed against the voluminous records produced by missionaries and colonial agents who were operating at the same time. For southern New Zealand there are the following: a taciturn and sporadic log from Piraki on the Banks Peninsula; the correspondence between the Weller brothers relating to their Otago operation; and the records of Octavius Harwood, the storekeeper at the Otakou station. These archival limitations mean that it is hard to reconstruct the social order of the stations and it is even more challenging to assess the quality and extent of cultural change. As Haines has noted, the silences of these archives make assessing the motivations and experiences of Māori workers and family members especially difficult. Following the post-colonial critic Gayatri Spivak’s argument about the occlusions of colonial archives, Haines has suggested that these actors remain hidden in the shadow of shadows. For Otakou, Harwood’s papers provide some detailed insights into the changing size of the indigenous workforce and patterns of labour allocation. However, those Kāi Tahu workers were rarely individuated and their social connections weren’t specified, they appear simply as ‘Māori’. This is a marked contrast to the papers of the Wesleyan
missionaries James Watkin and Charles Creed, which consistently individuated social actors and exhibited an abiding interest in the genealogical connections and social relationships that shaped these communities. There is evidence to suggest that Kāi Tahu workers on these whaling stations in the 1840s were less literate than kinfolk drawn into the orbit of mission stations. While several prominent converts and native teachers, like Matiaha Tiramorehu, engaged with colonial print culture and produced various texts, historians have no significant materials from the 1830s and early 1840s produced by any Kāi Tahu whaler.

Although there is limited evidence for whalers’ literacy amidst the shallow archival deposits that record shore-whaling, it is important to recognise that literacy and record-keeping were in fact integral to the successful operation of these stations. Writing had several crucial functions. It was a key instrument for managers who sought to build an archive about the local landscapes, seascapes, weather, and marine life. This kind of information was typically recorded in brief notes in journals and was a significant element in the operations of these stations. These kinds of records allowed managers at Otakou and Piraki to establish an image of the regularities of nature and allowed them to try and correlate their successes in whaling with patterns in the environment and climate. Joel Mokyr has emphasised the centrality of this kind of ‘useful knowledge’ in shaping economic action and in the development of modern capitalism. As much as we can tell, shore-whaling encouraged a distinctive littoral form of useful knowledge: whalers were concerned with the interaction between land and sea, tides and winds, and, especially, the relationship between coastal topography, shifting currents, and the migration pathways and breeding grounds of their quarry.

Most importantly, writing was essential to the coordination of labour, trade, and transport networks that shaped the whaling operation. As the Sydney-based manager of the enterprise, George Weller used the written word to move capital, to coordinate the movement of ships, and to arrange the release of whale oil, bone and a range of other commodities from New Zealand into various markets. He corresponded with influential Sydney administrators. He wrote to the Collector of Customs regarding the registration of ships and the duties charged on bone and oil from New Zealand, to the Colonial Secretary to negotiate wharfage rights and charges, and to the Board for the Assignment of Convicts to arrange labour. He also issued written instructions to his captains and directed them to use writing to keep him up to date with the latest developments. For example, in 1835 he wrote to Thomas Richards of the Weller’s Lucy Ann: ‘and neglect not by every opportunity to write me how you are doing, whether successful or not’.

The correspondence of the Weller brothers – Joseph and Edward on the ground at Otakou and George in Sydney – framed the operation of their enterprise. Joseph and Edward wrote from New Zealand, updating their brother on the movement, size and quality of whales, their ability to source and direct labour, and the station’s
needs for weapons, equipment, rations and supplies. They reported extensively on the movement of ships, the activities of their rivals, and the prospects for the whaling season and the production of other commodities. Conversely, George reported on the oscillations of markets for whale products – especially in Sydney and London, but also in Europe, Canton and Calcutta. He shared information on the other commercial opportunities in New South Wales, particularly for the potatoes, pork, fish and flax that Kāi Tahu could furnish. He offered evaluations of the qualities of the goods that were being sent from Otakou and suggestions for future priorities. Equally importantly, however, George also updated his brothers about the information and rumours that he gathered in Sydney’s wharves, describing the aspirations of other Sydney whalers and merchants and the news that reached Australia from other parts of New Zealand. This was crucial, as the brothers were persistently anxious about the security of the station. Soon after the station’s foundation in 1831 a raiding party burnt it to the ground, and in 1833 Edward was kidnapped when he was on a voyage to the north. Letter writing became a way of maximising commercial opportunity and ensuring that the brothers had a clear grasp of the shifting local and international currents that shaped their operation.

For Edward Weller and some other senior figures on the stations, the ability to read and write and the material culture of literacy (ink, pens, stationery, and books) were important signs of status and power. George Weller sent his brother the collected works of Walter Scott and hoped that good literature could counteract the uncivilising effects of isolation. Octavius Harwood also imported books and stationery, but it seems that the market for these was restricted to high-ranking figures such as the manager C. W. Schultze. For Hardwood, writing had very tangible power: his receipt books and ledgers were central in monitoring work, the flow of commodities, supplies and tools in and out of his store, and the credit that he extended to both Kāi Tahu and white workers. His papers and the records kept by Edward Weller were instruments that recorded and policed Kāi Tahu’s incorporation into social relations that were partially determined by the culture of capitalism.

The new ways of organising work and trade on whaling stations marked a substantial shift in the socio-economic base of Kāi Tahu life as wage rates and the pull of the market increasingly shaped the broad patterns of labour allocation, production and consumption within family units. This reorientation has not received sufficient attention in recent historical work built around the idea of Māori agency and the ability of Māori to control the terms of cross-cultural engagement. In fact, the fetishisation of ‘agency’ has led some to question the
significance of the empire in shaping Māori life before the mid-1860s. Most notably, James Belich has suggested empire was a myth rather than a reality until the conclusion of the New Zealand wars that enabled the consolidation of British sovereignty. But to read empire only through the lens of sovereignty is too narrow. While southern New Zealand was not formally part of the British Empire until New Zealand was constituted as a colony in 1840, for the previous three decades British empire-building reconfigured the parameters of the Kāi Tahu world. Despite the Colonial Office’s insistence that New Zealand was beyond the edge of empire, the power of imperial commerce and markets in Sydney, Canton, Calcutta and London was a fact of life for Kāi Tahu Whānui.

The written word was a key instrument that drew these coastal lands and their peoples into the orbits of capitalism and empire. By the 1830s, the white men working in the littoral were beginning to develop a strong interest in the benefits of land ownership. In 1832, for example, the Rakiura rakatira Te Whakataupuka signed a written agreement that sold Preservation and Dusky Sounds to Peter Williams, a sealer from New South Wales, for sixty muskets. This written contract reaffirmed and formalised an earlier oral agreement that was made in 1829. By signing this 1832 deed, Te Whakataupuka effectively confirmed the rights that Williams built up through occupancy and use of the land. While this agreement suggests that Kāi Tahu understandings of property were beginning to shift as a result of cross-cultural contact, it allowed Te Whakataupuka to cement his paramount position amongst the chiefs of the southern section of the tribe by giving him access to a sizeable cache of firearms. This agreement with Williams is indicative of the ways in which rakatira like Te Whakataupuka saw Europeans and European ways of doing things as avenues to enhance their mana (authority, charisma) and as being central to the future of his community.

Williams was not alone in seeing the value of land. In the late 1830s, the Weller brothers actively pursued land sales, seeking to purchase as much land as possible from Kāi Tahu communities in order to cement their influence if the formal colonisation of New Zealand proceeded. John Howell, manager of the whaling station at Aparima, also emerged as influential – his power in part rested in the substantial landholdings he gained through his marriage to Kohikohi, daughter of the influential rakatira Horomona Patu. Howell retained those lands after Kohikohi's death and they provided him with a strong resource base that enabled him to emerge as the leading pastoralist in Southland in the 1850s and a key player in local politics.

The most spectacular reinvention of a whaler was that of Johnny Jones. Jones, a former Sydney waterman, sealer and whaler, made a sizeable fortune through his shareholding in whaling vessels and a growing string of shore-whaling stations. This money he invested in purchasing Kāi Tahu lands through a sequence of transactions between 1838 and 1840. These allowed him to claim ownership
of large portions of Otago and Southland and through an agreement signed in 1840 he claimed all of the remaining unsold land in the South Island. Governor of New South Wales George Gipps refused to recognise the validity of that 1840 purchase, and eventually only 2,560 acres of Jones’s purchases were recognised as legitimate by the Land Claims Commission in New Zealand. However, as the returns from shore-whaling diminished Jones established himself as an ardent colonist. He founded the first planned settlement in the South Island, when he attracted a small group of colonists from Sydney to Waikouaiti in 1840. Jones hoped they would extend cultivation and experiment with pastoralism. Jones also sponsored the religious and social ‘uplift’ of local Māori and whalers by arranging for the appointment of the Wesleyan missionary James Watkin in 1840. By the time the systematic colonisation of Otago proceeded in 1848, Jones had consolidated his position as the chief commercial magnate in southern New Zealand and his farm and store played a central role in supplying the early colonists. His early career on sealing and whaling ships was far behind him as he emerged as a powerful commercial and cultural patron with considerable influence in the fledgling colonial city of Dunedin.

The aspirations of Howell, the Wellers, and Jones reflected the erosion of sealing and whaling’s distinctive littoral culture as whaling magnates and humble whalers turned their backs on the sea and pursued the opportunities presented by farming and trade. Quite literally, these men saw that the writing was on the wall for the polyglot, mixed-race world of the littoral that was oriented towards the ocean. The future was to be organised around the colonisation of the land and the rise of a bureaucratic state. The new colonial elite that worked hard to distance themselves from men of the sea and ordinary colonists was deeply invested in obtaining land, ‘opening up’ the interior, and developing an economy built around agriculture and pastoralism. The foundations for the transformation of southern New Zealand into a land of sheep and gold had been laid by sealing and whaling and the ways in which these practices entangled Kāi Tahu in a new world of markets, books and empires. These maritime workers were, in effect, the advance guard of empire and they played a key role in inserting southern New Zealand into the profoundly uneven contours of an imperial global economy.
The Protestant tradition was a central element in British empire-building during the nineteenth century. The global reach of British imperial power carried that tradition to Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Pacific. Over the past two decades Protestantism has become a central concern for scholars of British history and for historians of the empire. They have stressed, in particular, the role of Protestantism in shaping visions of Britain's imperial role as an agent of Providence, in generating understandings of imperial trusteeship, and in the development of a range of colonial cultures. Although the relationship between the 'Bible and the Flag' remains contested within this historiography, there is no doubt that the Robinson-Gallagher thesis (which held that imperial expansion was not driven by any coherent ideas or ideologies, but grew out of various local crises at the periphery of the empire) has been undercut by this new scholarship which places religion, together with race and gender, at the heart of imperial culture. At the same time, however, New Zealand historians have paid limited attention to the place of Christianity in debates over colonisation or the place of religion within the developing colonial culture, as race and land have been firmly embedded as the key nodes around which the historiography of nineteenth-century New Zealand is organised.

This disconnect between understandings of New Zealand’s colonial past and the larger historiography on Britain and its empire is not surprising given New Zealand historians’ deep investment in the nation state and their limited engagement with international historiographical debates. More specifically, however, our understanding of the history of Christianity in New Zealand has suffered as a result of the abandonment of ‘contact history’ in the middle of the 1970s. In the late 1960s and early 1970s it seemed that a rich historiography was developing on encounters between Māori and missionaries. An important exchange between Judith Binney, J. M. R. Owens and K. R. Howe hinted that a New Zealand ethnohistory tradition – sensitive to questions of religion – was
emerging in parallel with its Pacific and North American counterparts. But by the 1980s this tradition had withered as some Māori questioned both the ability and right of Pākehā historians to write about the ‘Māori past’, and historical research increasingly focused upon questions relating to land and resources raised by the Waitangi Tribunal from 1985.

This chapter draws its inspiration from both this recent work on religion’s place in the British Empire and the New Zealand tradition of exploring cross-cultural contact pioneered by Binney, Owens and Howe. Its aim is to foreground the importance of missions and Christianity in the transformation of Māori culture and in the creation of a colonial culture. This chapter emphasises the flexibility of Christianity and its multiple meanings within the contested cultural terrain of the New Zealand frontier. It could function simultaneously as a legitimating device for the cultural authority of missionaries, a powerful tool for missionaries to oppose systematic colonisation and the excesses of state policies after 1840, act as an important bridge between cultures, and be deployed by Māori in potent critiques of settler avarice and immorality. Not only does this chapter map the widely differing and frequently competing political ends to which Christianity was harnessed, but it more broadly stresses the centrality of Christianity in cross-cultural communication. Missionary activity has always involved acts of cultural and linguistic translation. In the evangelical tradition of the long nineteenth century, these acts of translation took on great significance as evangelisation was typically geared towards the vernacularisation of Christianity: the translation of Christianity in local languages and cultural traditions. Missionaries strove to translate Christian texts and theology into te reo Māori and Māori, in turn, quickly indigenised these bodies of knowledge. As a result, language, culture, and politics are entangled in the story of Māori Christianity. In suggesting that Christianity was central in both the reordering of Māori society and was integral to Māori politics, this chapter reinforces the historian Lyndsay Head’s insistence that a critical engagement with Christianity was fundamental to the emergence of a distinctively Māori version of modernity in the nineteenth century. Of course, understanding this ‘alternative modernity’ requires an appreciation of the transformation of Māori culture during the nineteenth century, but also necessitates an awareness of the European and imperial contexts that framed encounters between Europeans and Māori from 1769. In comparison to the substantial body of work that views Captain James Cook, European exploration of the Pacific, and late eighteenth-century encounters between tangata pora (people of the ship) and tangata whenua (people of the land) within the context of the Enlightenment, New Zealand historians have paid significantly less attention to the other great social and intellectual force that recast European society and moulded New Zealand’s early development: the evangelical revival. This tremendous eruption of religious enthusiasm, debate and reform, which
energised the social activism and reoriented the theology of the Protestant tradition from the 1730s, was a truly global phenomenon. From its origin as a trans-Atlantic movement, growing out of revivals amongst European settlers in North American as well as in Great Britain and in many of the German lands, evangelicalism was nourished by the networks of information exchange and the new religious institutions integral to European expansion and community building. Initially these networks and institutions were primarily concerned with reforming the spiritual and social lives of Europeans and European colonists, but, as the eighteenth century progressed, increased attention was directed towards indigenous communities. The pioneering work of David Brainerd, a leading New England evangelical, amongst the Delaware Indians in the 1740s, marked an important shift in the practice of mission, but it was not until the 1790s that a powerful and widely accepted argument for missions aimed at non-Europeans was elaborated. William Carey's *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen* (1792) articulated a new obligation for British Protestants to spread the gospel and constructed this task as a global campaign. Inspired by reading Cook's accounts of the Pacific and drawing upon North American examples, Carey argued that the gospel had to be carried to all corners of the Earth.

The technology of print and the agglomeration of skills that we denote as literacy were fundamental to this globalising mission. While the evangelical revival was fed by a trans-Atlantic republic of letters, the printing press was embraced by evangelicals as a powerful instrument of social change because it facilitated the production of cheap Bibles and extensive bodies of instructional literature and socio-political commentary. Not surprisingly, evangelicals placed heavy emphasis on the dissemination of Scripture and the cultivation of Bible-reading amongst domestic European populations, but print and literacy took on added importance in the 'contact zones' of empires. Within these spaces, which, as Mary Louise Pratt argues, were characterised by the 'interactive' and 'improvisional' exchanges of cultural encounter, Christian literature was believed to be a stabilising influence. Scripture and instructional texts inculcated appropriate models of piety and ethics into turbulent, predominantly male, settler populations, while it was an even greater instrument of change when aimed at non-Christian indigenous communities.

This chapter explores the role of the printed word in New Zealand, at the distant and unstable fringe of Britain's empire, where Britons encountered the various tribal groups collectively known as Māori, a non-literate Polynesian community unified by a shared linguistic and cultural heritage and six centuries of settlement in New Zealand. The central aim here is to sketch the cultural impact of literacy, the print medium and the Christian message upon Māori, within the broader context of a long-term intensification of contact with Europeans.
and New Zealand’s eventual transition to colonial status in 1840. Consequently, this chapter is concerned with the interface between social communication, religion and colonialism, and seeks to explore the ways in which Māori adapted to the complex social changes which characterised this new order. A central contention is that Māori engaged with, and appropriated, print and Christianity as they reassessed and recast pre-colonial mentalities and political idioms. This transformation should not be understood as a revolution from above, imposed by all-powerful Europeans destroying pre-existing ‘oral’ traditions. Even within the context of the increasing disparities of power that characterised colonial society, Māori interest groups directed and shaped these transformations and found ingenious ways of marrying the old with the new, creating a society where orality and literacy were frequently interdependent rather than mutually exclusive. Most importantly, print and the Bible provided successive generations of Māori leaders with new skills and knowledge that could be turned against Pākehā. 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’.

It is necessary, however, to begin by locating these ideas within the existing historiography of social change within the colonial Pacific. Until the 1970s, the dominant model for the interpretation of social change within the Pacific was the ‘fatal impact’ model, an interpretation elaborated forcefully in Alan Moorehead’s popular history of the same name. European intrusion into the Pacific was seen as calamitous, unleashing a radical and rapid social revolution that led to massive depopulation, undermined chiefly authority and undercut traditional social systems and cultural values. In an influential 1967 article, Gordon Parsonson suggested that Polynesians embraced literacy, believing it to be the ultimate source of European power, and argued that the resulting ‘literate revolution’ was central in the dismantling of traditional belief systems. Such models of revolutionary change resulting from Europeans introducing books and reading have been revised by new interpretations that emphasise indigenous agency and the constructive power of cross-cultural contact, but even the most theoretically informed of historians can still write of the ‘Fatal Impact of the Euro-Americans’.

Essentially, there have been two different interpretations of the relationship between oral tradition and literacy in the Māori context. The first, the New Zealand version of ‘the fatal impact’ school, identifies literacy as a corrosive force that undermined the vitality of Māori oral tradition, and, as a result, played a central role in the construction of Pākehā hegemony. This model has exhibited considerable longevity, as some educationalists and historians continue to identify literacy and printing as forms of cultural imperialism, even equating literacy with becoming English. The second position, which might be termed
the ‘cultural continuity’ argument, suggests that literacy and Christianity actually had limited impact on indigenous mentalities and that Māori culture in 1900, or even 2000, continued to be shaped by the power of the spoken word and exhibits a fundamental cultural continuity with pre-European traditions. This interpretation was developed most fully in D. F. McKenzie’s seminal *Oral Culture, Literacy & Print in Early New Zealand: the Treaty of Waitangi*, which argued that the notion of a ‘literacy revolution’ amongst Māori in the 1830s and 1840s was a product of evangelical missionaries, who were extreme proponents of a European ‘literacy myth’. In McKenzie’s view, print and Christianity had little effect on Māori in the nineteenth century and even in the twentieth. Indeed, he suggests that Māori retain an emphasis on the primacy of the spoken word as ‘the written and printed word is not the mode they [modern Māori] habitually use’.

This chapter challenges both these interpretations. It stresses the ways in which Māori leaders quickly adapted to literacy and Christianity, and their ability to use both the ideas and the printing press to fashion new cultural spaces and political idioms within the colonial order. Just as the sixteenth century Italian miller in Carlo Ginzburg’s famous *The Cheese and the Worms* read creatively, constructing an idiosyncratic and ‘extravagant cosmology’, literate Māori fashioned new worlds from the vernacular Bible, building histories and social visions that were inconceivable a century before. By the 1860s indigenous leaders were articulating a diverse array of new identities and political agendas. Some were defined primarily on sectarian lines as Anglican, Methodist or Roman Catholic and some aligned themselves with new pan-tribal political movements that attempted to restrict the flow of land and power to the settlers. Others, however, still called themselves ‘Tiu’ or ‘Hurai’, literally Jews, as God’s chosen people who were destined to cast off their Pākehā oppressors. These new identities were hybridised as they blended pre-colonial traditions and values with new ideas derived from the Old or New Testament. In this context, oral tradition and printing were frequently interdependent. Māori political leaders required both the mana (prestige, charisma) and oral skills of an old chief, but they also drew upon an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Bible in their letters, petitions and newspapers. As preachers, prophets, pamphleteers and warriors, the Māori leaders of the mid-nineteenth century moved between worlds, switching roles and shifting idioms as they negotiated the often treacherous waters of colonial politics.

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The transformation of Māori from a wholly oral society to a literate, or at least a partly literate society, was the product of their encounter with both the agents of empire-building and missionisation. Although a Dutch expedition led by Abel
Janszoon Tasman – an experienced seaman in the service of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie – initiated contact between Europeans and Māori in 1642, it was the ‘rediscovery’ of New Zealand by Captain James Cook in 1769 that established sustained contact with Māori. Where Tasman’s crew spent less than a week in the far north of the South Island, Cook’s *Endeavour* spent six months circumnavigating and charting New Zealand’s coastline. The rich documentation produced by this venture was the product of an Enlightenment concern with natural and human diversity, but also reflected a reorientation of British imperial ambitions towards Asia and the Pacific. Cook, summing up his impressions of New Zealand’s landscape and its indigenous population, concluded: ‘was this Country settled by an Industrus people they would soon be supply’d not only with the necessaries but many of the luxuries of life’.21

The printed word was essential in disseminating this understanding and transforming it into reality. The accounts of Banks and Cook, synthesised in John Hawkesworth’s popular compilation, stimulated a “Pacific craze” in Europe.22 The Pacific loomed large in Enlightenment debates over the development of ‘civilisation and the qualities of ‘natural man’. Economic exploitation followed intellectual assimilation at pace, as European and American sealers, whalers and traders attempted to tap the Pacific’s rich natural resources from the 1790s. Euro-American sojourner communities developed close to major natural resources, and in the case of New Zealand clustered near the fine timber of the far north and the seal colonies of the southern coastline. As carriers of Eurasian diseases and metal tools, and as transmitters of the pull of distant markets in Sydney, Canton, Boston and London, these commercial agents initiated profoundly important transformations in the demographic profile and material culture of the communities they lived amongst. Nevertheless, as they inhabited the hybrid world of the beach and the port, and were subject to indigenous control, these sealers and traders rarely aspired to, yet alone exercised the authority to, systematically transform indigenous mentalities.

On the other hand, the desire to effect religious and social change was at the heart of the Protestant missionary enterprise. From the foundation of the first Church Missionary Society mission in late 1814 and the establishment of the Wesleyan Missionary Society mission in 1823, Māori were incorporated into a social world fundamentally reshaped by evangelicalism. In order to understand the transformations in Māori mentalities that resulted from this encounter, it is important to sketch the values held and inculcated by missionaries, particularly with regards to literacy and the Bible. This is an important omission within the existing historiography. Most importantly, D. F. McKenzie uses the evangelical ‘myth of literacy’ to discount the extent of Māori literacy. While McKenzie meticulously anthropologised Māori attitudes to print, missionary attitudes did not receive the same close treatment. Greg Dening has warned against such
approaches, ‘an anthropology of natives and a history of strangers’, arguing that an ‘anthrohistory’ of both native and newcomer is the appropriate model for writing the history of culture-contact.  

At one important level, the evangelical revival was a rediscovery of the centrality of Scripture to faith. Indeed, Richard Altick has described evangelicalism as ‘bibliolatry’. The vernacular Bible was fundamental to the evangelical world view: it was the product of divine inspiration, as well as a valuable moral guide, a store of historical fact, a guide to the natural world (God’s other great ‘book’) and the key text for domestic devotion. Bible-reading structured and permeated evangelical life. It was seen as a window to God, best accessed by the individual reader, but also effective if read to illiterate members of the community or shared with family members over meals, during idle moments and on the Sabbath.  

Evangelical enthusiasm ensured that the Bible reached more and more Britons. The British and Foreign Bible Society undertook a vast campaign, disseminating their cheap Bibles to as many households as possible. This drive was extremely successful, with the Bible dominating the reading material of many nineteenth-century families. Around 1840, even in poor urban neighbourhoods, over 75 per cent of British families owned a Bible.

Although evangelicals envisaged the Bible as the primary text for the reading Christian, other forms of literature were also seen to forward the cause of spiritual and social reform. John Wesley declared himself to be a homo unius libri (man of one book – the Bible), but he nevertheless placed heavy emphasis on the value of Christian literature for the reformation of the soul, believing that ‘[r]ead[ing] Christians’ were ‘knowing Christians’. Wesley, a man of almost incomparable energy, played a central role in the creation of a literature-hungry evangelical readership. His fifty-volume The Christian Library communicated a body of spiritual literature, frequently in a condensed and pithy format, while his monthly Arminian Magazine reached a large and loyal readership. These texts, which directed the reading Christian to correct models of religious devotion, social responsibility and work discipline, were designed to counter the lure of popular literature and entertainments. A host of voluntary organisations and missionary societies from across the evangelical spectrum extended these campaigns in the nineteenth century, expanding upon the body of ‘improving’ literature created by early tract societies from the late seventeenth century. The Religious Tract Society, founded in 1799, disseminated over twenty-three million publications in Britain and Ireland in the decade following 1840, while in the same period, the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge published around four million items per annum. These projects were undertaken with the hope of inculcating new models of piety and sobriety and disseminating ‘useful knowledge’ to a Christian readership. Such campaigns took on extra meaning in the ‘Celtic fringes’ of the Highlands and Ireland, where evangelical organisations launched...
extensive proselytisation and educational campaigns in the hope of liberating
the peasantry from illiteracy and Catholic ‘superstition’.31

Instructional literature was only one product of evangelical presses. Print
had many functions for evangelical Protestants intent on remaking the world.
The press was an effective fund-raising tool, as missionary reports of souls
saved and the heathen awaiting the gospel in Africa, Asia and the Pacific were
written to keep Christians at home informed, but also to solicit the donations
that were essential to the continued function of missionary societies. In the
early nineteenth century, a host of new evangelical periodicals flourished and
provided a metropolitan audience with lively accounts of the trials of the mission
field and detailed discussions of the various communities, from the Highlands
of Scotland to Tahiti, from England’s industrial cities to rural Bengal, amongst
whom the missionaries worked. Journals such as The Methodist Magazine and
The Evangelical Magazine were hugely popular, with circulations in the vicinity
of twenty thousand. These circulation figures placed them amongst the most
influential journals of the day, clearly eclipsing, for example, the sales figures of
The Edinburgh Review.32 As this evangelical book market grew, new specialised
journals developed, tailoring their material and language to meet the sensibilities
of specifically youth and female readerships.33

Offering a mix of illustrations, pictorial and textual exoticism, religious
commentary and political discussion, missionary periodicals created a global
picture of British missionary activity at a moment when evangelical propagandists
could link missionary expansion with the national interest. During the Napoleonic
wars, a Church Missionary Society publication argued:

At this hour, religion, Protestant Religion, is the bulwark, shield, sword and
glory of Britain; and if Providence had placed under her domain the provinces
of the distant East, it is hard to say for what purpose, worthy of the Judge of
Earth, it is done, unless it be, that we may impart to them the blessed religion
of Jesus.34

Of course, Anglo-French conflict contained – and to some degree was animated by
– religious tensions, which missionaries proved themselves adept at manipulating.
Claudius Buchanan, Chaplain to the East India Company and a leading theorist of
mission, argued in his Colonial ecclesiastical establishments that British imperial
strength could be used to extend the ‘National church’. Elsewhere he argued that
Protestant missions in Asia, ‘defenceless and unprotected’, required government
support to ‘counteract the influence of the ecclesiastical power of ROME’.35
Anglicanism, Buchanan maintained, could provide a stabilising influence which
would weld an increasing disparate and diverse empire together.36

Similar arguments were articulated in the North American context after
the American Revolution. In 1786, William Knox, a member of the Society for
the Propagation of the Gospel and the former Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote that the ‘Prevalence of the Church of England’ in Britain’s remaining North American colonies was that best means of ensuring the continued ‘Fidelity and attachment’ of the colonists to British interests. As the nineteenth century progressed however, evangelicals would frequently express deep-seated suspicions of the British state and of colonial companies (expressed forcefully in debates over the charter of the East India Company, the New Zealand Company’s plans for colonisation and the provision of resources for Indian Christians). Faith, morality and imperial patriotism were increasingly entwined between 1783 and 1815 as British imperial holdings were consolidated in Ireland, the Mediterranean and beyond.

A missionary presence was established in New Zealand at the very end of this period. In fact, Samuel Marsden preached the first sermon of the Church Missionary Society mission at Oihi in the Bay of Islands, on Christmas Day 1814. Marsden soon returned to New South Wales, leaving the fledgling mission at Rangihoua (close to Oihi) in the hands of the first three missionaries: William Hall, a carpenter; John King, a shoe and rope maker; and Thomas Kendall, a farmer and teacher. It was these three missionaries, but especially Kendall, who would have to struggle with a problem that Marsden had left them with: translation. Although Marsden had enjoyed regular contact with Māori visiting the New South Wales colony and had established a close relationship with Ruatara, the Ngāpuhi ariki (chief) who acted as a patron of the mission, it was immediately clear that communicating Christian doctrine to Māori was going to be a difficult task. After Marsden’s initial sermon:

The Natives told Duaterra [Ruatara] that they could not understand what I meant. He replied, that they were not to mind that now, for they would understand by and bye; and that he would explain my meaning as far as he could. When I had done preaching, he informed them what I had been talking about.

Confident of Māori intellectual abilities and full of zeal, Marsden felt ‘much gratified’ with his reception, believing that mission labour in New Zealand would be ‘crowned and blessed with success’.

The linguistic and cultural translations challenging the early missionaries living amongst Māori were nothing new, at least within the broad sweep of Christian history. Of course, translation was deeply embedded in Christian tradition, occupying both a prominent position in the Bible and the historical experience of the early church. At a theological level, many Christian commentators had
understood the Incarnation itself was an act of translation, remembering that Jesus himself was described in this way: ‘And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us’ (John 1:14). Lamin Sanneh has traced the development of the impulse to translate Christianity from the time of Paul, arguing that out of the encounters between Jew and Gentile and then between Christianity and Greek culture, a distinctive tradition of Christian mission developed. The chief characteristic of this missionary impulse, in Sanneh’s view, was the fundamental importance attached to translation and cross-cultural communication in the preaching of the gospel. Even when the hierarchy of the medieval church upheld Latin as the sacred language of liturgy, vernacular languages were crucial media for religious exposition and individual devotion. Unlike Islam, which would place such a heavy emphasis on the revealed nature of Arabic and the resulting perfection of the Qur'an, ensuring a profound cultural continuity within the Islamic world, Christianity quickly became a vernacular faith, as distinctive localised traditions developed amongst the Celts, Slavs, Copts and Ethiopians.

Sanneh suggested that a tension between this long-standing tradition of ‘vernacularisation’ and the assimilationist aims of empires, whether medieval, early modern or modern, has been at the heart of the globalisation of Christianity. One of Sanneh’s objectives was to draw attention to the importance of translation within the Catholic tradition of mission, particularly as it developed within the Spanish imperial world from the sixteenth century. Sanneh noted that while Protestants emphasised the translation of Scripture itself, because it was their ‘crucial standard of authority’, Roman Catholic missionaries undertook the translation of the catechism, their ‘teaching authority’, into a multiplicity of languages in the Americas, the Philippines, Japan and India.

In the South Asian context, Jesuit missionaries gained few converts but some, most notably Robert de Nobili, made significant progress in the ‘vernacularisation’ of Christianity. But until the 1760s, European knowledge of Indian languages, apart from the Persian of north Indian courtly tradition, was disorganised and unreliable. Under the patronage of Warren Hastings, the Governor of Bengal, skill in Indian languages was a foundation of the Company’s administration and a huge effort was devoted to the study of Indian languages. Company servants, most notably men like Nathaniel Brassey Halhed and John Gilchrist devoted themselves to the study of vernacular languages like Hindustani and Bengali, producing grammars, dictionaries and translations. From 1792, the East India Company found an unlikely ally in this linguistic project in the form of the British Protestant missionaries, whose preaching the Company were attempting to restrain. Where the Company was attempting to gain a command of Indian languages in order to cement their authority, Protestant missionaries sought such linguistic knowledge as the first step in the Christianisation of India.

The Baptist William Carey – whose *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians*
to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen was pivotal in offering a theological justification (through the doctrine of ‘means’) for overseas missionary activity and turned the gaze of British Protestants to their vast empire – embodied the centrality of language to Protestant mission enterprise. Although a humble shoemaker Carey, the moving force behind the foundation of the Baptist Missionary Society and the establishment of the Baptist Serampore mission, exhibited considerable linguistic ability, and even greater drive as he devoted himself to the study of Indian languages. Under Carey’s influence, the Baptist Missionary Society saw that the translation of scripture into the vernacular languages of mission fields was fundamental to the success or failure of evangelisation. Carey led the way, working in close consultation with indigenous language experts on grammars of South Asian languages and translations of scripture. Carey was responsible for six complete translations of the Bible (Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Oriya and Sanskrit) and contributed to some twenty-nine other translations, while he also authored (or, more correctly, co-authored) grammars and dictionaries of Bengali, Marathi and Sanskrit. This Indian experience was crucial as a model for missionaries elsewhere by confirming the tradition of the cultural vernacularisation of Christianity and placing even greater emphasis on language in missionary policy. It was an example followed throughout the Pacific.

Within the New Zealand context, however, translation proved a serious barrier to the fulfilment of Marsden’s high expectations. As Marsden began preparations for the foundation of the New Zealand mission he stressed that the missionaries required books to guide them. The Bible was to offer spiritual solace and moral direction in a strange land, while ‘useful’ manuals would guide the missionaries in their trades and provide a body of knowledge that might eventually be communicated to Māori. Marsden insisted that the Church Missionary Society supply William Hall, the carpenter, with the ‘necessary Books and draughts’. Marsden attempted to provide the missionaries with the best possible linguistic training, as he prepared to sail with two of the first missionaries to New South Wales (where they would spend some four years), he was delighted to find a Māori, ‘a very fine young man’, aboard. Marsden hoped that this fortunate coincidence would allow William Hall and John King to gain ‘some Knowledge of the New Zealand language’, preparing ‘their minds for more easily understanding the natives when they arrive’. Such instruction would be supplemented by an attempt to systemise the knowledge gained as Marsden planned to ‘draw up a short Vocabulary’ in cooperation with Hall, King and the ‘New Zealander’. But here, as in his reflections on his first sermon in 1814, Marsden’s hopes were too high. With the exception of Kendall (and James Shepherd, a gardener and lay missionary who arrived in 1820) the early missionaries sent by the Church Missionary Society to New Zealand had limited linguistic ability. Hampered by
poor education, meagre resources and constant fears about the security of the mission, the initial progress of the mission was uneven. Kendall was responsible for the mission school where Māori learnt to read and write and were introduced to the basic elements of the Protestant tradition.

Kendall quickly collated A Korao no New Zealand; or, the New Zealander’s First Book, a work published in 1815 that identified basic elements of the grammar and provided a vocabulary of everyday terms and some very basic cultural concepts. In addition to a simple word list, Kendall’s text also contained parallel English and Māori sentences, such as ‘Behold! Jesus Christ is the great and good Atua [god], the great and good friend to white and black men; to all men.’ Many of these phrases embody Kendall’s uncertainty over the linguistic and cultural translations he was undertaking. ‘God’, a term fundamental to missionary projects, was especially problematic. There was a disjunction between the English word ‘god’ and ‘atua’, the Māori term that missionaries identified as the nearest possible equivalent. In the Polynesian world, where the boundary between the material world and supernatural was thin and porous, ‘atua’ could designate culture heroes, malevolent spirits, departed ancestors, chiefs of high standing as well as the supernatural beings resembling the ‘gods’ missionaries looked for. Initially, at least, Māori found the concept of the Christian God as elusive as the missionaries found Māori atua: Did God have a body? Where did he live? Was he English? Why did this God seem both loving and angry?

This disjunction between cosmologies led many missionaries and travellers to doubt that Māori had any equivalent of religion. Kendall himself, for example, argued that the Māori ‘does not, so far as I can learn, bow down to a stock [sic] or a stone; but he magnifies himself in a god’. The only elements he could discern in the Māori world view were ‘pride and ignorance, cruelty and licentiousness’. While on occasion Kendall translated ‘God’ as ‘Atua Nue’ [atua nui] (‘the great God’) – a rendering that implicitly recognised the multiplicity of Māori atua – he also produced Māori sentences which simply incorporated ‘Jehovah’ and ‘Lord’ as the name of the ‘Atua Nue’. In a similar vein, the English words ‘Paradise’, ‘Satan’ and ‘the Devil’ featured in the Māori sentences. While linguistic and cultural uncertainties imposed some limits on the vernacularisation of Christian terms in A Korao no New Zealand, the sample sentences affirmed the value that the early missionaries were placing on vernacular literacy: ‘It is good to read the language of New Zealand.’

This early linguistic work was extended and refined in 1820 when Kendall returned to England. Accompanied by the influential ariki (senior chief) Hongi Hika and the younger Hohaia Parata Waikato, Kendall travelled to Cambridge with the hope of fixing a basic linguistic framework for Europeans to study te reo Māori. In Cambridge Kendall and the ariki worked with Samuel Lee, Professor of Oriental languages, a prominent translator and grammarian who undertook
a range of linguistic work for the Church Missionary Society. Lee was at the forefront of Scriptural translation and linguistic scholarship and it was hoped that his assistance would help resolve the orthographic problems with which the missionaries struggled. The resulting volume, *A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand*, was a marked improvement upon Kendall’s earlier work. *A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language of New Zealand* (1820), like grammars and guidebooks in other colonial contexts, contained extensive sample dialogues where the missionary and ‘his pupil’ discuss the name of God, the Bible, the significance of the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, the Fall, the Incarnation of Jesus and the Crucifixion. As a grammatical text and teaching aid, this 1820 grammar provided missionaries with a basic framework for the preparation of sermons in Māori and was an essential starting point for the long and difficult process of Scriptural translation.

As we have seen from the discussion of Kendall’s work, early efforts at translation were *ad hoc* efforts, lacking coordination and authority. Falling back on what they knew best, the early ‘mechanic’ missionaries were more at ease communicating new agricultural skills and the proper use of European technology than immersing themselves in the profoundly important linguistic and hermeneutical questions raised by biblical translation. In the wake of Kendall’s grammatical work, it was a lay missionary, James Shepherd, and an Assistant Industrial Agent to the Church Missionary Society mission, William G. Puckey, who began translating significant sections of the Gospel. As the mission passed from Marsden’s control, greater emphasis was placed on the education of missionaries and coordinating the translation programme. From 1826, a committee of missionaries and their associates (including gifted ‘natural’ linguists like Puckey) worked together on a collection of key texts, including Genesis, John I, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer and a small assortment of hymns. Although this work was painstaking and intellectually challenging, significant progress was made when the resulting pamphlet was printed in Sydney, with the assistance of the New South Wales chapter of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Between 1827 and 1834, as translation work continued in New Zealand, the mission was reliant on printing presses in Sydney to produce various compilations of Scripture, catechisms, prayers and hymns. While this arrangement allowed Māori to be introduced to printed scripture, there was much dissatisfaction amongst the missionaries who were unhappy about the quality of the Sydney-produced material and the delays engendered by their reliance on distant presses.

Finally, in 1834, the New Zealand mission received a trained printer, the missionary William Colenso, and a functioning printing press. A gifted and
resourceful man, Colenso learnt to make the most of his meagre materials and quickly adapted to working in Māori. In fact, the pressure on Colenso quickly mounted. The mission press failed to keep up with a strong Māori demand that had grown steadily since 1830, and evidence suggests that in some locations at least, literacy outstripped the supply of Bibles. As Colenso’s press produced substantial runs of vernacular material, large numbers of Māori converted to Christianity and many more incorporated aspects of the new belief into their world view, even if they did not formally convert. In response to this increased demand, the Church Missionary Society press produced three-and-a-half million pages of Māori language texts between January 1835 and the beginning of 1840, and produced a further two million pages in 1840. In 1841, 1843 and 1845, the Māori New Testament was reprinted in runs of twenty thousand. By this stage, the missionaries had saturated the market – my conservative calculations suggest that there were two New Testaments in circulation for every three Māori in 1845.

Missionary translations and the printing boom were crucial cultural contexts for the debates in the late 1830s that would determine the future relationship between the British Crown and Māori. From the missionary perspective, the success of the printing press and a new-found Māori interest in Scripture were signs of a great age of conversion. By 1840 one missionary was, perhaps over optimistically, able to suggest that ‘full three-fourths’ of local Māori had ‘embraced the gospel’. The battle was not entirely won, however. Throughout the 1830s, the missionaries feared that while great progress had been made, the spiritual status of Māori was fragile. As the white trading community grew in the far north of the North Island and New England whaling ships visited the Bay of Islands with increasing frequency, the missionaries feared that Māori were being ‘contaminated’ by this contact. Whites were exploiting Māori women, introducing muskets, tobacco and alcohol into coastal communities, and the immorality of white sailors and traders were undercutting the positive effects of Christianity. The missionaries attempted to construct a social boundary around Paihia, the new mission headquarters, to limit the ‘degrading’ effects of Kororareka, the nearby port-town, which the missionaries dubbed the ‘Hell’.

The missionaries’ attacks on settler morality were extended and elaborated by James Busby, the British resident who arrived in the Bay of Islands in 1833. Hamstrung by meagre resources and lacking military support, Busby was unable to exercise authority over the Bay’s white population, but his depictions of social change were extremely influential. In his reports Busby, like the missionaries, attacked the impact of the traders and whalers, stressing that they were primarily responsible for ‘permanent anarchy’ of the Bay. European-introduced disease and muskets were leading to rapid depopulation, a ‘decrease’ that local Māori ‘were perfectly sensible of’. Many Church Missionary Society missionaries argued that any further white settlement should be prevented and that the
aspirations of the New Zealand Company, which was planning the foundation of colonies, should be blocked. Underpinned by humanitarian concern and a desire to control European incursions in New Zealand, such arguments actually facilitated colonisation because they created an image of Māori enfeeblement that ‘necessitated’ annexation and suggested that the weak and diminishing ‘native’ population would easily displaced, an attractive image for speculators and settlers.

By 1839 the tide of opinion had shifted. Some leading missionaries, including Henry Williams, supported formal British intervention, especially after the New Zealand Company dispatched its first colonists in September 1839. Once organised white settlement was inevitable, the Colonial Office, also under evangelical sway, decided (with ‘extreme reluctance’) that annexation was the only solution. A treaty would provide the best means of extinguishing Māori independence, which had been officially recognised by the Colonial Office in 1835, while in return Māori would receive law and the rights of British subjects. Ultimately, on 6 February 1840 at Waitangi, after heated discussion, forty-three chiefs from the far north (they would be followed by almost five hundred more) signed a treaty that guaranteed chiefly authority and resource rights, but transferred sovereignty over New Zealand to the Queen.

The Treaty they signed was in Māori, a text which fundamentally transformed the future of New Zealand, but whose ambiguity and imprecision encapsulated the problems of linguistic and cultural translation that had troubled the missionaries over the previous twenty-five years. Hastily translated from an English draft by Henry Williams and his son Edward, the Māori text failed to accurately convey several key concepts, particularly the shades of meaning and significance attached to ‘sovereignty’ in British legal tradition. As one historian has observed, the language Henry and Edward Williams used was ‘Protestant missionary Maori’, an idiom heavily moulded by earlier scriptural translation. The two key terms in the Treaty – ‘rangatiratanga’ and ‘kawanatanga’ – were both used in Māori scripture. ‘Rangatiratanga’ had been used by the missionaries to describe God’s kingdom, while ‘kawana’ (a transliteration of Governor) was used in the scripture to describe the authority of rulers; Pontius Pilate, for example, was described as a ‘kawana’. In the context of the Treaty, however, ‘rangatiratanga’ was supposed to convey the ‘possession of lands’, while ‘kawanatanga’ was supposed to designate ‘all the rights and powers of Sovereignty’.

The difficult nature of these translations and the cultural disjunctions which framed the Treaty continue to exercise political activists, lawyers and historians. In particular, the role of the missionaries continues to be debated. What precisely
were their motives in translating the Treaty? Were they simply pawns of empire that played a central role in the colonisation of New Zealand and the destruction of Māori culture? Where modern historians have tended to depict missionaries as either agents of modernisation or, more typically in the New Zealand case, as ‘cultural imperialists’ intent on destroying native culture as the first step in evangelisation, a very different picture is conveyed by contemporary British and settler sources. The missionaries’ critics, the advocates of colonisation, particularly in the ‘systematic’ forms pursued by the New Zealand Company, attacked evangelical missionaries as obstacles to cultural assimilation and social modernisation. Even after the Treaty made organised white settlement a possibility, *Fisher’s Colonial Magazine and Colonial Maritime Journal* attacked the cultural and linguistic policies of the missionaries. The printed form of the Māori language was, it suggested, ‘formed by Mr. Lee from the sounds of two natives, brought from New Zealand by Mr. Kendal [sic.]’. The sole object of this ‘creation’ was ‘to keep the native aloof from the English settler’. Missionaries, as self-appointed and ‘nominal’ protectors of Māori interests, were a serious barrier to the development of colonial society. For missionaries the way ahead was clear: ‘Cultivate the English language by every possible means, and lead the native to forget his own.’

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the leading theorist of systematic colonisation and moving force behind the New Zealand Company, launched a polemical attack against missionary language policy in the same journal in 1845. His argument began:

> A NEWSPAPER in the Maori, or native New Zealand language, has been published at Auckland, in New Zealand. It is a great mistake to laud this paper; it is in truth a link added to that chain, which has been gradually forged for the purpose of surrounding the natives as a distinct race, and to prevent their amalgamation with the settler, and consequent civilisation and attainment of real Christianity.

Wakefield and many other critics overlooked the significant transformations in faith and morality the missionaries hoped to effect through the vernacularised gospel and argued that the central thrust of missionary policy was the maintenance of indigenous culture and language. Here Wakefield clearly rejected the notion of an indigenous Māori Christianity (or Christianities), equating ‘real Christianity’ with British culture and ‘amalgamation’ as the assimilation of Māori into British norms. Wakefield suggested that ‘the only way, to really and not nominally Christianise the aborigines, is to first teach them our language; by degrees they will adopt our habits, they will amalgamate, civilisation will follow, and Christianity’.

His son, Edward Jerningham Wakefield, argued that Anglicisation was a necessity because of the cultural and linguistic poverty of Māori: ‘The
Maori language is essentially a poor one, and it possesses in particular but few words which express abstract ideas.69 For the Wakefields, a civilised colonial world of trade and politics necessitated the destruction of the Māori language.

But the Māori language exhibited a strength and vitality that was not easily crushed. The missionaries’ insistence on the vernacularisation of Christianity and the productivity of the mission presses created a body of printed material that would serve as a touchstone for decades to come. Even when some missionaries began to favour teaching Māori English in the mid-1840s, and Māori grew increasingly sceptical of missionary intentions as the settler population grew, the Bible remained fundamentally important to Māori communities.70 This was made clear when missionaries began to revisit the earliest translations, refining them and striving for greater consistency. Such revisions were contested by Māori who believed that, as the Word of God, the Māori Bible was perfect and should not be altered.71

By 1860, the vernacular Bible had saturated Māori society with one Māori New Testament per capita in circulation, a remarkable figure given that these communities were non-literate less than fifty years before. Of course, the diffusion of printed texts is not necessarily an indicator of literacy. This was particularly the case in Māori society where the accumulation of goods was integral to the construction of personal status and was an important vehicle in inter-tribal competition.72 McKenzie has also demonstrated that in many instances Māori used books as charms and talismans or even used the paper in the construction of cartridges for their firearms.73 He suggested that Māori literacy and Māori conversion was a mirage, borne out of missionary propaganda and their overwhelming stress on the power of print and the gospel.74 For McKenzie the most telling evidence of Māori literacy, or continued non-literacy, was the ‘ability or inability to write a signature’.75 He noted that of the 520 or so chiefs who signed the Treaty of Waitangi only seventy-two were able to sign their name, leading to the conclusion that perhaps 13 or 14 per cent of the population were literate.

This test, however, is problematic. While a signature might be taken as an easily quantifiable measure of literacy, it can be misleading. We know that in many societies, including Māori, individuals could often read without having the ability to write. Moreover, religious literacy of the type common among Māori was focused on reading, and within such a context less of a premium might be placed on the ability to write. McKenzie’s sample, moreover, was not representative, as the senior chiefs who signed the Treaty typically belonged to an older social order. Although some of the chiefs acted as patrons and protectors of missionaries and merchants, they were the section of indigenous society least acquainted with Christianity and literacy. Missionary schools, which were central in the dissemination of literacy, accepted Māori of both genders and of all
classes, but the pupils were more frequently from the bottom half of the society. For the Māori elite their mana (power, status) was derived from their ancestry, their ability to wage war, and from the accumulation of taonga (precious goods, including food, weapons, and even missionaries). The older chiefs had limited use for literacy and some resisted consorting with the lowly types who attended missionary schools. Conversely, Christianity and literacy had a greater appeal to those at the bottom of the social order, particularly former slaves, who were conspicuous as ‘native teachers’, spreading Christianity and literacy well beyond the frontiers of missionary influence. For these ‘little people’, literacy allowed them to function as intermediaries between the Pākehā and older, more traditional Māori. Most importantly, however, it allowed them to access Christianity, which proclaimed an egalitarian vision and promised eternal suffering for sinners, doctrines that had obvious appeal for ex-slaves.

Contrary to McKenzie’s insistence that vernacular literacy was a ‘chimera’, there is significant evidence that establishes that a substantial number of nineteenth-century Māori could not only read but also had confident handwriting, an important point in light of the weight McKenzie attaches to the signature as an indicator of literacy. The best estimates of the extent of vernacular Māori literacy come from A. S. Thomson’s exhaustively researched *The Story of New Zealand* (1859), which suggested that approximately half of the adult Māori population could read Māori and that around a third could both read and write. But such figures do not convey important variations within the population, particularly patterns shaped by region and age. Certain Māori tribal groups, Ngāti Whātua for example, were renowned for their literacy and coastal tribes that were engaged in frequent contact with Pākehā generally enjoyed higher rates of literacy than those in the inaccessible interior. Equally importantly, literacy was embraced more readily by a younger generation, which grew up with a closer knowledge of Pākehā than their elders. In 1841, the perceptive traveller R. G. Jameson noted that literacy was extremely widespread among those Māori between ages ten and thirty. While older Māori were less interested in this skill, young Māori placed high value on it and even taunted illiterate Pākehā.

This generation gap became clear as some younger Māori expressed an interest in using the print medium to preserve oral traditions. Leading government officials and amateur ethnographers offered indigenous informants free lodgings, money or other gifts in return for recording various tribal traditions. Younger Māori who were literate, familiar with Christianity, and accustomed to the market economy, seized these opportunities. However, their elders were not pleased, as they believed that such knowledge was tapu (sacred) and sharing it with Pākehā would undermine its tapu status and might also lead to illness and death. But these elders were unable to stem the tide. Younger Māori eagerly embraced literacy, becoming avid letter writers and used their new skills to
request detailed biblical exegesis from missionaries, to preserve genealogies and to record patterns of land holding. Effectively these innovations ‘disembodied’ knowledge. Old traditions were no longer the sole preserve of wise elders and tohunga (religious specialists), as Pākehā and Māori of all ranks could read and reflect on these new ‘fixed’ versions of tradition at their leisure.82

The profound political impact of Christianity and literacy is most clear from the late 1850s. Although there is much evidence to indicate waning Māori interest in missionary Christianity in this period, the Bible, Christian theology and literacy shaped political activism and notions of community. Here we can note three important strands in Māori thought, strands that reveal the interdependence between older oral traditions and literacy, and the imbrication of pre-colonial beliefs and new ideas derived from the Bible: the King Movement, loyalist or neutral Māori Christianity, and Māori prophetic traditions.

Christianity played a crucial (but often neglected) role in the elucidation of the ideology and aims of the King Movement, founded in 1857 by Waikato Māori in the hope that the alienation of Māori land could be controlled. While the movement’s aim was to limit Pākehā influence in the ‘King Country’, its ideology and political language was profoundly Christian. Iwikau Te Heuheu, who presided over the investiture of Potatau Te Wherowhero as the first king, asserted the primacy of Christianity in Kīngitanga (the culture of the King Movement):

Potatau, this day I create you King of the Maori People. You and Queen Victoria shall be bound together to be one (pai-here-tia kia kotahi). The religion of Christ shall be the mantle of your protection; the law shall be the whariki mat for your feet, for ever and ever onward.83

This investiture ceremony reflected the remarkably swift integration of Christianity into the construction and projection of political authority. Not only did Iwikau Te Heuheu insist on the cohesive and protective role of Christianity, but the Māori Bible was also the central ritual object in the coronation.84 Ultimately, the power of God sanctified and legitimised the power of the new King. The Māori King was responsible for the maintenance of law and order within Kīngitanga’s aukati (boundary), known by Pākehā as ‘the King Country’, while the Queen’s sovereignty was recognised by all New Zealanders, Māori and Pākehā, outside the aukati: ‘The King on his piece; the Queen on her piece, God over both; and Love binding them to each other’.85

Other Māori Christians, however, felt uneasy with the agenda of the King Movement. They placed their religious identity as Christians first, pledging allegiance to the Crown as long as it acted in a Christian manner. William Williams,
the Church Missionary Society missionary based at Tūranga (Gisborne), reported in 1863 that the local Rongowhakaata leader Anaru had rejected the overtures of the King Movement. Anaru asserted that Christianity, not the King Movement, was the basis of his own community’s future: ‘there was no unity except under the Gospel and no sure foundation but Christ’. These arguments were frequently restated at meetings and in innumerable letters by those Māori who rejected the legitimacy of the Māori King. Ngāti Kahungunu leaders from Gisborne, for example, wrote to the Governor to reassure him that they were loyal and that ‘cultivation’ and ‘the buying of clothes, and vessels’ were their interests, not war: ‘The heart which has enmity towards God or man is an evil thing. Love to God and man is peace with God, the Queen, and her subjects.’

These ‘loyal’ Māori did not see themselves simply as ‘Maoi Christians’, rather they were ‘Mihinare Maoi’ (missionary/Anglican Māori), ‘Weteriana Maoi’ (Methodist Māori) or ‘Katorika Maoi’ (Catholic Māori). From the late 1820s, distinctive sectarian identities emerged as Wesleyan and Catholic missionaries joined the Anglicans in the New Zealand mission field. Māori religious affiliation was often determined by old agendas as denominational identity became a new vehicle for kin group rivalries and, in turn, Christian identities became a means of reinscribing boundaries between rival kin groups. Both Catholicism and Methodism also became ‘denominations of dissent’, allowing kin groups to emphasise their autonomy from both the control of Pākehā and powerful Māori Anglican groups.

The intensely sectarian programmes of the missionaries undoubtedly deepened these tensions. Both Wesleyan and Anglican missionaries drew on pre-existing Māori resentment of the French to launch sustained anti-Catholic campaigns and print was their most important vehicle. In response to the establishment of the Catholic mission, the Church Missionary Society produced a raft of anti-Catholic pamphlets drawing on the stock images of evangelical anti-Catholicism. As a result, Māori routinely called Jean-Baptiste Pompallier, the Catholic Bishop, the ‘Anti-Christ’. The strength of these sectarian identities became clear in the 1850s when missionaries and Māori of various denominations were embroiled in heated doctrinal debates that drew intense Māori interest.

Just as historians have devoted greater attention to those Māori who fought against the Crown in the 1860s than to the majority of Māori who did not fight (either for or against the Crown), the existing historiography on Māori religion has generally neglected these more explicitly orthodox forms of Māori Christianity to focus on the more radical and sensational responses to Christianity and the host of Māori prophets, millennial movements and healing cults. The characteristic feature of these prophetic movements was their active engagement with the Old Testament. Whereas the first two strands of Māori Christianity focused on the New Testament and the figure of Christ, the prophetic movements drew heavily
on the narratives and parables of the Old Testament, which was printed in its entirety in Māori in 1858. In 1864, one leading colonial reported that Māori were ‘exceedingly fond of reading the books of the Old Testament, in which they find described a state of civilisation not unlike their own’. The angry and vengeful God of the Hebrews was far closer to Māori atua than the God of the New Testament. The Christian God was, as one Māori observed, ‘too quiet, too lazy, and so no good for the Maori’.95

The Old Testament’s narratives of enslavement and its promise of salvation for God’s chosen people, held great appeal for Māori who had experienced the hardships of disease, depopulation, land sales and war. Pai Mārire (or Hauhau), the most important prophetic movement of the 1860s, consciously emphasised the Māori-Israelite link and its founder, Te Ua Haumene, signed himself as ‘Te Ua Jew’ or ‘Te Ua a peacable Jew’.96 His described his homeland, the Taranaki, as ‘wahi o Keenana’ (the land of Canaan) and ‘Iharaira’ (Israel) while the land-hungry Pākehā were ‘nga Parihi’ (the Pharisees).97 The Old Testament was integral to the teachings of the other great prophet of the 1860s, Te Kooti Arikirangi. Te Kooti saw himself as a Māori Moses, a leader who would free a persecuted group from bondage and functioned as a conduit for God’s instructions to his Chosen People. In services, parables, and prophecies, Te Kooti consistently identified Māori as the Israelites and Pākehā as the Egyptian oppressors.98 Over the next two decades, Te Kooti delivered a series of parables promising that he would drive the ‘wicked’ out of the Promised Land.99 These parables were the product of a powerful concordance between Old Testament notions of prophethood and matakite, the gift of foresight.100 Te Kooti assured his followers that divine favour insured success:

Fear not because thy cry hath reached unto God, and God hath heard thy crying, hearken I will strengthen thee and will cause thee to know the things whereof I had spoken unto your forefathers, to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob and all their children down to David.101

As this quotation shows, the Māori identification with the Israelites had gone beyond a simple analogy between the Māori and Israelite experience of oppression. Te Kooti insisted that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David were the forefathers of Māori. Te Ua also insisted that Māori actually were Jews. ‘Ua Rongopai’ ends with the injunction: ‘kei hoki ki te Whare o Tapeta, engari e hoki ki te Whare o Hema’ – ‘Do not return to the House of Japheth, but return to the House of Shem’.102 Te Ua accepted the three-fold division of humanity into the descendants of Japheth (Tapeta), Shem (Hema) and Ham (Hama) conveyed in missionary translations and texts.103 It is important to note that just as there was a powerful similarity between the gifts of prophethood and matakite (the gift of foresight), the Old Testament’s strong emphasis on genealogy was in keeping
with Māori tradition where, as we have seen, whakapapa (genealogy) was fundamental to individual or group identity. In fact Christianity and pre-colonial tradition became increasingly imbricated and as Christianity spread, many Māori whakapapa began to assimilate the genealogies of the Old Testament. Noa (Noah) and Hema (Shem) began to appear as ancestral names in Māori genealogies that defined the history and identity of the kin group. But in the new world of the 1860s these genealogies were increasingly recorded in a written form. Māori and Judeo-Christian elements were woven together in new printed narratives and genealogies that enjoyed the authority that Pākehā, and increasingly Māori, conferred upon the printed word.

These new hybridised visions of tradition are a telling emblem of the profound outcomes of Māori engagements with both print and the Bible. If we examine the King Movement, the range of Māori sectarian identities, or Māori prophetic traditions, we can see a weaving together of the old and the new. The dominant models in New Zealand historiography – ‘the fatal impact’ or ‘cultural continuity’ arguments – fail to illuminate the constructive and creative response of Māori to rapid and painful changes wrought by colonialism. Old values and traditions were challenged and re-evaluated as the old men who signed the Treaty of Waitangi struggled with the new world of the 1860s. By this time indigenous society and culture was increasingly hybridised, as Māori embraced many Judeo-Christian ideas as well as drawing upon those elements of tradition which remained powerful. In the mixed and new world of a colonial society some degree of accommodation was inevitable. The dynamism of these cross-cultural exchanges, where Christianity and tradition were interwoven and literacy and oral tradition were frequently interdependent, is a powerful reminder of the ability of ‘traditional’ societies to adapt quickly and effectively to new technologies, ideas and political orders. This provides an insight of some importance in our own age of globalisation where technology and social communication are changing so rapidly.
On 1 March 1865, the Church Missionary Society missionaries Thomas Grace and Carl Sylvius Völkner arrived at Völkner’s Opotiki mission station in the Bay of Plenty, on the east coast of New Zealand’s North Island. The missionaries had been in the colonial capital Auckland and were returning to the station despite warnings from the local Te Whakatōhea iwi (tribe) they should stay away. The Opotiki region had been unsettled for at least a year while community leaders debated whether or not to join the people of Tauranga and Waikato in open war against the colonial government. The tensions within Te Whakatōhea were deepened by the presence of emissaries from Te Ua Haumene, the prophetic leader of the Pai Mārire ('Good and Peaceful') movement, active in Taranaki on the west coast of the North Island. Te Ua offered his followers a revolutionary eschatology that suggested as God’s prophet he would lead Māori, who he saw as Israelites, to cast off colonial oppression and restore New Zealand as the Promised Land, Canaan. Although Te Ua’s messengers, Kereopa Te Rau and Patara Te Raukatauri, identified as Hauhau (who followed a militaristic variant of Te Ua’s gospel), they had been sent to build unity with these eastern communities in a time of war. And although they carried with them the dried head of a soldier – designed to weaken the resolve of troops fighting against Māori – Te Ua’s instructions specified that the men were not to ‘do anything at all to the pakeha’.

A large party of local men, as well as Te Ua’s emissaries, detained Völkner and Grace as soon as they arrived at Opotiki. That evening Kereopa, members of Te Whakatōhea, and a number of men from allied iwi met and discussed their course of action; the majority advocated killing Völkner. On the following day, a party of about twenty armed men led the missionary to a large willow tree by his church. He prayed briefly, before shaking hands with his captors. They stripped Völkner down to his trousers, placed a noose around his neck and then hanged him. His corpse was cut down and one of the men beheaded the missionary. Kereopa then drained some blood from the body into a chalice, which he then either drank
or applied to his face, an example followed by others. Finally Kereopa gouged out Völkner's eyes and swallowed them after announcing that one represented Parliament and the other the Queen of England.

On 5 March, before Thomas Grace finally escaped his captors, a retrospective trial was held for Völkner: he was charged with being a secret Catholic, refusing to listen to the warning not to return to Opotiki and, most importantly, of being a government spy. This final charge was the substantial concern. Another influential Pai Mārire figure, Aperahama Tutoko, explained Völkner's killing by arguing that Völkner had been acting in the interest of the government, 'going backwards & forwards to the Town [Auckland]', informing on the people he lived amongst. The Catholic missionary Joseph Marie Garavel suggested that Völkner had been executed because of 'the conviction in the Maori mind of his being a government spy'. Völkner had in fact been passing on significant information about developments in the Opotiki region to the Governor, through direct correspondence and through Anglican networks hinging on William Williams, Bishop of Waipu.

Völkner's execution was a powerful demonstration of the stress that Māori placed on both information and loyalty. Their value in a time of war was further demonstrated by the difficulty that colonial forces had in apprehending Kereopa. Colonists felt this failure very keenly given the outrage provoked by the murder of Völkner and the persistent rumours about Kereopa's whereabouts and aspirations. Colonial officials and newspapermen saw Kereopa's actions at Opotiki as symptomatic of the innate irrationality and excessiveness of Hauhau warriors. Their 'fanatism' was seen to underpin their rejection of colonial authority and rendered them an unpredictable and potent threat to the future of the colony.

After eluding colonial forces, Kereopa travelled into Te Urewera, the traditional lands of the Tūhoe people, later in 1865. Tūhoe embraced Kereopa's teachings and the iwi offered him their protection as they themselves were drawn into open conflict with the state. By 1868, Kereopa's influence had begun to wane after a new warrior-prophet, Te Kooti Arikirangi, had also gained a considerable following after seeking refuge in Te Urewera. But Tūhoe did not lift their protective mantle. The strategic stronghold Kereopa occupied allowed him to evade contact with the expeditions launched by the colonial state into Te Urewera. It was only after Kereopa violated an agreement that he had made with Tūhoe leaders that he was finally handed over to the colonial authorities in 1871. By that stage Tūhoe had suffered considerably because of the Völkner murder, which had occurred outside their takiwa (tribal domain). Many of their prize lands had been confiscated, their economic base had been smashed by incursions made by both colonial soldiers and their Māori allies, and hunger and disease had also taken a heavy toll. By the early 1870s, the state was intent on punishing the killers of Völkner.
and also sought to open up Te Urewera through roads, the power of the market and the extension of state authority. Kereopa was swiftly tried for the murder of Völker in December 1871 and executed in January of the following year.15

These events introduce an important set of interpretative questions for the historian of imperial systems. What was the significance of information in rebellions against British colonial authority? How did native ways of thinking mould the aspirations and strategies of insurgent groups? What role did intelligence gathering and information flows play in the suppression of revolts? And what strategies allowed colonial states to reassert their paramountcy? These are very important questions for historians who seek to understand the significance and consequences of the long sequence of crises that shook the British Empire in the middle of the nineteenth century. These crises included the Matale rebellion in Ceylon in 1848, the Xhosa cattle-killing of 1856–7, the Santhal insurrection of 1855–6, the Indian rebellion of 1857–8, the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865 and the New Zealand wars between 1860–1872. This chapter focuses particularly on the Indian rebellion and the New Zealand wars. It uses these two sustained struggles – where deep rooted and extensive rebellions dismantled British sovereignty for extended periods – as a delimited way of examining the connections between information, colonialism, and the ability of imperial systems to reinvent themselves during and after times of crisis.

The obvious historiographical starting point for this kind of analysis is C. A. Bayly’s work on intelligence gathering and social communication in colonial India. Bayly’s landmark study *Empire and Information* suggested that the transformation of the British East India Company into a colonial power was dependent on the ability of its agents to access and reshape the complex forms of social communication that had developed in the courts and bazaars of Mughal north India. As colonial rule matured and as the political terrain of both India and Britain shifted, the Company increasingly attempted to ‘improve’ Indian knowledge traditions, foster new forms of western learning in India and to engage scribal experts and traditional authorities in debate over the nature of knowledge. Various Indian scholars and social groupings, he suggests, reworked these innovations. Bayly claimed the massive uprising against British rule in 1857–8 laid bare the gap that had developed between the colonial state and its subjects. Bayly’s monograph is an influential contribution to the sprawling literature on colonial knowledge within the British Empire.16 However, this chapter focuses on the connections *Empire and Information* drew between information and authority, an argument that has clear implications for how to think about the operation of the British Empire as a whole.

It is also productive to bring Bayly’s work into dialog with a broader interpretation of the cultural landscape of empire, which has been a prominent feature of work on the history of racial thought and in the so-called ‘new imperial history’. One
of the key concerns of the ‘new imperial history’ has been the ways in which
cultural difference encoded the political order. In reconstructing the development
of British ideas about cultural difference, much recent work has suggested that
race came to occupy a central position in imperial politics and culture in the
middle of the nineteenth century. Several historians have argued that during
the 1850s and 1860s British colonial officials, military men and colonists reacted
to a sequence of colonial crises by asserting the primacy of racial hierarchies in
both explaining the imperial order and the nature of colonised peoples.17 This
stress on the growing power of race echoed one of the central claims of a long
established tradition of work on the history of racial thought, where scholars
such as Christine Bolt, Douglas Lorimer, and George Stocking Jr also stressed
race’s centrality in ordering both scientific and popular British views of the world
in the wake of the colonial conflicts of the 1850s and 1860s.18 This interpretation
has been refreshed by more recent work by post-colonial scholars like Robert
Young, who have argued that heated mid-nineteenth-century debates over race
and hybridity were fed by the pressures of colonial authority and events like the
‘Mutiny’.19

So instead of viewing the New Zealand wars of the 1860s within a national
frame, this chapter places them back into their larger imperial context and
reads them alongside the largest rebellion against British rule in the period, the
‘Mutiny’ or ‘Rebellion’ in India in 1857–8.

So what was the connection between the colonial information order and the
rebellion of 1857–8? Essentially Bayly’s thesis is that the growing distance
between the colonial rulers and Indian society created a set of cultural barriers
that restricted flows of knowledge to state functionaries and, as a result, allowed
social space for rebellion to develop. The rebellion itself brought together disparate
elements of the social order – mutinous sepoys (soldiers), dispossessed elites,
disgruntled urban artisans, caste Hindus anxious about Company policy and
some Wahhabi-inspired jihadis (Sunni Muslims committed to the struggle for
Muslim autonomy) – into a common cause galvanised by the mobilising power
of religious idioms, dreams of millenarian renewal, and a series of inchoate
patriotisms.

In part at least, this insurrection developed and took its distinctive shape because
of the way the East India Company administered India and how it understood
the ‘native peoples’ it ruled over. Following its assumption of responsibilities for
administering Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1765, the British East India Company
worked hard to clothe their authority in the institutions and conventions of Mughal
rule.20 As its power was consolidated and extended, the Company drew on some
of the complex knowledge systems that had underwritten Mughal authority. They attempted to use these systems to maximise revenue flows, monitor the movements of their rivals, and secure the stability of economic life and the social order. Where possible the British bought their way into local knowledge networks, they attempted to turn local spies and runners to their service, as well as drawing on the complex system of political information produced through the offices of *akhbar nawis* (news writers installed at courts). Before 1800, the Company was also able to access some significant reservoirs of ‘affective knowledge’ through the intimate relationships that many Company officials and military figures established with Indian women. These dried up as a consequence of the legal and social pressures arising from a new rhetoric of imperial loyalty and racial superiority that took root in the 1790s. This cultural shift made these cross-cultural sexual connections and family formations a much less common feature of an increasingly ordered colonial social landscape. As this affective knowledge was lost, Company officials produced a new body of empirical colonial knowledge about contemporary social and economic organisation, as well as about influential textual and historical traditions. Company officials placed less trust in the human intelligence they gleaned from local runners, policemen and informants as they placed growing emphasis on the value of direct observation, on the surveillance of the output of presses printing pamphlets and periodicals in native languages, and the power of statistics to represent the society they ruled over. At the same time, the state worked very hard to police knowledge flows by restricting the flow of both strategic information and ‘opinion’ that came out of the military establishment and bureaucracy.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, attacks were launched against Indian knowledge experts and traditions, frequently by Britons in India who faced competition from literate South Asians drawn into the state’s bureaucracy and educational institutions. A clash of authorities took shape as South Asian religious leaders and advocates of the knowledge traditions subordinated under British rule decried the inversions of the colonial order. They were critical of the ways in which individuals of low status rose to power under British patronage and railed against the ‘pollution’ caused by Western medicine and sciences.

While these reorientations in colonial knowledge distanced the state from the Indian communities it ruled over, they are insufficient as an explanation for the outbreak of the mutiny in May 1857 or its development into a large-scale rebellion. The immediate cause of the mutiny lay in the changing conditions of service in the Company’s Bengal army, but there was widespread disaffection with colonial rule that enabled the mutinous soldiers to form connections with a range of other groups. Key factors here were the aggressive territorial expansion of the Company (made clear in the conquest of Punjab and the annexation of Awadh) and the willingness of the Company to interfere in ‘domestic’ matters,
such as marriage law, which produced a growing sense that the Company was intent on the propagation of Christianity. In the midst of swirling rumours and in the wake of several small mutinies, the 3rd Bengal Light Cavalry stationed at Meerut mutinied on 10 May 1857. This was the catalyst for a large-scale uprising. The soldiers, who were quickly joined by sepoys from the 11th Bengal Native Infantry and various bazaar goondas (ruffians), marched to Delhi and took control of the old Mughal capital. News of this success spread swiftly, triggering uprisings across the Gangetic valley and drawing significant numbers of men, especially young Muslims, long distances from across South Asia to Delhi. The rebels themselves looked for support over long distances, sending emissaries to Persia and Russia. Given the depth and range of the revolt, it took the British until June 1858 to reassert their authority over north India.

As Company forces attempted to re-establish their authority, a heated interpretative battle broke out over the nature of the rebellion: was it merely a military mutiny? Was it the product of a conspiracy? Had Muslims planned and coordinated the uprising? Was it essentially a protest against Christianisation by disgruntled Brahman (Hindu ritual experts)? Many of these arguments underlined the gap in knowledge and sentiment that was seen to separate the Company from Indian society. Some argued that this gap was the product of British attempts to reform and civilise India, while others suggested that this gap could only be bridged by the Christianisation of Indian society. Nevertheless, it was clear to most that the rebellion represented a failure to understand the ‘native mind’.

In the wake of the rebellion, the administrator and historian Sir John Kaye reflected that ‘[w]e know little of Native Indian society beyond its merest externals, the colour of the people’s skins, the form of their garments, the outer aspects of their houses’. While the British could sense the power of indigenous connections and communication, Kaye suggested they were outside these networks and their authority was therefore precarious: ‘[T]here is a certain description of news, which travels from one station to another with a rapidity almost electric.’ Kaye observed that news of the massacre of the Company army in Afghanistan in 1841 reached Calcutta through the bazaars of Karnal and Meerut days before Government House received any information. In a similar vein, sepoys in the force travelling to Burma heard of the Barrackpore mutiny before any British officials. Kaye’s interpretation must be placed alongside the substantial evidence that suggested that a complex mix of economic, social, political and religious factors set the tinder that the mutiny at Meerut sparked. The inability of the British to foresee either the likelihood of large-scale civil rebellion, or interpret the religious idioms that much disaffection was expressed through, meant that the Company’s establishment was blindsided by the revolt. Not knowing the ‘native mind’ almost cost Britain its control over India.

Given the important ways in which pre-colonial knowledge experts and
traditions shaped the colonial order, it is hardly surprising that colonial knowledge took a different shape in colonial New Zealand.\textsuperscript{32} The commonality of te reo Māori as a shared language and the fundamental cultural continuities between tribes meant that colonial officials in New Zealand were not confronted by the range of complexities that characterised South Asia's polyglot cultures, profound regional variations, and highly variegated social organisation. The smaller scale of both Māori and colonial society in New Zealand meant that high-ranking colonial administrators and Māori leaders were in frequent and direct contact, whereas in South Asia the state's bureaucratic machinery was increasingly complex and relationships with indigenous states were mediated by the more complicated processes and institutions of the colonial state.

In New Zealand during the 1850s, the pressing question was how was the state to enact its authority? This was of most significance in the central North Island, where over five-sixths of the land remained in Māori hands, colonists were hemmed in on coastal bridgeheads, and civil authorities and military leaders had very limited knowledge of the wooded and hilly interior. As the 1850s progressed, colonists placed increased pressure on the Governor to apply British law in ‘Māori districts’, even though section 71 of the 1852 Constitution Act allowed for the Governor to identify specific districts where Māori practices and customs could be maintained. During the 1850s, Governor George Grey had appointed Resident Magistrates to oversee the implementation of British law in several parts of the North Island. His successor Governor Browne reluctantly followed this path, appointing F. D. Fenton to act as a travelling magistrate in Waikato. Fenton’s presence in Waikato evoked considerable hostility and was an important catalyst for the proclamation of Potatau Te Wherowhero as the Māori King in 1857.\textsuperscript{33} Kīngitanga (the King Movement) attempted to maintain control of Māori-owned land, limit future sales of land, and assert the authority of an elected Māori king over a pan-tribal confederation, including Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Taranaki, Whanganui and Tainui. The hope of the movement was that this King would be able to stand on equal footing with the Queen of England.

Many settler politicians argued that the weakness of the Governor had allowed the emergence of the King Movement, which they saw as a serious challenge to the sovereignty of the Crown. For Governor Browne, Kīngitanga reflected the larger reality that British law continued to have little sway in Māori-dominated districts where it was, he reflected in 1860, a ‘dead letter’.\textsuperscript{34} By that stage he felt that Māori challenges to the sovereignty of the Governor and Crown could no longer be tolerated. Browne hoped that a single ‘sharp lesson’ from the army would crush resistance to the Crown’s sovereignty, but armed intervention in 1860 triggered a thirteen-year sequence of conflicts, campaigns, and rebellions throughout the central North Island.\textsuperscript{35} The resulting wars in Taranaki (1860–1, 1863–6) and Waikato (1863–4), the search for Kereopa (1865–1871) and the
campaigns against the prophets Titokowaru (1868–9) and Te Kooti (1868–72) reflected the colonial state's commitment to crushing any explicit challenge to its authority.

But the path to the actual outbreak of war in 1860 was quite slow, unlike the eruption of the rebellion in India. During the 1850s, the Governor and his agents engaged with Māori leaders on a sustained basis. Meetings, conferences, the exchange of letters, Māori language newspapers, and communication through missionaries and the Anglican church brought tribal leaders, influential leaders in the native church, and key figures in Kīngitanga into dialogue with the state. But by the end of the 1850s it seemed that these engagements were unable to direct Māori thought and action.36 Channels of cross-cultural communication were further closed down when Browne resolved to go to war in Taranaki in 1860. This closed off some important church and humanitarian networks that could have provided the state with detailed information on indigenous sentiment.37 Kīngitanga leaders also limited communication and the free flow of people, goods, and information. They refused to allow their lands to be opened up to road building in 1861. Without these routes it was very difficult to move large numbers of soldiers and artillery into the Waikato, which effectively delayed the state's invasion of the region by six months. Kīngitanga also imposed an aukati (boundary line) to separate the King's lands from those areas where the writ of colonial law was recognised. Even after the conclusion of the Waikato war, this was maintained with the aim of preventing military raids, controlling colonists entering the King's domain, stopping the flow of goods and preventing the construction of public works schemes. This was forcefully policed and colonists who transgressed the aukati without permission were liable to be killed.38

Despite this, colonial officials and newspapers generally saw Kīngitanga as a clear threat to their sovereignty, a movement whose aims and language were easily comprehensible.39 The language and symbols of Kīngitanga were clearly Christian and it was also possible to communicate with Kīngitanga leaders directly or through church figures such as the Anglican Bishop George Selwyn. Conversely, prophetic warriors like Kereopa, Te Kooti or Titokowaru were much more difficult for the state to engage with. To colonial officials their teachings were garbled and cryptic, they were excessive and fanatical, and their blend of religion and violence was a potent threat to the colonial order.40 These men did not speak the language of politics or rational protestant Christianity, preferring portent and prophecy. Te Ua's Pai Mārire faith and its militaristic Hauhau variant were both pentecostal in character; followers spoke in tongues and glossolalia (writing in tongues) was an important feature of the prophet's written lessons.41 Men like Kereopa, Te Kooti, and Titokowaru were elusive and inaccessible: they did not attend conferences with the Governor, they did not communicate in any regular way, they disappeared into the bush and hills, making their homes beyond
the reach of colonial power. The murder of Völkner, Kereopa’s swallowing of the missionary’s eyes, Titokowaru’s cannibalism, and Te Kooti’s violent raids were all seen as excessive, dangerous irruptions that threatened the security of the body politic as a whole.42 For many colonists their actions were a re-enactment of the worst atrocities of the rebellion in India. In 1869, Sir Edward Stafford, a colonial politician renowned for his moderate pragmatism, suggested that in Te Kooti’s actions ‘[e]very atrocity of the Sepoy rebellion had been paralleled and outdone in the raids, burnings, violations, tortures and cannibalism of the last nine months in New Zealand, and with less provocation or excuse’ .43

How were these anti-colonial movements suppressed? In India, the pacification of the revolt was only possible because it remained contained to central portions of north India. The Bombay Presidency in the west and the Madras Presidency in the south largely remained calm, with the key princely states, such as Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Mysore, not joining the rebellion. Most importantly, in Punjab powerful Sikh princes supported the Company by providing soldiers. The Company was able to mobilise large numbers of Punjabi troops, in part by stoking their animosity towards the rebellious soldiers from the plains and Bengal. Pacification was also made easier because the rebels never succeeded in clearing all local opponents and British functionaries from the lands they asserted dominance over. There was no equivalent to Kingitanga’s aukati (boundary), and this meant in key locations, such as the area just to the west of Delhi, the British were able to hold onto some key positions and military capacity.44

Even though ideas about restoring the old Mughal order had wide currency,45 the leaders of the various strands of rebellion struggled to develop any coherent and cohesive ideology once they had succeeded in gaining control of key cities and military outposts. Their inability to either restore a functioning recreation of Mughal governance or articulate another unifying vision of the political future alienated support. Rebel leaders also struggled to maintain communication lines, secure reliable food supplies, provide sufficient powder and weapons, and ensure that basic needs, such as sanitation, were maintained in areas under their control, undercutting popular support and eroding the morale of their soldiers. These logistical failures were one important context for the increased flow of information out of rebel encampments to the British, as spies and informants gave British officers information which proved valuable in the planning of counterattacks against rebel forces that were weakened by hunger and desertion.46 The Company was also greatly assisted by its fledgling telegraph network. Even though only a limited number of trunk lines were in operation, they enabled intelligence to be transmitted at great speed and enabled the British pacification force to plan and
coordinate their campaigns. The broader resources of the imperial system were also significant: an expeditionary force en route to China was quickly diverted to India and colonial Governors, especially George Grey in the Cape Colony, pledged resources to enable reassertion of British paramountcy. The key feature of the suppression of the revolt in India was the unrestrained retribution visited upon sepoys and their supporters by the Company’s armies. The circulation of stories recounting the horrors of Lucknow and especially Kanpur created a seemingly insatiable appetite for death and destruction. While many rebel soldiers and their peasant supporters were killed in combat, tens of thousands of others were subject to summary execution – hung, shot, or blown to pieces by cannons – in a relentless display of military power and imperial rage. In this campaign detailed information about the actions and loyalties of suspected rebels was seen as being of little value as there was to be no time for legal hearings and weighing evidence. Judgment was swift and punishment was brutal and final. Felice Beato’s famous 1858 photograph of Lucknow, which featured hundreds of skulls, skeletons and decomposing corpses, was perhaps the most powerful and most carefully staged image that communicated the scale of violence that underwrote the reassertion of British paramountcy.

The rebellion was crushed by the massive and often indiscriminate deployment of state-sanctioned violence. But the restoration of British colonial power was also secured through the penal system. The old Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah was found guilty of treason by a military commission and exiled to Rangoon where he died in 1862. Twenty-six members of his family had been executed by that stage and another thirteen were imprisoned in Agra. This excision of the Mughal royal family was in part a response to their role in the rebellion, but was also partly motivated by the desire to smash the symbolic freight of the emperorship. Most importantly, the British wanted to ensure that the family would not become centres of ‘intrigue and disaffection’ in the future. Bahadur Shah was not the only exile: the chief destination for exiled rebels was the Andaman Islands, which the British swiftly converted into a penal colony. The transportation of the convicted mutineers and rebels after their conviction by special tribunals effectively expelled them permanently from the Indian body politic, a strategy that was designed to minimise potential disruption to colonial authority in the future while also placing these rank and file insurgents in an environment where they were could be reformed because they were isolated from political agitators.

In comparative terms, the pacification of Māori anti-state movements was less explosive and more protracted. Whereas in India colonial forces were confronting concentrations of rebels in the towns of the Gangetic plains, in New Zealand the foe was smaller, more nimble, and aided by its superior knowledge of a complex and difficult topography of broken hill chains and dense bush. The
state relied on three key strategies to overcome these challenges. The first was, of course, military suppression. James Belich’s work detailed the difficulties of this process, demonstrating that Kingitanga soldiers and bands of fighting men attached to warrior-prophets were difficult opponents for the state to overcome. In some significant engagements, strategic innovations and deep knowledge of the terrain allowed Māori forces to out-think and out-fight British and colonial troops. Some conflicts were inconclusive and some others resulted in victories for the state forces that were symbolic rather than substantive. The first war in Taranaki ultimately ended in a stalemate. While the invasion of the Waikato opened up some land for colonial settlement, this was more the consequence of punitive legislation than military action, as imperial and colonial forces were unable to deliver a ‘decisive blow’ on the battlefield. Later efforts to capture warrior-prophets such as Kereopa, Te Kooti and Titokowaru proved to be extremely difficult. As we have seen, Kereopa was only placed in custody when his Tūhoe protectors gave him up. Te Kooti proved even more elusive. State forces could not capture him and in 1883 he made a public pledge of peace and in return received a pardon from the Native Minister. Titokowaru’s ability as a military leader and his fearsome reputation was such that the areas of Taranaki he controlled in the 1870s were essentially autonomous. He was finally captured in 1881, but spent only eight months in prison.

In executing these campaigns, the state was heavily reliant on Māori knowledge and military resources. Even though Governors drew on contingents of troops from Australia, India, and Britain, Māori assistance was more important as it allowed state soldiers to be deployed with greater precision. By 1863 it was clear that weakness in the communication systems supporting colonial forces was hampering the ability of the army to locate, engage and defeat rebel forces. The value of local knowledge was made clear in 1864 when colonial forces captured the key Kingitanga fortification at Rangiaowhia. This success was largely due to two mixed-race guides: James Edwards and John Gage. They had lived in the region before the war and furnished General Cameron with information that enabled the colonial army to outflank the defences of the Kingitanga army and capture the pivotal element in the Paterangi line of fortifications.

In later campaigns, a range of Māori groups who the state saw as ‘loyalists’ or ‘Queenites’ supported colonial forces. In fact, as Monty Soutar has shown, these groups were primarily acting within tribal or subtribal interests. Some Ngāti Porou hapū (subtribes), for example, fought alongside state forces against Hauhau because they saw this movement as a powerful threat to tribal autonomy. The assistance of such groups allowed the state to quickly access rich pools of knowledge about the landscape, as well as the genealogical connections and political dispositions of the groups that supported the prophets. Even when only a small number of Māori were prepared to enter into battle alongside colonial
soldiers, significant flows of intelligence and rumours came to the government and to military units from chiefs sympathetic to the Crown’s goals. Conversely prophet-warriors like Te Kooti strove to restrict information flows. One of his first acts after assuming the mantle of leadership was to order the drowning of his uncle, Te Warihi, who he suspected of being a government spy and informant.

The second key element of the state’s drive to suppress rebellion was the use of land confiscations as a punitive weapon against communities that had resisted the Queen’s sovereignty. Under the terms of the New Zealand Settlements Act (1863), ‘rebel tribes’ in Taranaki, Waikato, and the Bay of Plenty had large swathes of their land confiscated (raupatu). This was the basis for an increasingly intricate legal apparatus that effectively allowed the state to undercut the territorial foundations and economic base of many Māori communities. This mechanism was used as an instrument to assert state paramountcy in the wake of Völkmann’s murder. In 1866 the government designated an area of both coastal and inland Bay of Plenty as raupatu land as a punishment for Völkmann’s killing. This confiscation deprived Tūhoe of their only low-lying land, cutting that iwi off from important food sources and access to the Ohiwa harbour. Tūhoe were punished even though they had no direct involvement in the killing of the missionary: they were identified as targets, however, because they were believed to ‘conceal’ Kereopa. The Premier, Edward Stafford, believed this raupatu would help pay for the expedition to capture Kereopa, but it would also enable new military settlements to be planted to ‘maintain the Queen’s authority’ and prevent further outbreaks of rebellion. Colonists saw raupatu as justified by British precedents, especially its historical use in Scotland, in the confiscations that underwrote the English plantations in Ireland, and in East India Company policies in India.

Of course, raupatu also enabled the rapid extension of colonisation through the extension of white settlement, which ultimately proved the most powerful engine for securing colonial domination.

The third element of pacification was a purging of the body politic through the legal and penal system. State powers were amplified through the Suppression of Rebellion Act (1863) which extended the powers of the Governor, suspended habeus corpus, and established Courts Martial, which were empowered to pass death sentences and sentences of penal servitude. Harsh punishments were frequently handed down to rebels during the 1860s, but in comparative terms the death penalty was not applied broadly, even though men like Kereopa were executed. A more important component of the judicial drive to suppress the rebellion was the sentencing of prisoners to locations distant from the seat of insurrection. From the late 1860s, some Waikato and then Taranaki Māori were sent to serve their sentences in the southern city of Dunedin. But the most important site for this penal exile was the Chatham Islands, five hundred miles off the east coast of the South Island. Groups of Hauhau prisoners were sent there
in the mid-1860s, including Te Kooti (after his second arrest for allegedly being a Hauhau spy). Te Kooti’s incarceration, however, was a spectacular failure. It was during his exile that he first received revelations from the ‘Spirit of God’. Assuming the mantle of prophethood, he led the daring escape of 298 prisoners on board the Rifleman. Within two weeks of his return to the North Island, Te Kooti delivered a defeat to colonial forces at Paparatu, confirming his distinctive mix of military prowess and prophetic foresight.62

In both colonies, suppression and reconstruction shaded into each other. But it is important to note that there were significant commonalities in the longer-term project of reconstructing colonial governance in New Zealand and India. Most importantly, new efforts were made to incorporate local populations into the functioning of the state and to build ‘loyalty’. The Government of India Act (1858) formally transferred the Company’s authority in India to the British Crown. A new department was created in the British government, the India Office, to ensure metropolitan oversight of India. Much greater emphasis was placed on the role of the Crown in governance. As the rebellion was pacified, key proclamations were issued in Queen Victoria’s name and new emphasis was placed on the Queen’s personal investment in India. On the ground in the colony a programme of government reform was launched. This had two key elements: first, pre-rebellion policies of westernisation were abandoned; and second, the state incorporated larger numbers of South Asians into its service and some low-level places were opened up for Indians in the machinery of representative government. These moves were designed to reconcile important social constituencies to colonial rule, to give the state some new mechanisms to shape native opinion and create a safety valve for Indian political aspirations. The military was also reorganised, with recruitment increasingly redirected to Nepal and especially Punjab. The rapid Punjabiisation of the army from the 1860s reflected the points of recognition that Britons were able to identify in Punjabi and especially Sikh culture, but also reflected the widespread belief that the loyalty of the Sikhs ‘saved’ British India.63 This military reorganisation created an important template for imperial security as Sikh soldiers and policemen served extensively outside India and became an important embodiment of imperial power.64 Finally, the new Crown Raj sought to shore up its connections with important traditional magnates and maharajas, even as it used various forms of indirect influence to encourage the Princely States to adapt to some of the conventions of the ‘modern’ order.65

In New Zealand, the state sought to fashion similar connections to re-anchor its authority. The Maori Representation Act (1867) allowed for the creation of four seats in Parliament, reserved for Māori voters to elect Māori representatives. All Māori men over the age of twenty-one were enfranchised, with the exception of those who had been charged or convicted for ‘any treason felony or infamous
Early Māori Members of the House were usually chiefs who had supported the state during the war, and the Act was thus an important mechanism for cementing ties between the state and its Māori allies. At the same time it ruptured the separation of Māori and settler politics. ‘Native Affairs’ were no longer the domain of the Governor and his Protectors of Aborigines, Māori now had the ability to directly contest and shape legislation.

Just as the waging of war drove the emergence of centralised states in Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the wars of the 1860s were also an important impetus towards the centralisation of power in New Zealand. In 1870, the Colonial Treasurer Julius Vogel launched an ambitious new programme of state-driven development. His plan for government-assisted migration fundamentally transformed the demographic, economic and political face of New Zealand. Of course, large flows of assisted migrants fundamentally recalibrated the relationships between Māori and colonists; these state-sponsored colonists joined with various other migratory flows to effectively ‘swamp’ Māori. Demography became a key buttress of state dominance.

The other plank of Vogel’s developmental scheme – roads and railways – echoed post-1857 initiatives in India. In both contexts, transportation and communication were seen as vital to the improvement of the economy. But more extensive and better quality networks would also allow the state to move resources and troops more efficiently if rebellion did reoccur. In New Zealand, new roads allowed white settlements to be extended into areas previously controlled by Māori and there was hope that these routes, together with the pull of the market, would help to lace Māori more firmly into colonial life. In India, the Crown Raj rapidly extended the telegraph network from the late 1850s. The British invested heavily in the railway network as well and it was rapidly extended in the 1860s and 1870s. Railways functioned as the ‘hard back bone’ of the Crown Raj, shaping the organisation of military resources and standing as a potent symbol of British power.

Some of these processes of imperial pacification and reconstruction, from execution to exile, had little direct connection to colonial knowledge. Offering a broad discussion of these processes has been a deliberate strategy in order to produce a contextualised reading of the place of information and opinion in the creation of colonial authority. Recent work has tended to treat colonial knowledge either as an independent variable, or else reduced state function to the creation and policing of knowledge flows. But colonial knowledge is best thought of as a prominent and recurring thread within the larger fabric of these reconstructed colonial political economies. Colonial knowledge alone cannot explain the nature
of colonial rule, but the pattern of that rule cannot be comprehended without recognizing its prominence.

There are four further important observations to make about these conflicts and their significance. The first is that while the clustering of rebellions and small wars in the middle decades of the nineteenth century undoubtedly constituted a very real crisis for the empire, resistance, mutiny and rebellion were constant parts of the colonial landscape. In New Zealand, of course, there was open war in the 1840s, as well as a long series of small conflicts over the extension of colonial settlement and numerous minor prophetic leaders who openly challenged the legitimacy of colonial rule. During the first half of the nineteenth century, riots, small scale rebellions and warfare moulded the extension of the Company’s territorial sovereignty in South Asia and were central in giving shape to the state and the limits of its power. In other words, these larger conflicts were broader and more deeply rooted manifestations of the open contestation that colonial orders were born out of. And in the second half of the century too, colonial authority would be called into question by native religious reformers, new millenarian voices, nascent nationalist movements and small-scale uprisings. This is an important point to underline in the context of British imperial historiography that frequently offers a kind of steady, gradualist and teleological narrative of ‘imperial expansion’. In fact, it is striking that these conflicts of the 1850s and 1860s are sometimes downplayed in broad surveys of the empire, simply because they unduly complicate the story of Britain’s gradual march to imperial power. Here the political importance of colonial knowledge production can be seen most clearly. Constructing knowledge about colonised lands and peoples did not simply solidify colonial power by hardening of cultural boundaries, but rather was integral to a range of practices that secured and reproduced the dominance of the state. It is crucial to remember that processes of war-making, pacification and counter-insurgency were key determinants of the nature of the colonial state. Unfortunately, historians have been insufficiently concerned with tracing the relationships between colonial knowledge and these brute realities of colonial power.

The second observation follows on from this. As we have seen, the amplification of communication networks and the creation of political mechanisms that connected influential colonised groups were key elements of the reconstitution of colonial power. Taken together, these structures were crucial in consolidating the primacy of the nation state. These institutions and networks were central in allowing colonial states to extend the geographical reach of their power, with the aim of ensuring that state sovereignty permeated the nation space. Postal, telegraphic, and railway networks also reconfigured old patterns of intra- and inter-regional mobility and trade, extending the spatial parameters of economic activity, religious practice, and cultural debate. These networks reconfigured indigenous politics and were an important spur to the emergence of political
discourses and programmes amongst colonised leaders that were national in their outlook. Most notable were the pan-tribal Kotahitanga movement, which emerged in the 1880s in New Zealand, and the Indian National Congress in India (established 1885). Accordingly, the national transportation and communication networks created by the colonial state were a key precondition for the emergence of these movements and the development of patriotisms that transcended the locality and region, even as this nascent sense of oneness coexisted with more place-specific identities.

Thirdly, a careful reading of the connections between information, intelligence and authority suggests that ‘racialisation’ is an inadequate reading of the cultural shifts arising out of these conflicts. It is certainly possible to discern a hardening in popular attitudes and in the language of difference across the empire during the 1860s. But this shift was contested, as were attempts to see imperial conflicts simply through a racial lens. Most notably, humanitarians and Anglicans in New Zealand were fierce critics of colonial war-making and the salience of race in assessing character or intellectual capacity. In Britain, at the height of anxiety over the rebellion, important political voices warned against reading the rebellion through the lens of a racial conflict. In the House of Commons, Thomas Perronet Thompson, former Governor of Sierra Leone and MP for Bradford, suggested that the rebellion was actually the ‘honourable and necessary resistance by a betrayed army’ in response to the Company’s ‘dishonourable breach’ of its pledge to rule without interfering in the ‘customs, laws and prejudices’ of Indians. Thompson’s injunction that Britons should audi alteram partem (‘hear the other side’) was certainly a minority position, but it was widely reported and it reminds us that both the importance of race and the direction of colonial policy were fiercely contested at home.

Thompson’s speech and other radical critiques of the Company are evidence that the authority of race was disputed during and after these crises. In Britain, perhaps more than in Europe and in the United States, older civilisational discourses and Scottish Enlightenment models of economic and social development remained remarkably durable. These long-established traditions of thought were drawn into dialogue and open conflict with newer ideas about race in the first half of the nineteenth century, prior to the rise of Darwinian thought or the major crises in the empire. Conflicts in the empire and in the United States certainly multiplied and extended debates over race in the 1860s, but race was slow in overthrowing these other developmental models of cultural difference.

This narrative of racialisation also has limits in colonial settings. If we turn to India, there are good reasons to be sceptical of two key claims of recent work on the post-1857 period. This work’s suggestion that race trumped language and religion in organising the colonial imaginary needs to be refined. Particularly important here is Thomas Trautmann’s argument that language and race were
disarticulated in colonial knowledge as race scientists muscled aside philologists. Trautmann suggests this shift allowed for the articulation of a ‘racial theory of Indian civilisation’, a theory that implicitly shored up British authority. For Trautmann, the key indicator of this shift is what he reads as H. H. Risley’s authoritative racial theory of caste and the South Asian social order. This claim about the triumph of race in the post-Mutiny enumerative state – which my own Orientalism and Race largely supported – is an over-reading of the overall shape of colonial knowledge, as illustrated by Denzil Ibbetson’s work on caste in the 1880s. Ibbetson highlighted the limits of racial categories (like ‘Aryan’), stressing the layering of identities through caste, tribe, religion and language. He suggested that race had little analytical power when attempting to describe and account for the diversity of modern life in India. Caste, he argued, is primarily the product of access to economic resources and political power, rather than a racial hierarchy. As caste was largely a product of occupation and social obligation, it was a fluid structure, shifting as a result of alterations in economic and political configurations.

Similarly, an important body of work has used the ‘martial races’ theory – which suggested certain communities had innate capacity for military service – to suggest that colonial knowledge was deployed to racialise the basis of British authority after 1857. But biological race did not determine the shape of this discourse. In fact, most military writing on the differential military capacity of South Asian communities drew on older ideas about diet, climate and character, and beliefs about the ways in which religious practice shaped physique and morality. Disputing the depth and extent of racialisation is not to discount the cultural impact of the rebellion, but I would argue ideas about cultural difference became starker because they were able to invoke other categories of difference.

My fourth and final argument extends this observation. What is actually discernible in the 1860s and 1870s is not so much a simple racialisation, but rather a deepening and broadening preoccupation with difference. While the new biology inserted a potent series of arguments into debates over human variation, these ideas were jostled by and interacted with a host of other explanatory frameworks and interpretative preoccupations: class, nationality, religion, ethnicity, language, and economic systems were all identified as important ways of accessing the nature of human variation and explaining historical development. Even as particular scholars and disciplinary traditions prioritised specific categories of difference, these variables rarely emerged as discrete and entirely self-contained: religion might be racialised, language could be seen as a guide to racial history, or economic systems were thought to be the product of religious values. Each endeavour, however, was deeply concerned with explaining difference, a project that seemed more urgent than ever as a consequence of the attempts of colonised peoples to throw off British rule.
These conflicts raised the problem of the ‘native mind’, a term that was imperial shorthand for the intellectual traditions of the colonised, their religious movements, the idioms through which these ideas were articulated, and indigenous processes of communication. In both India and New Zealand, the ‘native mind’ was a discursive product of colonial anxieties about the limits of British understandings of local knowledge traditions. In both contexts, newspaper stories, political debate, and ethnographic texts produced an image of the ‘native mind’ that was deeply contradictory. While it was the most important gateway to colonial improvement, western cultural forces found it generally impenetrable. Yet although the colonial state found it difficult to prize open, it was easily swayed by the vernacular press, popular rumours and native gossip. And while it was fickle and easily swayed by snatches of conversation, its patterns and preoccupations were deeply ingrained.

Most importantly, the native mind was understood to be prone to superstition and excesses of religious enthusiasm. In its unimproved form it was not disciplined or rational. This is why the colonial ‘information panics’ – moments of crisis where colonial officials worried about the depth, quality and accuracy of the knowledge they possessed about the colonised – that intermittently flared in the final third of the nineteenth century were so often focused on native religious movements. In South Asia, colonial officials were anxious about the anti-colonial sentiments espoused by the Kukas in the 1860s and 1870s, concerned about the threat that sadhus (religious mendicants) posed to civil society, and wondered how they should interpret the various religious signs, prophecies, and rumours that circulated. In New Zealand, journalists, editors, policemen and politicians worried about the emergence of the South Island prophet Te Mailhara in 1877, the rekindling of Hauhau in 1887, and the teachings of new prophets like Tohu, Te Whiti, and Rua Kenana. When it seemed to exceed the restraint of the major Protestant denominations, the colonial state saw religion as a potent threat to its power. While district gazetteers and censuses might show the relative and changing strength of various religious communities, statistics did not allow colonial officials to evaluate the intentions of prophetic leaders; ultimately numbers had no power to illuminate the ‘native mind’. Surveillance and the power of the law were more powerful weapons, but given the persistent anxiety of colonial states about the limits of their power after the ‘Mutiny’, it is hardly surprising that full coercive power of the state was brought to bear on Te Whiti and Tohu and then subsequently on Rua Kenana. While these men preached gospels of peace, the spectre of Kereopa, Te Kooti and Titokowaru was strong. Long after that day in March 1865, the ghosts of Völker and Kereopa haunted colonial memories, reminding colonists of the limits of their knowledge of ‘native’ thoughts, intentions, and capabilities.
WRITING
Over the last three decades, the ‘archive’ has become a key issue in exchanges over the theory and practice of writing about the colonial past. The stakes of these post-colonial debates are high because they subject the cultural impact of colonialism to sustained scrutiny, but they also raise questions about the possibility of accessing the ‘voices’ and subjectivities of colonised peoples, especially women, children, and those of low status. In Australia, indigenous and non-indigenous historians, politicians, and community leaders continue to dispute native title, the evidence that catalogues the manifold forms of violence directed against Aborigines, the meaning of the ‘stolen generations’, and the evidentiary weight that can be attached to the memories and narratives produced from within indigenous communities.\(^1\) A new generation of South African activists and scholars are exploring the archival basis of the apartheid regime and grappling with the complex historical, political, and psychological freight of the evidence collated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.\(^2\) In South Asia, there have been sustained debates over the history of ‘communalism’ and strong resistance from Hindu rightwing groups to attempts to document the history of marginalised groups, as they fear that these stories might call received visions of the nation and its past into question. Even though the figure of the archive has not been explicitly invoked in quite the same way here in New Zealand, the early reflections of Michael King and Judith Binney on the value of oral narratives for understanding the Māori past and the Waitangi Tribunal’s sustained engagement with the multiple forms of Māori historical knowledge (from whakapapa (genealogy) to whakataukī (proverbs), waiata (songs) to early written texts (from haka to printed te reo Māori documents)), have opened up a new range of sources and perspectives on our colonial past.\(^3\)

Taken together, these debates mean that the archives of empire have been subjected to a new interrogation, as scholars have begun to reconstruct the concerns that generated them, to clarify the logics that organised them, to map their occlusions and to identify their points of silence as well as their recurrent
concerns. This scholarship has jeopardised the faith in the archive that is still inculcated into undergraduate and postgraduate history students as the very basis of the discipline. G. R. Elton’s injunction that historians’ aim is ‘[t]o know all the evidence’, or the oft-cited insistence that historians should immerse themselves in the archives until they ‘hear the past speak’ seem grandiose, misleading, and politically naive in light of critical discussions of the archive. Only some ‘voices’ are clearly recorded in colonial archives and those voices are frequently unreliable; many other voices are only fleetingly recorded, surviving only as fragments, faint traces, or muffled in reported speech and translation. At the same time as historians have been rethinking traditional archives, others have been deploying new archives, drawing on oral history, literature, the visual arts, the built environment, material culture and bodily adornment as scholarly resources. These are sources that earlier generations of imperial historians, who viewed colonialism through narrow economic and political perspectives, would have ignored or discounted. Important new perspectives on empire-building and the multifaceted nature of colonialism have been unlocked by: Heidi Gengenbach’s use of tattoos as an archive for rereading the social history of colonial Mozambique; Ann Stoler’s exploration of memory work in the Dutch Empire; Timothy Burke’s examination of soap as a window on ‘commodity’ colonialism in Zimbabwe; the work of Arun Kumar on the history of rumour and anti-colonial resistance in India; Luise White’s examinations of rumours, lies, and secrets in colonial Africa; Urvashi Butalia’s use of memory and oral history in India; and Antoinette Burton’s work on houses and homes as archives for women writers in late colonial India.

In surveying debates over the archive in the recent historiography of the British Empire, this chapter is designed to stage an encounter between this scholarship and New Zealand historical writing, potentially opening up the possibility of new approaches to the history of colonialism in New Zealand. It is divided into three sections. The first focuses on debates over archive in the historiography of colonial South Asia, which has been perhaps the key body of historical work driving this debate, paying particular attention to the question of gender. The middle part of the chapter briefly turns to New Zealand, asking which issues and research avenues opened up in these South Asian debates might be productive points of engagement for New Zealand historians, as well as highlighting some key divergences between New Zealand colonial archives and their South Asian counterparts. The chapter concludes by turning to a particular concern in my own work, the function of archives as nodes within the extensive knowledge-producing networks fashioned by empire-building, suggesting that historians of colonialism must bring local and national perspectives into dialogue with the broader inter-regional, transnational, and even global, perspectives that are entailed in any effort to understand imperialism’s significance in world history.
It has not been sufficiently recognised that colonialism was itself a cultural project of control. Colonial knowledge both enabled conquest and was produced by it; in certain important ways, knowledge was what colonialism was all about. Cultural forms in societies newly classified as ‘traditional’ were reconstructed and transformed by and through this knowledge, which created new categories and oppositions between colonisers and colonised, European and Asian, modern and traditional, West and East. Ruling India through the delineation and reconstitution of systematic grammars for vernacular languages, representing India through the mastery and display of archaeological memories and religious texts, Britain set in motion transformations every bit as powerful as the better-known consequences of military and economic imperialism.6

Nicholas Dirks’s statement neatly encapsulates key understandings that have emerged in recent work on the place of knowledge production and the role of archives in the colonisation of India. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to rehearse the theoretical and historiographical shifts that underpinned the emergence of this body of scholarship, instead it will explore two key issues that run through this recent scholarship: the role of the colonial state in knowledge production and the gendering of the archive.

The role of colonial knowledge has assumed a central position in South Asian historiography, as historians that have sought to explain the ability of a small group of Britons to incorporate India into British trade networks and eventually colonise most of South Asia. In a ground-breaking 1985 essay, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak insisted that colonial archives were the product of the ‘commercial/territorial interest of the East India Company’, forcefully underscoring a point that the early research of Bernard Cohn had pointed towards.7 Cohn himself subsequently mapped the various ‘modalities’ that framed the production and organisation of colonial knowledge in India.8 The research of Cohn’s former colleague, Nicholas Dirks, has focused on the production of colonial archives in south India and has stressed the centrality of colonialism in producing and policing ‘traditional’ India, primarily through the British valorisation of caste.9 Other scholars, especially C. A. Bayly and Eugene Irschick, have placed a far greater emphasis on the ability of South Asian groups to contest, mould, and appropriate the production of colonial knowledge.10

Although these views of knowledge production are grounded in different visions of the nature of the British presence in India, draw upon divergent theoretical literatures, and have been fiercely debated (most especially in Dirks’s polemic against Bayly in the closing portions of *Castes of Mind*), they have transformed
historians’ understanding of the production and significance of South Asian archives.\textsuperscript{11} Collections of cartographic, linguistic, ethnological, ethnographic, religious, economic and historical knowledge relating to colonial India are no longer simply seen as repositories that record India’s past, but rather they have been reimagined as the very basis of British dominance in South Asia. Thanks to Lata Mani’s study of debates surrounding sati (widow burning) and Nicholas Dirks’s work on ‘collectors’, such as Colin Mackenzie in south India, we are now aware that colonial archives were produced by the colonial state’s ability to solicit indigenous opinion, textualise traditions and compose detailed pictures of the indigenous communities that were drawn into its ambit.\textsuperscript{12} At a fundamental level, this shift in understanding of the archive also reflects a growing awareness of its symbolic power – we are sensitive to its central role in the day-to-day paperwork that drove the wheels of empire, but also to the power of the imperial fantasy of the total archive. Many colonial officials and British politicians were attached to the dream that world mastery might come about through documentation, the construction of an empire of knowledge based on the pen rather than the sword.\textsuperscript{13} This was an endeavour that colonised communities in South Asia were deeply aware of themselves: indeed some Indians termed British rule kaghazi raj (rule by paper), while libraries, offices, and the printed word were significant targets of indigenous resistance against British rule.

In effect, the archive has become deeply problematic for historians of colonial India. Increasingly scholars have shared an awareness that most of the sources that historians conveniently use to access the colonial past – government documents, manuscript collections, Parliamentary Papers, court records, periodicals and newspapers – were themselves constitutive of the inequalities of that past. Thus it has become difficult to view the archive as a transparent store of sources from which to recover a total image of the South Asian past. Instead the archive has been reimagined as generated and saturated by power, a dense but uneven body of knowledge scarred by the cultural struggles of the colonial past. Given that this is the nature of the archive of colonialism, how must it be read? What perspectives are foregrounded and what groups are privileged within colonial archives? More importantly, who is excluded, whose voices are silenced, what groups and individuals are reduced to fleeting traces and isolated textual fragments?

These questions are particularly pressing for historians committed to documenting the experiences of South Asian women and the dynamics of gender construction and performance. The colonial archive itself was heavily gendered. The bureaucratic machinery of empire was overwhelmingly male and most of the texts produced by South Asians were written by those male indigenous experts, scribal professionals, and textbook authors who were recognised and supported by the colonial state. Beyond the confines of the state, the highly gendered pattern
of literacy over the long sweep of South Asian history has ensured that male voices are over-represented in the historical record. Female voices, stifled by both the colonial state and the power of patriarchy, are difficult and some would say even impossible to recover. As Spivak argued, seeking South Asian women’s subjectivities in the archive is analogous to being ‘in the shadow of shadows’. Spivak was critical of Michel Foucault’s belief that oppressed subjects were able to speak, to articulate their subjectivity. She asserted that this position is untenable within the context of colonialism, especially within the context of a heavily gendered colonialism saturated by masculinised ideologies. As Spivak made clear, the Rani of Sirmur (the wife of the ruler of a small hill state in what is now Himachal Pradesh), emerged in the colonial archives only when she was ‘needed in the space of imperial production’. As the expanding Company state attempted to consolidate its northern frontier in the Shimla hills it exhibited a strong interest in the political structure and courtly politics of those states on its borders. It is within this political and diplomatic framework, where the Company attempted to pacify and subordinate the hill states through their ‘Settlement’, that the Rani appeared so briefly in the Company’s archive as ‘a king’s wife and a weaker vessel’.

Spivak’s conclusion that subaltern groups cannot speak proved extremely controversial and stimulated a large and discordant literature. Perhaps the most important gloss on Spivak’s exploration of gender and subalternity has been Lata Mani’s work on sati (the burning of widows on funeral pyres). While Mani acknowledged the importance of Spivak’s argument, she resisted seeing Spivak’s argument as a set of ‘conclusions about colonial discourse in general’, instead using it as a starting point for an extensive rereading of contemporary accounts of sati. Mani revealed the highly uneven nature of this archive of materials surrounding this most contentious tradition, generated by evangelical missionaries, state functionaries, and indigenous male reformers. These intense debates over the scriptural basis of the practice and its meaning within high-caste Hindu ‘tradition’, generally erased female subjectivity, as women instead became the ‘ground’ for debate about the nature of custom and modernity. While Mani’s powerful analysis followed Spivak to the extent that she made it clear that any desire to fully recover female subjectivity is doomed to failure, it also suggested that a nuanced reading of colonial texts could unsettle the fundamental assumptions of male-produced eyewitness accounts. Mani traced acts of resistance to the coercive techniques that often enabled the performance of sati, highlighting the occasional accounts that disrupted official discourses by focusing on the physical and emotional pain inflicted upon women. These accounts compromised and even ruptured key ‘fictions’ about sati, especially the dominant representation of it as a ‘religiously inspired act of devotion to the deceased husband’.
Equally importantly, through debates on *sati*, Mani delineates the ways in which male indigenous elites were authorised as experts within the colonial system. *Pandits* (Hindu knowledge experts) employed in the Company’s legal system were subjected to ‘continual and instinctive questioning’ by British authorities, and out of their competing opinions and interpretations a new synthesised vision of ‘custom’ was textualised and ensconced as the bedrock of colonial policy. This ‘incitement to discourse’ directed towards male ‘authorities’ must be set in contradistinction to the muffling of female voices in colonial archives, revealing the fundamentally gendered dynamics that shaped British knowledge construction and the fundamental contours of the political economy of British India.

What might New Zealand archivists and historians learn from these debates? One point of departure is Lata Mani’s exploration of the ways in which understandings of ‘custom’ and ‘tradition’ were produced by the colonial state’s ‘incitement to discourse’. As I showed in *Orientalism and Race*, early functionaries of the colonial state, as well as explorers and missionaries, had great difficulty accessing Māori mentalities, and only had a hazy picture of key aspects of pre-colonial social structure. Pākehā had only a limited grasp of the tangata whenua’s (people of the land) conception of the relationships between the natural and supernatural worlds, their gods, and their *rites de passage* or key rituals until the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Only through sustained contact with Māori, the growth of the Pākehā population, the expansion of the colonial economy, and the alienation of Māori land, did Pākehā begin to order their understanding of Māori into a coherent body of knowledge. The colonial state and its representatives – from the Governor to land negotiators, military commanders, translators, and surveyors – produced increasingly dense bodies of information pertaining to particular hapū and iwi (and the ways in which these kin groups related to their landscapes) as well as a more generalised picture of Māori culture and history. While some of this material was produced by travel and observation, the institutions of the colonial state itself produced large amounts of information about Māori. Most importantly, within the context of settler colonialism, the maps, diaries and reports of surveyors deepened the colonial state’s knowledge of New Zealand’s natural resources, potential communication routes, and highlighted areas that might be ‘opened up’ to settlers. After its establishment in mid-1860, the Land Court greatly expanded and attempted to order this knowledge as it collated a vast body of information relating to resource use and ownership. (It is important to stress that this knowledge was never complete, contained many conflicting accounts, and that representatives of the state frequently worried over its accuracy and reliability).
But perhaps the most valued knowledge was produced by those Māori who established working relationships with colonial officials. Like their counterparts in India and elsewhere in the empire, colonial officials in New Zealand typically believed that an accurate knowledge of colonised peoples was crucial to their ‘pacification’ and the creation of a thriving colony. In New Zealand this argument was most strongly (and famously) forwarded in the preface to George Grey’s ground-breaking *Polynesian Mythology* (1855). Grey explained the importance of Māori language and mythology to a Governor who had taken over a war-torn colony: ‘I soon perceived that I could neither successfully govern, nor hope to conciliate, a numerous and turbulent people, with whose languages, manners, customs, religion, and modes of thought I was quite unacquainted.’ Grey noted that the ‘rebel chiefs ... frequently quoted, in explanation of their views and intentions, fragments of ancient poems or proverbs, or made allusions which rested on an ancient system of mythology’. As Māori political discourse was grounded in ‘these figurative forms’, Grey believed that a close knowledge of Māori language and tradition was essential to the preservation of the Crown’s authority. In Grey’s view, the effective amalgamation of ‘natives’, whether Aborigines, Māori or Africans, into a harmonious multiracial society was dependent on a sound knowledge of their social organisation and world view.

To achieve this end Grey provided several Māori with lodgings and wages in return for language instruction and recording various myths and historical narratives. The most important of these men was Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikaheke, a high-ranking member of Te Arawa. Te Rangikaheke quickly established a close working relationship with Grey. He lived with Grey in the Governor’s residence, receiving £3 per month in return for his teaching and writing. Until Grey’s departure from New Zealand in 1853, Te Rangikaheke provided Grey with a series of manuscripts recounting various Māori traditions. These manuscripts, and the continuing dialogue between Te Rangikaheke and Grey which grew out of them, formed the basis for much of Grey’s published work on Māori. However, Grey’s relationship with Te Rangikaheke was not unique. Edward Shortland, a leading surveyor and Protector of Aborigines, published two important works on Māori mythology, social organisation and religious practice. His *The Southern Districts of New Zealand* (1851) and *Traditions and Superstitions of the New Zealanders* (1854) revealed a substantial debt to Māori informants and clarified the extent of regional variation in Māori social life and cosmology. Meanwhile, the ethnographer John White was beginning to build a vast web of Māori informants. A range of important government positions in various parts of the North Island from the 1860s allowed White to extend his network of correspondents, resulting in a huge collection of historical and mythological narratives. These ‘tales’, collected over four decades, formed the basis of his monumental *The Ancient History of the Maori* (six volumes, 1887–1890).
The pioneering work of both Jenifer Curnow (on Grey and Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke) and Michael Reilly (on White and his ‘informants’) provide richly detailed case studies of how such relationships were constructed and maintained. Their work also tells us much about how the state’s ‘incitement to discourse’ worked out on the ground: the personal relationships, the economic contexts, and intellectual concerns that framed the production of particular colonial archives. These types of projects – which nicely parallel the ‘biographies’ of colonial archives produced by Nicholas Dirks for colonial South Asia – need to be undertaken for many other archives produced in colonial New Zealand. In my view, New Zealand historians need to turn to their archives more critically, making the archives themselves the object of critical historical study. Historians desperately need to appreciate how our colonial archives were constructed, we must catalogue what is absent in these collections as well as what is present, and we need to reconstruct the ideological work that they have done. Over the past decade, many archives have been at least partially ‘decolonised’ as New Zealand institutions pay close heed to the Treaty of Waitangi and New Zealand archivists have grappled with the particular interests and needs of Māori users. Alongside this, however, historians need to rise to the challenge and recognise that our archives are important microcosms of the colonial processes that have moulded the development of modern New Zealand. In other words, the decolonisation of our archives must be accompanied by a full appreciation of their imperial histories.

One other potential avenue of research hinted at by the South Asian literature is the history of ‘colonial disciplines’. Indian historians have paid considerable attention to the role of disciplines (such as geography, medicine, botany, and literary studies) in enabling the cultural project of colonialism and to exploring the ways in which the authority of these distinctive forms of knowledge and idioms of interpretation were established. These disciplines were crucial in both ordering British knowledge of India and in disseminating ‘European’ forms of knowledge to Indians through the colonial education system and print culture. This kind of approach to the cultural and intellectual history of colonialism has not featured prominently in New Zealand historiography, even though European disciplines did encounter the distinctive knowledge systems fashioned by pre-colonial Māori. Brad Patterson and Giselle Byrnes’s work on the history of surveying on the New Zealand frontier hint at the new perspectives that enabled this approach (and can be read as an interesting counterpoint to Mathew Edney’s work on the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India). Given the centrality of surveying to the success of settler colonialism, the history of surveyors, surveying, and maps as colonial artifacts require further detailed examination.

Two aspects of colonial science have received good treatment in recent years. In an important arc of essays, John Stenhouse has highlighted the religious, political
and ethical debates surrounding science in the colony (especially surrounding the reception of evolutionary thought). As well as foregrounding the persistence of Christianity as a key framework for shaping Pākehā understandings of race, the natural world, and ‘universal history’, Stenhouse has traced a range of intense conflicts that erupted around these issues within the context of colonialism. Environmental thought has also received sophisticated treatment, in the work of Ross Galbreath and Paul Star on colonial environmentalism, as well as throughout Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking’s landmark *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*. One of the most important features of these works (and one which could be further developed) is the movement beyond simply examining a particular individual’s ‘attitude’ or a single set of representations of Māori, to embed colonial science in its institutional, political, and intellectual contexts. Future work on colonial science could, however, be enriched by closer attention to the processes of archive construction and how these new forms of knowledge engaged with and ‘supplanted’ Māori epistemologies.

The gendered dynamics of colonial knowledge production and the gendering of colonial archives also remains largely unexplored in New Zealand historiography, which is surprising given the large and sophisticated literature on New Zealand women’s history. In part, this lacuna reflects the uneven temporal focus of the research on women’s history. This historiography is very strong for the Liberal and post-Liberal period, but comparatively underdeveloped for the years before 1890. Perhaps the neglect of this earlier period is not only produced by a narrative sensibility that is ordered around the development of feminism, but is also partly determined by the more restricted range of sources and greater difficulty in accessing female ‘voices’ in the pre-1890 period. There is no doubt that sources produced by women – especially non-European ones – are under-represented in New Zealand’s colonial archive, but the precise extent and nature of this gendering remains unclear. Frances Porter’s and Charlotte Macdonald’s *My Hand will Write what my Heart Dictates* does suggest, however, that some very rich sources produced by colonised women do exist in our archives and it seems that, in comparative terms, we have a much better range of documents left by indigenous women than is the case in South Asia. This reflects two key divergences between South Asian history and the history of New Zealand. Firstly, in the colonial period Māori women were much more likely to be literate than their South Asian counterparts. For much of the nineteenth century, male vernacular literacy rate in South Asia was about 10 per cent, with female literacy probably in the vicinity of 1 per cent. Although the figures we have for Māori literacy remain debated, there is no doubt that rates of Māori women’s literacy were much higher than female literacy in India, and as a result of this we have some rich documents which might be used to access their experiences of colonialism. Secondly, because Māori social structures were more flexible than many of the...
forms of social organisation that had developed in India, the functionaries of the colonial state had a more direct relationship with Māori (men and women) than was the norm in colonial South Asia. Within this context, Māori women could exercise considerable authority (in a variety of forms) and a significant number of Māori women were able to access colonial political processes and institutions. Māori women signed petitions, wrote letters to colonial officials to clarify the nature and extent of their land ownership, sent messages to Pākehā visitors to remind them that they should be reimbursed for their labour and hospitality, or, as in the case of Ruta Tamihana Te Rauparaha, used letter writing to maintain the close bonds of friendship that some Māori established with colonial officials and their families.\textsuperscript{27} Close reading of such sources, together with broader assessments of how gender constituted colonial archives, will greatly enrich existing analyses of ways in which various forms of difference constituted and mediated the social formations that developed on the New Zealand frontier.

If New Zealand historians were to subject our colonial archives to critical scrutiny and sustained analysis, by viewing the archives themselves as artifacts of colonialism rather than simply the repositories where the data pertaining to the colonial past is stored, important new perspectives of empire-building and the dynamics of colonisation would be enabled. The existing historiography on ‘race relations’ in the nineteenth century remains organised around two poles – conflict and assimilation – and while these were crucial dynamics, they do not allow us to map the diverse and shifting relationships between the developing colonial state and various Māori individuals, hapū (subtribes) and iwi (tribes). The rich evidence produced for the Waitangi Tribunal offer some windows into these complex dynamics, but this material has had little impact on academic history writing. The work undertaken by and for the Tribunal needs to be complemented and supplemented by a new body of research that is less narrowly focused on resources and resource use, exploring language, cross-cultural communication, and the many different interfaces between Pākehā and Māori ways of knowing the world. Most crucially, historians need to assemble a full and rich understanding of the ‘colonial information order’, or better still the ‘colonial knowledge order’.\textsuperscript{28} This would identify the place of knowledge production within the broader colonial social formation, highlighting the role of ‘knowledgeable’ groups (within Māori, Pākehā and other tauiwi populations), the changing shape of communication networks and technologies, debates over the status of particular forms of knowledge (an exemplary case of this would be the disputes around the Tohunga Suppression Act of 1907), and most crucially the connections between knowledge production and the fundamental processes of colonisation: the alienation of land, rights, and cultural authority.
One other important way that historians of New Zealand might approach the histories of our colonial archives is by reframing them within the broader context of the British imperial system. My own research has tried to bring these discussions of creation and power of colonial archives into dialogue with ‘transnational’ approaches to the imperial past. Transnational histories of the empire focus on the movement of commodities, capital, people, ideologies and ideas across the boundaries of nation states. This kind of work necessitates reconstructing these integrative structures and tracing the cultural transformations and translations enacted by these networks. As Chapter Ten shows, these exchanges operated frequently over great distances within imperial contexts, and this cultural traffic brought colonies as disparate as India and New Zealand into close connection.

As my work on Aryanism has shown (see Chapter One), historians need to move beyond thinking of empire as resembling a spoked wheel with London as the ‘hub’, from where the various ‘spokes’ (whether flows of finance, lines of communication, or the movement of people and objects) to the periphery emanate. It is more useful to imagine the British Empire as being like a complex web consisting of ‘horizontal’ filaments that run between various colonies in addition to ‘vertical’ connections between the metropole and individual colonies. This metaphor of the web has several advantages for conceptualising the imperial past. At a general level, it emphasises that the empire was a structure, a complex system of overlapping and interwoven institutions, organisations, ideologies and discourses. The web captures the integrative nature of this cultural traffic, as the everyday operation of the empire linked disparate points in space through complex and shifting networks. Archives of various types – the libraries of learned societies, the records produced by missionary organisations and reform movements, private libraries assembled by colonial intellectuals and the official archives of colonial government – can be understood as crucial nodes in these webs. Identifying archives as hubs within a larger system of imperial knowledge production recognises the double function of the archive. At one level, archives are the product of centripetal processes, as various webs of correspondence, institutional exchanges and publication networks draws material together into the archival space where it is collected, organised, and stored. But archives also have a centrifugal function; they are centres from which knowledge was distributed, whether through the act of reading, correspondence, the intertextual nature of print culture, or the exchange of manuscript or printed material. These ideas are developed more fully in the next chapter.

Unfortunately we have a very limited understanding of the circulation of ideas and the movement of information across the empire, largely because of the ways in which historians imagine the spatial significance of the archive.
Even after the ‘cultural turn’, most historians view the archive as providing the materials for studying a carefully delimited space, whether it is a city, a district or the nation: effectively, the archive comes to stand as a proxy for the unit of analysis. Even those historians sensitive to the occlusions of the imperial archive typically view archives as enclosed, static, and discrete, rather than the product of the constant circulation of information and the heavy intertextuality of many forms of knowledge. By emphasising the mobility of colonial knowledge and the interweaving of the archives of empire – arguments further developed in Chapter Ten – historians can place greater emphasis on the transnational cultural and intellectual traffic that was the very lifeblood of empire. This emphasis illuminates the conditions that produced many of the key archives and also recontextualises New Zealand’s history within the British imperial system, the fundamental structure that shaped the transformation of New Zealand from 1769 through to the second half of the twentieth century.

Despite its centrality in the practice of historical research and writing, the archive remains largely understudied and undebated by New Zealand historians. This chapter has charted the place of colonialism in the current ‘archival turn’ in humanities scholarship, in the hope that those of us interested in New Zealand’s past might engage with these important international debates. By making archives the actual focus of research, rather than viewing them simply as source repositories, many important insights can be gained into the colonisation of New Zealand. More generally still, by viewing New Zealand archives within the larger formation of the British Empire, we can gain important insights into networks, institutions and discourses that moulded the development of the colony. Close scrutiny of the imperial frameworks of our archives reminds us that nineteenth-century colonial culture was by its very nature porous, fluid and that it was energised by the circulation of people, ideas, and ideologies through an almost bewildering array of institutions, networks, and forms of cultural production. Although New Zealand archives have been increasingly tied to the fate of the nation and the history of the nation state since World War II, they were produced within an imperial world that was shaped by conflict, mobility, and an almost insatiable desire for knowledge. Rethinking and rereading our archives is a crucial step towards grappling with the painful legacies of that imperial past and its contemporary resonances.
CHAPTER TEN

MR PEAL'S ARCHIVE

Archival repositories, libraries, museums and monuments cluster around the heart of New Zealand’s capital city, Wellington. Although the city was not planned to project power in the coherent and imposing manner of other imperial cities such as Washington D.C., London, or New Delhi, and lacks the orchestrated modernity of Australia’s capital Canberra, Wellington’s centre contains a complex of buildings that forcefully embody and enact the power of the state. Nestled around the junction of Lambton Quay and Molesworth Street, the Parliamentary precinct contains the Old Government Buildings, the Beehive (which houses the Members of Parliament and the prime minister’s Office), and the Parliament Buildings, while the state’s judicial powers are embodied in a nearby network of buildings on Molesworth Street (the High Court), the corner of Bowen and Stout streets (the recently created Supreme Court) and Featherston Street (the Waitangi Tribunal). The state’s memory and nation’s identity are preserved and projected at a network of institutions that are located close to these sources of power. While the national museum, Te Papa Tongarewa sits on the edge of Lambton harbour, Archives New Zealand (on Mulgrave street) and the National Library (on Molesworth Street) are immediately adjacent to the parliamentary precinct, embodying the New Zealand state’s deep investment in archiving the nation’s past.

This chapter explores one body of materials within this large, multi-institutional archival complex. It focuses on my own encounter with an archive collated by Samuel E. Peal, and the ways in which this archive forced me to reconceptualise my own work and to explore a new way of imaging the structure of the British Empire. Peal was a leading botanist and ethnographer based on India’s northeast frontier who gifted his ethnographic archive to the Polynesian Society on his death in 1897. Peal’s bequest forms one small part of the substantial collections of manuscripts, books and other materials that made up the archive of the Polynesian Society, which now forms the Polynesian Society Collection (PSC), housed within the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL), which in turn is organisationally and physically part of New Zealand’s National Library. In discussing this material, this chapter tells of three archive stories. It begins by reconstructing the story
of Peal’s collection itself – charting Peal’s efforts to develop a substantial archive of materials relating to the ‘primitive peoples’ of Asia and the Pacific, the place of this collection within imperial ethnography, and Peal’s involvement with the Polynesian Society. The second archival story that is narrated is my own ‘discovery’ of this particular collection a century after Peal’s death and the role this engagement played in shaping the transnational vision of the structure and culture of the British Empire sketched in Chapter One and further developed in my monograph *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire.* The third archival story recounted is that of the increasing marginalisation of Peal’s work within the Polynesian Society, the history of anthropology, and the intellectual history of British imperialism during the twentieth century, as both anthropology and history became increasingly tied to the nation state and its narratives. In other words, I narrate the neglect of Peal’s papers, which form a largely forgotten archival fragment within the Polynesian Society Collection, a body of material that has stood at the very heart of New Zealand’s intellectual history over the last century. The chapter concludes by reflecting upon these stories, to ask what collections such as Peal’s can tell us about the institutional structures, forms of intellectual sociability, and correspondence networks that conditioned the production of knowledge within imperial systems. By foregrounding complex processes of collection, ordering and dissemination that were central to the production of colonial archives, this chapter marks a further step towards mapping the inter-regional and transnational structures that enabled the integrative, if highly uneven, work of modern imperial systems.

Samuel E. Peal made his name on India’s northeast frontier as a naturalist and a leading expert on the Naga peoples. Peal does not seem to have found much success as a tea planter. His correspondence records his strained financial circumstances, and his obituary in the *Calcutta Englishman* noted that it was ‘perhaps a mistake that Peal was a tea planter at all’. He did play a central role in opening up Assam’s natural resources to the colonial state and private British interests, identifying materials for paper production and locating rich deposits of petroleum and coal in the vicinity of Margherita, information that enabled the exploitation of Asia’s first significant oilfield. As a naturalist, he gained some renown after discovering the ‘tea-bug’, which had blighted the tea plantations of Assam until Peal’s discovery in the early 1870s, and he also identified several new species of snakes, beetles, and butterflies during his travels in the hilly frontier lands of Assam and Burma. In addition to publishing his botanical researches in the Agri-Horticultural Society’s *Journal*, Peal established a substantial reputation amongst the many missionaries, social reformers, military officers and colonial
officials who developed interests in ethnography and emerged as a significant man of science in late nineteenth-century India.5 His published anthropological work explored the language, material culture, social organisation and ancient history of the Naga peoples, and included essays on issues as diverse as Naga architecture to tree-climbing techniques.6

Late in his life, Peal’s wide reading on the anthropology of the Pacific stimulated his interest in the question of Polynesian origins, an issue that he believed his research in northeast India could shed significant light upon. He became an important member of the Polynesian Society, a scholarly society dedicated to study of the ‘manners and customs of the Oceanic races’ established in New Zealand in 1892. Soon after its establishment, Peal contributed two essays on Māori origins to the Society’s journal and was invited by Society’s joint-secretary, S. Percy Smith, to serve as a ‘Corresponding Member’.8 After establishing good relationships with both Smith and Elsdon Best (a leading expert on Māori), Peal offered to donate his ethnographic materials to the Polynesian Society in 1896 and Peal’s papers were deposited with the Society following his death on 29 July 1897.9

Peal’s archive is a small fragment in the very large and rich collection of material that the ATL holds relating to the Polynesian Society. In addition to the 495 files of the main ‘Polynesian Society Collection’, the ATL has an additional nineteen boxes, twenty-seven volumes and one folder of material in the Society’s ‘Further Records’, and the Society’s substantial anthropological library.10 Given the wide scope of the Society’s activities and the energy of its editors and chief contributors, substantial amounts of material relating to the intellectual and political context of the Polynesian Society’s operation are in the large collections of individual papers produced by the driving forces behind the early operation of the Society: S. Percy Smith, Edward Tregear, and Elsdon Best.11

Materials relating to Peal can be found scattered through these different collections. The main body of his archive is divided into three sets of materials. The bulk of his correspondence (which contains newspaper clippings, word lists and extensive discussion of Asian and Pacific ethnography), is held within the main PSC. These papers record his exchanges with some thirty-two correspondents, a veritable who’s who of anthropology in Asia-Pacific at that time.12 A second group of Peal materials is held within the PSC ‘Further Records’ series.13 This is a variegated body of records, featuring clippings from newspapers and journals, off-prints of Peal’s publications, his printed tables of comparative vocabularies (complete with his annotations), diaries, notes and itineraries from his field trips, draft essays, a few items of correspondence, a notebook, and ethnographic sketches.14 A significant amount of supplementary manuscript material relating to Peal is scattered through the larger PSC collection and in the individual papers of its leading figures: six letters from Peal and the draft of Smith’s obituary for
him are in a loose collection of correspondence and manuscripts for publication, while he also figures in the Society’s correspondence, and his work runs through the exchange of letters between Smith and the prominent ‘committee man’ and colonial scientist Dr. A. K. Newman in Newman’s papers. The third main concentration of Peal materials is a sizeable collection of thirty-five dictionaries, grammars, and ethnographic texts that he donated to the Society. Although this may seem a small body of texts, it seems that this collection formed at least 41 per cent of the library at the point of Peal’s death and this resource was crucial in providing evidence for the work of anthropologists intent on tracing Māori back to India and interpreting Māori religion as a form of transplanted Hinduism.

Peal’s collection was produced through two avenues of research. Peal’s initial published work, which focused on Assam, its peoples, plants and natural resources, was grounded in extensive travel in the region and first-hand description: this material is represented in the fieldnotes, sketches, and journals that are prominent in the Peal collection. In the 1880s, Peal began to supplement this fieldwork with extensive comparative reading, both in his own library and in the libraries of Calcutta. Material relating to this broader research forms the bulk of his archive and was of particular relevance to Polynesian anthropology. In researching the place of the peoples of Assam in the broader pattern of ‘racial history’, Peal believed that he had identified some similarities between Polynesian languages, material culture and religion, and the customs of the tribal peoples of northeast India. In light of these ‘racial customs’, Peal encouraged Smith and his society to pursue the study of racial affinities. Such research would finally fix the place of Polynesians in the history of civilisation, as Peal hoped it would confirm his belief that Polynesians ultimately shared their origins with the ‘Dravidians, Kols, IndoMongols ... Malays, Dyaks [Dyaks], Papuans, the Massai, Madagascar races, Australians & Formosan savages’. Correspondence with Smith and Best convinced him that Māori belonged to a large racial group which spanned east Africa, the mountainous regions and the south of India, most of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Peal believed that he had identified twenty ‘singular racial customs’ which established the ‘former racial unity’ of these peoples. ‘These included the use of ‘platform dwellings’ and other common forms of material culture that Peal identified as evidence for the unity of this racial group.

In an 1897 article in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (JPS) Peal elaborated his theory of ‘ethnic diffusions’ that, he argued, explained the peopling of India and the Pacific. According to Peal, in the ancient past various peoples entered north India from central Asia and Tibet. The first of these migrants were the ‘Nigreto’ or ‘Australo-Dravidian’ peoples, who were soon followed by the Tibetan or ‘Himalic’ races. These two waves of migration merged together and intermarried, producing new communities including the Khol, the Bihari and the Khasia. In India’s distant pre-Aryan past these new hybrid racial communities, which
Peal termed the ‘Mon-Anam’ or ‘Gangetic’ race, dominated Upper Burma, the Gangetic basin, and much of the north Indian hinterland. A new wave of Tibetan migrants eventually displaced the Mon-Anam, forcing them eastwards, where they settled in Southeast Asia and finally in Polynesia. En route to Polynesia the Mon-Anam were exposed to a variety of new cultural forces, most notably Aryan influences resulting from the introduction of Hinduism into Java and the incursion of Muslim traders into Southeast Asia. The resulting veneer of Aryan cultural accretions could not, however, disguise the essentially pre-Aryan nature of Polynesian society. Peal’s work here fed into the central questions that energised early anthropological debate in Polynesia: where was the ancient Polynesian homeland and, if it was in India, was it to be located in the ‘Aryan’ north, the ‘Dravidian’ south, or amongst the tribal peoples of South Asia’s deserts, hills, and frontiers? In asserting that Māori origins were non-Aryan, Peal aligned himself with a tradition of scientific racism that questioned the emphasis placed on Māori capability by many humanitarians, missionaries and Māori leaders. As the product of pre-Aryan tribal India, Māori were primitive, unassimilable and likely to die out in the face of New Zealand’s ‘Aryan’ European settlers.

The PSC records the influence that Peal’s work exercised over Polynesian anthropology, particularly the study of Māori culture, over the three decades after his death. Peal’s letters to Smith, Best and Tregear and his publications in the Society’s Journal of the Polynesian Society encouraged New Zealand anthropologists’ continued engagement with Indian ethnography and Indocentric visions of Māori culture. Alfred K. Newman, for example, attempted to provide the definitive case for Indian origins in Who are the Maoris? (c.1912). During his lengthy research for this volume, Newman utilised the Peal collection extensively and discussed Peal’s work at length in his correspondence with S. Percy Smith. Ultimately, Newman was convinced by Peal’s case and concluded that the Nagas of Assam ‘were the mothers of our Maoris’. More significantly, correspondence with Peal, who believed that phallus worship was one of the ‘racial customs’ that linked the far-flung members of the Mon-Anam racial family, encouraged Best’s work on Māori fertility rites and phallic symbols. In a letter to Peal in 1895, Best reported that he was ‘much pleased ... at having discovered the remnants of that most ancient cult – the worship of the phallic symbol, it never having been noted in N.Z. before’. Best believed that Māori mythology and religion contained important ‘survivals’ from ancient forms of religious practice, especially phallus worship. Best documented these survivals in an important article in Man in 1914, which recorded Māori beliefs ‘concerning the inherent power of the organs of generation in the genus homo’, and in his massive Tuhoe (1925).

But by the 1930s, Peal’s influence had waned. His correspondents, Smith, Tregear and Best had died and the work of the pioneering members of the Polynesian Society was subjected to critical reassessment. As a result of this
process of generational change, the intellectual focus of the Polynesian Society itself was turning to increasingly detailed studies of Māori material culture and the history of Māori culture within New Zealand itself. While Best’s work as an ethnographic collector remained highly respected, the grand diffusionist interpretations formulated by Best, Smith and Tregear were attacked by David Teviotdale and H. D. Skinner, the new co-editor of the journal. A struggle between two generations of scholars and an emergent paradigm shift is recorded in the JPS, a reorientation that is powerfully embodied in the work of another Polynesian Society member, Raymond Firth. Bearing the clear imprint of Malinowski’s functionalism, Firth’s *Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori* (1929) set a new agenda for the study of Māori culture. Where Tregear, Smith and Best constructed a genealogy of Polynesian culture and ‘excavated’ the remnants of Asian influence in modern Māori culture, Firth foregrounded the material frameworks of Māori society and emphasised the importance of internal structures and dynamics.28 Within a decade of the publication of Firth’s landmark study, it was clear that the work of anthropology was unravelling the local development of culture, rather than identifying its distant roots in ancient homelands.

As a result of this paradigm shift, Peal’s work was marginalised. The word lists, sketches, and dictionaries which he believed shed light on the ancient origins and history of Māori, were of little use to scholars who wanted to understand Māori history within a more narrowly Polynesian or, more commonly still, national framework. When a later generation of scholars, particularly D. R. Simmons, M. P. K Sorrenson and James Belich, came to identify the Polynesian Society’s activities as occupying a central position in settler culture and as providing the central intellectual apparatus of colonisation, they exhibited no interest in Peal. Even though he was an influential figure in moulding diffusionist interpretations of Māori culture, he was based in India, and his work did not fit easily amongst the national narratives of identity formation that these historians worked within. Moreover, in the world of modern professional anthropology, Peal’s racial theories and diffusionist speculation were at best irrelevant and, at worst, an embarrassing reminder of anthropology’s amateur and imperial origins. Peal’s erasure was reinforced in Sorrenson’s *Manifest Duty*, which reconstructed the intellectual and institutional history of the Society in considerable detail, but paid little attention to the international contexts of the Polynesian anthropology or the imperial networks that energised the field until at least World War Two. In narratives that framed the Polynesian society within the disciplinary history of anthropology or the development of a national identity, Peal had no place.
Different historians bring radically different perspectives to bear upon archives and find very different stories in the same repository. For me, encountering the Peal collection was crucial in crystallising the transnational approach to British imperial history that I elaborated in *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*. In narrating my own encounter with Peal’s papers, I hope to record the context in which I found a body of material that profoundly reorientated my research and my view of empire. The process of working through Peal’s papers and reconstructing, however partially, the afterlife of his papers in New Zealand, pushed me towards a realisation of the complex intellectual traffic that operated over great distances within the empire. The conversations and exchanges recorded in the Peal papers were carried out through a restless and seemingly ceaseless shuttling of paper – letters, postcards, telegrams, the purchase and lending of books and periodicals, and the exchange of field notes, word lists, sketches and off-prints – between individuals and institutions scattered across the empire and frequently occupying very different subject positions (in terms of wealth, political power, intellectual standing and cultural capital). Such exchanges moved freely across both modern nation state boundaries and the analytical units (for example, settler colonies versus military-garrison colonies) that historians use to order their work, and played a fundamental role in the history of imperial knowledge production and the cultural lives of many individuals within the empire.

Randolph Starn observed that although ‘we [historians] routinely sift through and evaluate our documents, we tend to use archives without thinking much about them as institutions’. Despite the recent ‘archival turn’ in the humanities, historians in general have been slow to scrutinise their archives, reluctant to explore the institutional history of archives, hesitant to examine the cultural and political work carried out by these institutions and, most tellingly, loathe to chart their individual experience of archives. This is in stark contrast to anthropology, for example, where critical reflections on fieldwork have become common-place. Indeed, Nicholas Dirks argues that while anthropologists have regularly reflected critically upon their ‘arrival stories’ – which narrate their arrival, especially their ‘originary arrival’, in the field – historians have been slower to record to their own archival ‘arrival stories’ and submit them to critical scrutiny.

The significance I have come to attach to the Peal papers was itself the product of the particular moment of my arrival in the archives and the questions I was grappling with at that point in time. Our archival stories should not only recount our work with bodies of evidence in particular spaces, but should also record our own political concerns and intellectual preoccupations at the specific moments in which historians read, transcribe, paraphrase and ponder source material. Verne Harris’s gloss on Derrida’s *Archive Fever* has stressed: ‘Scholars are not,
can never be, exterior to their objects. They are marked before they interrogate the markings, and this pre-impression shapes their interrogation.32

My interrogation of the Peal papers was the product of my own research trajectory across the former British Empire. In late 1996, the research for my Cambridge PhD brought me home to New Zealand. Initially, at least, my PhD was conceived of as an exercise in comparative history. It would be, I imagined, a project that would explore the development of colonial knowledge in two very different contexts: Punjab and New Zealand. I hoped that by focusing on Punjab, which shared with New Zealand a similar chronology of contact and colonialism, I would be able to explore the divergent place of knowledge production in settler colonies as opposed to India, which by the mid-1990s had assumed a central position in the literature of colonial knowledge as well as in post-colonial thought. This research necessitated work on archival materials held in India, Australasia and the United Kingdom itself and entailed conscious reflections upon the place of these archives within the project of empire-building.

I returned to New Zealand earlier than planned, after my research in India was truncated. Even though I had promptly applied for my research visa for India on arriving in England in the summer of 1995, there was no sign of it a year later when I embarked on the Indian leg of my research (I did, in fact receive this visa, but only some time after the submission of my PhD thesis). Once I had arrived in India it was clear that without the visa I would not be able to work in the National Archives of India and instead focused my efforts in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in Teen Murti House, New Delhi, as well as several smaller archives and university libraries. Given the tremendous ability of both the Raj and Indian presses to produce vast bodies of documentation, I quickly assembled a substantial body of material relating to social change in Punjab (and north India more generally) between 1780 and 1914. In terms of my project, it became clear that only the National Archives held a significant collection of resources that I could not access in Britain, so after visiting various historical sites and pilgrimage centres in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, I travelled on to New Zealand.34

Early in 1997, I travelled from my hometown of Dunedin to Wellington to carry out research at the ATL, one of New Zealand’s most important archives, with particularly rich nineteenth-century holdings, now housed within the National Library. I planned to focus my research on the Polynesian Society Collection within the ATL, researching the history of this learned society and the work of its linguists, ethnographers, folklorists, historians and anthropologists on New Zealand’s frontiers. In stumbling across the Peal papers on my second day in the archive, I made a ‘discovery’ that radically transformed my research and my vision of history more generally. I spent the best part of a month reading the Peal papers, tracing connections between this collection and other holdings at the
ATL, and thinking about how Peal’s collection of ethnographic material relating to the ‘native races’ of Asia and the Pacific would sit both within my comparative project and within the historiography of empire.

Unlike other users of the PSC – who typically focus on the relevance of its ethnographic material for understanding the history of Māori or other Pacific peoples, or who used the archive as a window into the ‘intellectual colonisation’ of New Zealand – I was interested in the way in which the archive sat within a broader imperial context of knowledge production. And slowly I realised that I had identified a body of material that offered a series of compelling insights into the role of archives in both the development of racial thought and imperial power. Peal’s papers were particularly compelling because they allowed me to connect a host of figures that I was already interested in (from Best, Smith and Tregear to the leading North American expert on Polynesia Horatio Hale, from E. B. Tylor to the leading evangelical ethnographers R. N. Cust and William Wyatt Gill), but they revealed the complex operation of a very wide network of ethnographers who were engaged with the same set of questions: What was the relationship between the peoples of Asia and the Pacific? How was colonialism transforming indigenous peoples? How could these ‘ancient traditions’ be preserved? How could scholars work together to ensure the efficient recording of information relating to these peoples? How should this information be inserted into the wider story of human development?

In a very stark way Peal’s correspondence and networks of exchange forced me to recognise that ethnography and early anthropology were comparative projects, but they were also connective projects. The store of comparisons between Māori and Indians, especially Punjabis, that I had collected were borne not only out of the comparative sensibility of pre-functionalist anthropology as I had assumed, but rather were fashioned out of the imperial networks that brought missionaries, colonial officials, humanitarians, and pioneering anthropologists together into a shared intellectual space. Although Peal was based in Assam, not Punjab, his papers forced me to entirely rethink my project. His papers made me grapple with the question of the spatial structure of the empire and almost immediately forced me to open out my approach to South Asia, moving from a narrow regional focus on Punjab to a more flexible analytical strategy that grappled with, however imperfectly, both regional variation within British India and British India’s place within the larger structures of empire. In materialising the transnational production of imperial knowledge in such a stark way, Peal’s work encouraged me to think of my work as a connective history that would reconstruct the institutions, networks, and discursive fields that provided the fundamental intellectual structure of the empire, rather than an exercise in comparative history.

Eight of my nine proposed chapters were scrapped and my attention now
focused firmly on the chapter I had planned on the place of racial thought in colonial knowledge. It was recast as the basis of the entire thesis in an attempt to carefully delineate a set of imperial debates over racial origins and the networks that enabled these debates. Large amounts of the archival research I had conducted in India was now ‘archived’ for future use, while the remainder of my research in New Zealand and an extended period of research on my return to Britain in mid-1997 focused on the operation of these knowledge networks. Most crucially, the insights I gained from Peal provided a ‘key’ with which I reread the archival evidence I had kept and continued to gather. But in time, Peal himself was overshadowed by the host of other networks I uncovered and by the time the revised version of the PhD was published as Orientalism and Race less than 500 words (of an 85,000 word volume) were devoted to his work. Although Peal and his archive were significant figures in Orientalism and Race, the text itself gives no indication of Peal’s role in shaping the volume or my vision of the imperial past. In Orientalism and Race, like so many other historians before me, I masked my own archival story, an ironic silence in a book that underscored the importance of knowledge gathering and archival spaces in the dynamics of empire-building.

To this point, it seems that my attachment to the Peal materials remains a particular one, not shared by other historians of the Polynesian Society, colonialism in New Zealand, or the intellectual history of imperialism. In fact, during a research trip to the Alexander Turnbull Library in December 2003, one staff member checked the computerised record of usage of the Peal papers and discovered that I have been the only person to use the papers over the last decade.

How to explain this neglect? I have already suggested the PSC and the JPS allow us to locate Peal’s neglect and the marginalisation of his archive within the disciplinary history of anthropology. But Peal’s standing in the New Zealand context can also be identified as a product of the disjuncture between the actual content of the collection and the broader cultural context of its current archival repository. Achille Mbembe has suggested that the ‘status and power of the archive’ is produced by the ‘entanglement of building and documents’. The physical space of archives – in their organisational structure, architecture, decoration, signage, and other forms of cultural encoding – provide crucial cues to the kinds of stories that institutions and archivists imagine residing in their collections or want to be produced from their repositories. In other words, as Mbembe has suggested, the ‘inescapable materiality’ of archival spaces provides ‘an instituting imaginary’ that guides those who work with the ‘fragments of life’ recorded and interred within the archive.35
When I was working through the Peal collection in 1997, I was increasingly aware of a profound disjunction between the highly mobile and imperial intellectual visions that were the very stuff of the Peal collection and the ‘instituting imaginary’ of the National Library itself. The addresses, letterheads, postmarks, stamps, postcards, and bookplates found in Peal’s collection were testament to the construction of powerful networks that cut across the boundaries of emergent nation states. The collection is housed in an archive that erases such imperial structures as it frames its collections within a post-colonial vision of New Zealand as a nation. Since the mid-1970s, New Zealand public institutions have slowly, unevenly, and painfully been reshaped around a particular post-colonial vision: biculturalism. Biculturalism is grounded in the legal power and cultural weight ascribed to the Treaty of Waitangi signed by representatives of the Crown and over five hundred Māori chiefs in 1840. In effect, biculturalism imagines New Zealand as containing two distinct populations – Pākehā settlers of European (but mainly British) descent and the tangata whenua (people of the land) – Māori. Biculturalism recognises the authority of traditional Māori leaders, the value of Māori language, culture and other taonga (‘Treasures’), and the state’s role to protect these rights promised by the Treaty.

In keeping with the state’s recognition of the Treaty and its cultural implications, the National Library (which houses the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Peal collection) explicitly projects a bicultural image and follows bicultural practice. This commitment to biculturalism is not hidden away in the institution charter or mission statement, but rather shapes the library’s public image, its architecture, decoration, and organisation. Its bilingual name (the National Library of New Zealand/Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa), the use of both English and Māori signage, the significant space and resources attached to Māori language materials and resources relating to Māori pasts, and the prominence of Māori art within the National Library reflect a concerted attempt to decolonise the archive.36

These practices give Māori materials legitimacy within the archive and respect the particular needs and interests of Māori users, but also place the institution firmly within the apparatus of the state and the bicultural historical vision that the state has projected since the mid-1980s. Biculturalism has functioned as an increasingly authoritative framework for narrating the nation’s past and this narrative is clearly reinforced in the National Library. In the early 2000s library users entered the building by passing under an impressive pare ‘Kuaha: Entranceway’ carved by Raymond Smith, John Manukau, and Bernie Rongo, which represents Te Wānanga (the source of all knowledge) as well as the signatories of the Treaty of Waitangi.37 The Library’s use of the art of Cliff Whiting also forcefully communicated this vision of the library as an embodiment of the nation’s bicultural ideology and a repository of its bicultural past. Whiting’s ‘Te Wehenga o Rangi raua ko Papa’, which represents the separation of the
primordial parents Rangi and Papatuanuku, dominated the main reading room of the National Library and was also used as a key element within the multimedia presentation that greeted users of the National Library’s website. The Library’s website explained this presentation as passing through three stages: ‘the natural New Zealand landscape and inhabitants in pre-European settlement times’; ‘the discovery, colonisation and development of early New Zealand society, to illustrate the birth of industry, and the foundations of today’s structured society’; and ‘evolution of the mind and of knowledge, ideas, art, thought and intellectual progress’. This replicated a common three-stage model for narrating New Zealand’s past: pre-contact Māori history, contact and its outcomes, and the development of modern bicultural New Zealand.38

While it is important to recognise that biculturalism has enabled the slow redress of Māori claims under the Treaty and a significant redistribution of resources and authority, it must also be seen as a national imaginary that allows the state to produce a partial and self-legitimating vision of the past. In effect, as a historical vision, biculturalism rests upon the prioritisation of national identity and the marginalisation of histories of ethnic and religious identity, migration, and intellectual connection that transect or transcend the boundaries of the nation state.39 In this regard, Foucault’s formulation in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, that ‘the archive is first the law of what can be said’ helps us read the cultural work done by the architecture and decoration of the Library. The archive’s physical layout, signage and artwork help fix the ‘rules’ within ‘which we speak’, enabling particular discursive fields and investing some arguments with particular legitimacy.40 In the case of the National Library, the archive – both as a physical space and as the product of collation, classification, and cataloguing – does not entirely preclude heterodox readings of the materials it houses, but it does provide a series of powerful ideological statements about the kind of visions of the nation and its past that library users should produce.

Even though the ATL was the product of the assiduous efforts of an individual collector rather than the nation state itself, it has been thoroughly assimilated into the nation state’s archival complex. Although the Library’s users’ guide in the early 2000s noted that the ATL is a ‘storehouse of words, pictures, and sounds that tell us about the activities of people in New Zealand and in the Pacific’, it quickly shifted from this broad vision of the ATL’s spatial framework to stress that it holds ‘the nation’s collection’.41 This slippage between the broader regional scope of the ATL’s collection and its status as a national collection is not entirely out of step with the vision of Alexander Turnbull himself who identified his library ‘as the nucleus of a New Zealand National Collection’. But Turnbull saw his library as fulfilling an important role within broad imperial, narrowly local as well as national contexts: his will actually bequeathed the library to ‘His Majesty the King’ and stressed the local significance of the collection, specifying that it
CHAPTER TEN

should ‘constitute a Reference Library’ to be located in ‘the City of Wellington’.\textsuperscript{42} This emphasis on both the imperial and local significance of the library has been erased over time and after the ATL was absorbed into the National Library in 1966, it has been firmly harnessed to the nation, despite the fact many of its collections (such as the PSC) sit uneasily within a national framework.\textsuperscript{43}

Nicholas Dirks has observed that the ‘archive is simultaneously the outcome of the historical process and the very condition for the production of historical knowledge’.\textsuperscript{44} For historians of empire this is a particularly important insight, as it serves as a reminder that the materials used to craft historical narratives that scrutinise empire-building are typically products of that process. By their very nature, the constituent components and processes of empire-building (from slavery to colonial administration, from the movement of capital to free migration) operated across significant distances and cut across the boundaries of states. Following Dirks’s formulation, this means that the archives produced by empire-building must themselves be imprinted by and record the operation of these ‘cross-cultural’ or ‘transnational’ processes. Yet many historians continue to conceptualise colonial archives as a window on the development of a particular colony. Dirks argued that colonial knowledge was ‘not an archive that was imagined as the basis for a national history, for it was only designed to reap the rewards and to tell tales of imperial interest’, but in many colonies, including New Zealand, this is precisely how colonial archives are frequently used by historians. In other words, New Zealand historians transfigure these collections, which were fundamental in the creation of colonial authority, into repositories where ‘our’ national story might be found. Certainly, Treaty breaches, violence, and the alienation of Māori resources figure prominently in these national narratives, but such acts are often assigned to the chaotic early chapters of the nation’s past and, as such, serve to offset the ‘progress’ that began in the 1890s and accelerated rapidly since the 1960s. These narratives tend to contain this conflict within an essentially progressive national narrative, rather than reading either cultural conflict or colonial archives themselves as the product of the crucial material and ideological context of New Zealand’s development: empire-building.

By locating the work of both Peal and the Polynesian Society within a complex series of imperial networks and a significant tradition of anthropological work that transplanted Indian models to the Pacific, \textit{Orientalism and Race} produced a very different vision of the production of racial thought in colonial New Zealand. Instead of following recent work on the ‘representation’ of Māori or older studies that saw colonial texts as simply the product of nineteenth-century British racism, my work viewed this ‘Indocentric’ tradition of research within
the broader dynamics of the textualisation of colonised cultures, the creation of learned institutions across the empire, and the comparative sensibility of imperial ethnology and anthropology. This transnational vision of imperial knowledge production did not view colonial anthropology in New Zealand or New Zealand colonial history more generally as a self-sufficient story, but rather interrogated and reframed these ‘national’ stories within an explicitly imperial framework. On reflection, this approach had three advantages. First, it undercut the assumption of some New Zealand historians that Aryanism was a concern unique to the New Zealand frontier, instead revealing the profound entanglement of this vision of racial history with discourses of colonial governance and theories of racial contact throughout the empire. Second, only careful attention to the broader intellectual history of the empire made the allure of Indocentrism in colonial New Zealand explicable. Earlier New Zealand historians viewed colonial Aryanism as the product of amateur speculation or read it anachronistically through the lens of the Holocaust, and these approaches made Aryanism an awkward and embarrassing passage in the nation’s cultural history. But the power of Aryanism would be much less surprising if it was read against the backdrop of the profound intellectual impact of the British ‘discovery’ of Indian languages and Hinduism, or if it was located within the institutional development of colonial science in New Zealand, or framed within the histories of the production, circulation and consumption of imperial print culture. Third, it suggested at the broadest level, that nineteenth-century colonial culture was by its very nature porous, fluid and energised by the circulation of people, ideas, and ideologies through an almost bewildering array of imperial institutions, networks, and forms of cultural production. In proposing the metaphor of the ‘web’ as a heuristic tool for imperial history, Orientalism and Race tried to make sense of these forms of cultural traffic and refocus historiographical attention on the structures and discourses that integrated the empire (however imperfectly) and underwrote colonial domination. Although not universally applicable to the imperial past, I still find the ‘web’ metaphor a useful heuristic tool for my work as I continue to explore knowledge production and the mobility of culture within the British Empire.

This chapter has revisited Peal’s archive to foreground the centrality of exchange and mobility in the making of a particular imperial archive. In so doing, this chapter questions the overwhelming emphasis of the intimate connection between the archive and the modern nation state within recent work on the ‘archive’. Although the ‘new social history’ and the ‘cultural turn’ have in some instances produced a less state focused vision of the archive than that associated with the long ascendant traditions of economic and political history, much of the recent ‘archival turn’ in the humanities has focused on the relationship between the archive and state, especially the state’s legal powers. The sophisticated
literature on the development of colonial knowledge in South Asia, for example, has generally focused on the enumerative projects, classificatory regimes, and coercive instruments that enabled the state to levy taxes, wage war, and discipline restive segments of the colonised population. But the unquestioned priority attached to state-produced archives has worked to reinscribe the boundaries of colonial states and, in effect, has tended to remove particular colonial states from the larger imperial systems within which they operated. Although the literature on colonial knowledge production in New Zealand is much smaller and less theoretically engaged, the existing work has also taken the nation state as its unit of analysis, with little attention devoted to particular locales, broad regional patterns, or structures that transect or transcended the colony’s boundaries.

Peal’s collection, of course, cannot be easily framed within this national narrative, as both his web of correspondents and his diffusion vision of ‘racial history’ cannot be contained by the nation state. His archive encourages a reappraisal of the analytical units that historians use and, more generally still, the very operation of the empire itself. Peal’s papers are a reminder that the individual colonies developed within a larger imperial system and demonstrate centrality of the creation and dissemination of knowledge in both the intellectual and political life of the empire. Examining the role of archives in the creation of what Mrinalini Sinha has identified as the ‘imperial social formation’, what C. A. Bayly has termed the empire’s ‘extended political arena’, or what I have conceived as the ‘webs of empire’ seems a crucial way ahead for historians of British empire-building.47 Mapping the reach of colonial archives across space and time, as well as noting their recurrent concerns and highlighting their silences, will not only deepen an understanding of these crucial nodes within the empire but also enrich our reflections on how to make sense of imperialism itself.
Knowledge has become a central problem in recent work on cross-cultural encounters and the processes of empire-building. In an array of contexts – from Spanish America to colonial South Africa, from Ireland to occupied Egypt, the American West to British India – anthropologists and historians have highlighted the ways in which ‘colonial knowledge’ facilitated trade, the extraction of rent and taxes, conversion, and outright conquest. This scholarship has demonstrated how these new forms of understanding produced on imperial frontiers facilitated the actual extension of sovereignty and the consolidation of colonial authority: for Tzvetan Todorov, Bernard Cohn, and Nicholas Dirks alike, colonialism was a ‘conquest of knowledge’.1 Scholarship on empire-building in the Americas has placed special emphasis on the place of literacy in the dynamics of conquest. Walter Mignolo in particular has argued that European understandings of the power of literacy encouraged Spaniards in the New World to discount the value of indigenous graphic systems and disparage Mesoamerican languages as untruthful, unreliable, and products of the Devil. For Mignolo, the dark side of the new knowledge orders born out of the Renaissance was a new interweaving of literacy, knowledge, and colonisation in a new cultural order he dubs ‘coloniality’.2

In the North American literature too, literacy has been seen as a crucial element in imperial intrusion and conquest. James Axtell, for example, has argued the ‘conquest of America was in part a victory of paper and print over memory and voice. The victors wrote their way to the New World and inscribed themselves on its maps.’3

These cultural readings of the state processes and forms of intellectual production that underwrote imperial power have not simply connected colonial knowledge with conquest and imperial territorial extension, but they have been particularly concerned with demonstrating the cultural consequences of colonial knowledge. This kind of work has illustrated how the new bodies of demographic, ethnographic, and historical knowledge produced by agents of empire ultimately textualised cultures and subsequently transformed the mentalities and social practices of colonised, indigenous, and enslaved populations, who increasingly understood their own communities through the categories of caste, tribe,
religion, and race that were elevated and calcified under colonial rule. Another set of studies, primarily concerned with the role of the colonial periphery in the creation of modern science, has demonstrated the ways in which colonial spaces were never merely locations where scientific raw materials – specimens, observations, data – were gathered, but rather functioned as sites where important new linguistic, scientific, and historical models were formulated and contested. Taken together, these large and diffuse bodies of scholarship have stressed the pivotal role of empire in constituting ‘modern’ forms of knowledge and have also recast understandings of colonialism itself, reimagining it as being a ‘cultural project’ as well as a set of unequal economic and political relationships.

This chapter works in the wake of this scholarship, but it explores an issue that has not received a great deal of consideration in recent studies of colonial knowledge: the place of paper in the transformations set in train by imperial encroachment and formal colonisation. While Harold Innis’s landmark study *Empire and Communications* (1950) discussed the connections between various media and forms of political and religious organisation over the longue durée of human history, his insights have not been developed or tested in recent work on the cultures of modern empires. More recent scholarship on empire has certainly foregrounded the connections between writing or literacy and colonialism, but very little work has addressed the impact of paper on the colonial order of things or the cultural consequences of its particular materiality. The most detailed study of the place of paper in the techniques of colonial rule in British India is Richard Saumarez Smith’s *Rule by Records* (1995). This monograph demonstrated the ways in which the complex system of administrative papers, especially village records and district reports, that the British fashioned in Punjab after that region’s annexation in 1849, recast social relations. Smith argues that this bureaucratic system triggered a shift from a flexible tradition of land management that was grounded in an idiom of shareholding to a more rigid system of private property based on patrilineal descent where rights were passed from father to son. But for all of Smith’s attention to the operation of this administrative machinery, he did not address the material basis of this greatly enlarged bureaucratic regime, overlooking the importance of paper, the very medium that this order was grounded in. The connections between paper and colonialism have been more directly examined in the South Asian context in a provocative short essay by Martin Moir, and its significance is alluded to at several points in C. A. Bayly’s *Empire and Information*. Both of these studies recognised how paper was embedded in the broad shifts from the scribal culture and courtly traditions of the Mughal state to the administrative practices of the East India Company (and these works can be read productively alongside Jonathon Bloom’s important work on the impact of paper in the Islamic world).

But this focus on the construction of the colonial state’s archives offers relatively
few insights into the ways in which paper reshaped the everyday practices of colonised peoples, nor does it document the particular impact of paper on South Asia's tribal populations, who were traditionally non-literate and operated within cultural worlds that remained grounded in orality. Ajay Skaria's work on western India has offered some crucial insights into this issue as he has examined the ways in which writing reordered relationships within adivasi (aboriginals; first peoples) communities and highlighted adivasi leaders' awareness of the strong connections between writing, paper, and colonial power.10 In the Pacific, the focus of this chapter, there is significant scholarship on the impact of print technology and the nature of indigenous literacies, but there has been little consideration of the ways in which paper itself was entangled with colonialism and its place in the transformation of indigenous knowledge traditions.11

In African scholarship, Sean Hawkins's detailed assessment of the place of writing in the economic, cultural, and legal transformations enacted in northern Ghana offers a host of insights into the ways in which writing became entangled in both colonial and African practices. But while Hawkins charts the development of this 'world on paper', he prioritises the impact of literacy and actually offers little discussion of the place of paper itself in these transformations and the monograph's index has no reference to paper.12 Hawkins's emphasis on the inventive nature of Ghanaian writing traditions has been elaborated by work like Karin Barber's collection Africa's Hidden Histories. That volume highlights the profusion of literary practices that flourished in colonial Africa, documenting the centrality of writing as an instrument of self-fashioning, the enthusiasm for reading as an instrument of self-improvement, and the developing tendency to collect and archive amongst Africans. Like Isabel Hofmeyr's study of the localisation of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, Barber's collection portrays a wide cross-section of colonised peoples as innovators who developed new cultural practices, created new genres and traditions of writing, and worked hard to bring into being new literary and cultural spaces where books and print culture occupied a central place.13 In a similar spirit, Penny Van Toorn has reconstructed some of the creative forms of literacy fashioned by Australian Aboriginal communities who exchanged written British texts as curiosities, wove letters of the alphabet into their graphic traditions, and fashioned distinctive cultures of writing that were markedly different from the prevalent models authorised by missionaries and administrators.14 Brian Frederick Edwards has also documented the efforts of Aboriginal peoples in Canada to harness literacy, books, and libraries introduced by missionaries and colonists to their own cultural priorities and their growing ability to fashion distinctive and increasingly independent literary and library cultures.15

This recent emphasis on the centrality of writing and paper in the life of colonised communities is a crucial starting point for this chapter. It explores
the place of paper and the cultural practices that came to be associated with that medium in southern New Zealand from 1770, when the takata whenua (people of the land) first encountered Europeans, to the close of the nineteenth century when Kāi Tahu Whānui, the primary indigenous community in the region, were largely landless and struggling with the consequences of disease, depopulation, and colonial rule. In examining the place of paper and literacy in the transformation of Kāi Tahu mentalities, this chapter draws on Harold Innis’s deep concern with the material base of knowledge orders: the ways in which the media that knowledge is stored in and transmitted through shapes social patterns, cultural practices, and cosmologies. A focus on the qualities of particular forms of knowledge storage and communication is productive because it reconnects mentalities and practices with the distinctive materiality of knowledge media, whether we are thinking about stone, the spoken word, or paper. While the existing work on Māori literacy has focused primarily on Christianity and the Native schools system, here I am particularly concerned with economic questions and the nature of rakatiratanga (the culture of chieftainship), foregrounding the relationships between knowledge media, the importance of whakapapa (genealogy) in ordering the Kāi Tahu world, and the operation of political power. From the 1840s, Kāi Tahu practices were increasingly embedded in a culture of paper, which included paper itself, the skills of literacy, and the endless circulation of printed texts that was the lifeblood of colonial culture. This centrality of the culture of paper under colonialism encouraged a reorganisation of both traditional forms of knowledge transmission and chiefly practice. It is very important to recognise that Kāi Tahu encountered paper, literacy, and the printed word simultaneously, unlike some other colonised peoples and unlike Europe itself, where the development of literacy, the adoption of paper, and establishment of printing presses were disaggregated and distinct transitions.16

The nature and status of indigenous knowledge has been the subject of a series of overlapping and long-running debates in New Zealand. While it is possible to suggest that these debates emerged out of the new programmes to revitalise Māori language and culture championed in the 1970s, they really began the moment that the indigenous people of New Zealand entered into sustained relationships with Euro-americans. From the moment that members of the Rongowhakaata and Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti iwi (tribes) met the officers and crew of Captain James Cook’s *Endeavour* at Turanganui in 1769, knowledge has been in question in New Zealand. In the wake of Cook’s arrival, indigenous communities encountered new skills (reading and writing), new ways of presenting knowledge (books and maps), and new institutions through which they could access knowledge (mission
stations and schools). These encounters were an important part of the processes that produced a sense of being ‘Māori’. In pre-contact times, ‘Māori’ primarily designated things that were normal or routine, but as contact with Europeans and other newcomers proliferated, the tangata whenua increasingly designated themselves as ‘Māori’ (ordinary) people as opposed to the newcomers who were seen as tipua (goblins), pakepakeha (fairyfolk), patupaiarehe (outlandish beings), and Pākehā (strangers). These oppositions were echoed in British imperial thought: just as the opposition between ‘Māori’ and ‘Pākehā’ was consolidated in the language and thought of the Polynesians who had been long settled in New Zealand, British observers made sense of Māori through categories such as ‘Indian’, ‘Aboriginal’, and especially ‘Native’. An important part of this production of ‘Māori’ as an indigenous population was the constant evaluation of the nature and sophistication of indigenous knowledge by explorers, missionaries, imperial agents, and colonists, as they variously hoped to benefit from it, reform and elevate it, and, in some notable cases, displace it altogether.

Issues of language and literacy have been key in these contests over knowledge. Historians, educationalists, anthropologists, and Māori Studies scholars have surveyed the extent and nature of Māori literacy and the connections between colonialism and indigenous linguistic and cultural decline. There have been two dominant interpretations of the relationship between oral tradition and literacy in the Māori context. The first is a version of ‘the fatal impact’ thesis, which imagined contact with whites as initiating the rapid and almost total destruction of Pacific cultures. Within the New Zealand context, this tradition of interpretation identifies literacy as a corrosive force that undermined the vitality of Māori oral tradition, and, as a result, played a central role in the construction of Pākehā (white) hegemony. Some educationalists and historians identify literacy and printing as primarily agents of cultural imperialism, even equating literacy with complete deracination. This rather essentialising line of interpretation suggests that in learning to read and write nineteenth-century Māori effectively lost their own culture and became English.

The second position, which we might term the ‘cultural continuity’ argument, suggests that literacy and Christianity had limited impact on indigenous mentalities and that despite land loss, conversion, urbanisation, and colonial education, Māori culture exhibits a fundamental cultural continuity with pre-European traditions. This interpretation was developed most fully in D.F. McKenzie’s landmark *Oral Culture, Literacy & Print in Early New Zealand: The Treaty of Waitangi*, which argued that the notion of a ‘literacy revolution’ amongst Māori in the 1830s and 1840s was a product of evangelical missionaries, who were extreme proponents of a European ‘literacy myth’. As we have seen in Chapter Seven, McKenzie argued that print and Christianity had little effect on Māori and he suggested that Māori retain an emphasis on the primacy of the spoken
word, since ‘the written and printed word is not the mode they [modern Māori] habitually use’. The limitations of both of these positions have been exposed by recent studies of Māori Christianity and Māori-language newspapers, which have revealed the multiple ways in which Māori individuals and communities wove elements from their old knowledge traditions into new cultures of literacy and print, cultures that generated innovative political and spiritual traditions in the face of British colonial authority. Most tellingly, the complexities and richness of Māori literacy and traditions of writing have been hinted at by Brad Haami’s Pūtea Whakairo: Maori and the Written Word. This is a short study of the place of writing in the lives of seven individuals spanning four generations of the Maaka family, in forms ranging from pepeha (traditional sayings) to personal diaries to waiata (songs).

This chapter stresses the fundamentally mixed nature of Kāi Tahu knowledge traditions in the wake of sustained cross-cultural contact and colonisation. This new order reflected deep-seated changes in the demography and material base of the tribe. The introduction of the potato in the first decade of the nineteenth century encouraged the establishment of new coastal settlements that reshaped the patterns of whānau (family) and hapū (subtribe or clan) movement and settlement. These littoral communities grew as Kāi Tahu groups engaged with European newcomers, initially sealers in the 1810s and 1820s and subsequently whalers in the 1830s. Shore-whaling stations were especially important sites of cross-cultural exchange: they were sites where the tangata whenua could sell potatoes, other vegetables, and pigs to Euro-americans and where they could in turn access novel foodstuffs and commodities from the newcomers. Many Kāi Tahu men worked on these stations and some also embraced the opportunities that maritime life offered, travelling regularly to the Australian colonies and out into the Pacific world and beyond. Equally importantly, many Kāi Tahu women established relationships with whalers, founding the large number of mixed-race families that were a particularly distinctive feature of the southern coast of New Zealand.

In light of these developments, by the middle of the 1830s, Kāi Tahu ways of thinking and being in the world were constantly being reshaped through their encounters with new technologies, ideas (especially Christianity), practices, skills (especially literacy), and ways of acting and talking. My particular aim here is to move beyond focusing on representations of the nature of indigenous knowledge and literacy, a strategy that underpinned McKenzie’s work, to instead focus on what we might think of as ‘knowledge practices’, the ways in which indigenous knowledge was actually transmitted, stored, and contested.
Prior to contact, Kāi Tahu communities stored knowledge in two main ways. The primary one was in the bodies and minds of learned individuals. While knowledge relating to many daily and mundane tasks were widely shared, at least within gender groups, specialised knowledge that had a strong ritual component or that related to the interface with the supernatural and natural worlds was compartmentalised, restricted, and embodied. Knowledge relating to various rituals – from the karaka (welcoming of visitors) to the rites associated with birth, death, or making war – were the domain of select senior people of high rank: women in the case of karaka and men in the case of the rites associated with war. What we might think of as useful knowledge – the information, techniques, and skills related to food gathering and preparation, various crafts, and combat – was also segmented. Many men might be adept at wielding the ko (digging stick), but few men were considered tohuka (ritual experts) in moko (tattooing), carving, or waka (canoe) construction. All knowledge was subject to the laws of tapu (that which is in contact with the supernatural; set apart; sacred) and its antithesis, noa (free from tapu). An individual’s gender, age, ancestry, rank, and mana (charisma, power) all determined the extent to which they could interact with tapu things and tapu knowledge (or noa knowledge and things, for that matter). Within this social context knowledge was valued, guarded, and even feared: it was transmitted with great care. Sharing knowledge with the wrong person, or with the right person at the wrong time, could result in misfortune, illness, or death.

Consequently, especially valued or dangerous knowledge was invested only in tohuka, experts who were specially trained and who were acknowledged as rare individuals skilled in retaining and transmitting restricted knowledge. In his recent examination of Ngāi Tahu oral culture, Te Maire Tau has identified the two most important categories of this knowledge as wānaka and pūrākau. Wānaka signified a wise person or a school of learning, but it also designated the teachings transmitted by a tohuka that deal with supernatural powers or the occult. Pūrākau referred to a wise man, but also was the name given to mythic narratives of great power relating to ancestral deeds. These types of narrative, together with knowledge relating to combat, astronomy, the natural world, and makutu (magic, witchcraft), were carefully transmitted at wharekura (schools of learning), where tohuka slowly and carefully shared their knowledge with select pupils, typically young men of high status. Knowledge transmission in such settings was embodied depending on the exchange and mingling of the hau (breath, life force). So these types of highly tapu knowledge were shared under strict controls and these restrictions have encouraged Te Maire Tau to characterise the traditional Ngāi Tahu knowledge order as a ‘closed system’.

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But as he himself shows, this knowledge order was never entirely closed because folk knowledge – pakiwaitara – was a kind of open access store of understandings and beliefs: these were popular sayings, stories, and scandalous yarns that were widely shared by all in the community, stories for amusement, rather than narratives packed with transformative or supernatural power.31

The second way in which knowledge was traditionally stored was in a range of objects made out of wood, bone, or pounamu (jade). These devices included rākau whakapapa (genealogical rods or staffs), carvings that graced dwelling places and the entrance ways to burial grounds, and a range of worked figures that were used in architectural or personal ornamentation. These objects related to the history of the community (especially key ancestors) or to the connections between atua (supernatural powers, gods) and te ao mārama (the world of light; the natural world). Those that pertained to history typically functioned as a kind of prompt; their physical form contained the seed of a narrative, not the narrative itself. Rākau whakapapa, for example, did not actually record the identity of ancestors, but rather their carved notches or knobs were spurs to kōrero (speech).32 They were tangible physical guides around which genealogical information could be recalled, organised, and recited.33 The genealogical knowledge stored in rākau whakapapa provided a narrative framework that could be reshaped in particular ways in specific locations and for specific audiences, as whakapapa was used to establish connections, justify claims to resources and rights, and to establish the mana of the kin group.34

There are three important points to make about such objects. First, they were produced by highly skilled individuals who worked materials with special qualities. The outputs of these tohuka – carved wood, worked bone, tattooed skin – were singular and special, imbued with mauri (life spirit, vital quality).35 Second, given this framework of production, these objects were relatively uncommon (especially rākau whakapapa) and their construction in durable materials meant that they were not amenable to constant revision – their value was their durability, not plasticity. This meant that they were suited to the communication of knowledge across time. Third, these devices were dependent on embodied knowledge. While a rākau whakapapa might be highly tapu in its own right, it only became a meaningful knowledge medium in the hands of a man who belonged to the precise family that the rākau belonged to. In the hands of an individual who had not learnt the relevant whakapapa, or a man adept at the recitation of whakapapa but with no connection to that specific lineage, the rākau literally contained no knowledge.36

In a similar vein, the symbolic language of traditional carving had to be read. As D. R. Simmons has pointed out, the carved works on wharenui (‘big houses’, meeting houses) or on smaller objects which represented how the world came to be were understood and interpreted differently by individuals depending on
the knowledge they have. In fact, pre-colonial material culture contained many figures and design elements that could be ‘read’ by viewers to produce narratives of various types. In an important essay, Sarah Gallagher has suggested that pre-colonial traditions of ta moko (tattooing) created a kind of textual culture within the tangata whenua before contact with Europeans. Moko designs were a signifying system, with particular elements in moko indicating social rank, particular accomplishments, and genealogical connection. The bands of migrants who settled in Te Waipounamu (New Zealand’s South Island) from the fifteenth century also developed a notable tradition of pictographic representation, extensively deployed in caves and on prominent rock faces. These images of birds, dogs, and people, as well as more abstract designs, were probably important ways of communicating authority. Kāi Tahu oral traditions suggest that different colours of pigment were used by successive waves of migrants to assert their rights. During the colonial period these pictographs were called whakairo (carvings), but at least one Kāi Tahu authority believed that these images were part of a lost writing system and this notion perhaps informs the term ‘ka tuhituhi o nehera’ (the writings of the ancient times) that is frequently applied to these inscriptions on rock. These traditions of representation and interpretation may have meant that the embrace of writing as a system of representational inscriptions did not require quite as radical a shift in mentalities as D. F. McKenzie suggested. It is certainly true that alphabetic literacy and the significations embedded in carving, tattooing, and rock art were profoundly different, but it does seem plausible that these pre-existing practices reduced Māori epistemic anxiety about writing and contributed to the alacrity with which Kāi Tahu embraced literacy and print culture.

The introduction of paper challenged and eventually transformed the very basis of this knowledge system. Paper became a routine part of the Kāi Tahu world prior to 1848. Kāi Tahu individuals almost certainly encountered paper when they were drawn to the coastal settlements that sprang up around sealing and whaling stations, even if these European communities did not place a high value on literacy themselves. And those Kāi Tahu rakatira (chiefs) who travelled to Port Jackson in Australia on a regular basis were immersed in a colonial society where paper, writing, and printing were bedrocks of commercial, legal, and religious life. During 1834, the rakatira Karetai stayed with the Reverend Samuel Marsden, the former colonial chaplain of New South Wales and chief agent of both the London Missionary Society and Church Missionary Society in the southern Pacific. During a later visit, in 1839–1840, Karetai and another rakatira Te Matenga Taiaroa requested that a missionary be sent to minister to Kāi Tahu.
With the arrival of the missionary James Watkin in Otago in 1840, texts and paper became increasingly commonplace in Kāi Tahu communities. In their meetings with Watkin, his native teachers and other visiting churchmen, they encountered Bibles, printed portions of scripture, prayer books, newspapers, letters, notebooks, and various types of paper. This flow of paper became a flood once the systematic colonisation of Otago began in 1848. Colonists carried newspapers, Bibles, and in some cases substantial libraries to the Otago colony: paper suffused their new lives in the colony from the outset. All paper for printing, book production, and personal stationery was imported, primarily from ‘home’ in Britain. Paper mills were established at Mataura and in Dunedin in the mid-1870s, but these produced low-grade paper for packaging and wrapping rather than for printing and personal use. The dependence of both the colonists and Kāi Tahu on imported British paper is a potent symbol of the colony’s cultural reliance on the imperial centre.

By the time systematic colonisation started, books were highly valued by Kāi Tahu and individuals travelled great distances to procure missionary primers and portions of the Scripture. Kāi Tahu quickly embraced the possibilities of ready communication over distance that paper offered and once they had become accustomed to using paper they felt shortages keenly, being forced to incise messages into slate or leaves. In this context, literacy was very important. Even though printed artifacts were woven into oral culture – for example, newspapers were read aloud to non-literate community members – some competence in reading and writing was a precondition for full participation in the colonial cultures of paper. Missionaries and native teachers suggested that all members of Kāi Tahu should learn to read and write. As we have seen, in the old order of things, the ability to incise skin or carve wood was restricted to a select few: it was only the tohuka who was able to wield the uhi (chisel). In the new order, the ability to inscribe paper was understood as being open to all; unlike the uhi, the pen and pencil were tools that could be used by men, women, and children of all ranks. Kāi Tahu writers made use of various types of paper – the loose sheets supplied by missionaries, coarse brown wrapping paper, and more latterly the cheap notebooks imported by colonial stationers – to practice their skills, record their thoughts, and communicate their sentiments and desires to kin, friends, missionaries, and government agents. It seems that the cost and quality of the paper was much less important than the ability of this new medium to allow interpersonal communication that bridged considerable distances.

While the depth and quality of Māori literacy remains contested, it is clear that by the 1850s these skills were valued by a broad cross-section of Kāi Tahu – men and women, high and low ranking. By around 1850, roughly 50 per cent of high-ranking Ngāi Tahu men were able to sign their names on land deeds. This figure probably underestimates the percentage of the total Kāi Tahu population that
had some functional reading ability in the vernacular, given that learning to read typically preceded learning to write during the nineteenth century and the particular emphasis that Wesleyan and Anglican missionaries and native teachers placed on the primacy of reading. There is also clear evidence that some chiefs signed these documents with a tohu (a personalised sign or mark: sometimes a simple cross, sometimes a more personalised inscription like Taiao’s distinctive arrowhead tohu) or with a representation of their moko (facial tattoo), when they were in fact able to sign their own name. The extent of Kāi Tahu literacy in English remains unclear. Certainly Wesleyan missionaries focused their efforts on teaching in te reo Māori, but we do know that even before large-scale colonisation began in 1848 many Kāi Tahu could speak some English.51 Given the scope of Kāi Tahu’s early involvement in sealing, whaling, and long-distance travel in the 1820s and 1830s it seems likely that Kāi Tahu embraced literacy in English more readily and quickly than many North Island communities. This proclivity was probably extended by Kāi Tahu’s enthusiastic engagement with the colonial market economy in the 1840s and 1850s. It certainly also reflected the willingness of some Europeans, especially the German missionary Johannes Wohlers, to encourage Kāi Tahu communities to learn English in the belief that a mastery of the language of the colonisers was central to the iwi’s economic and political future.52

While documents like land deeds offer a fleeting and shaky snapshot of the extent and meanings of literacy, they remind us that paper was the crucial medium through which members of Kāi Tahu Whānui engaged with new forms of economic and political activity. In fact, this kind of engagement pre-dated the formal colonisation of the region, since Kāi Tahu rakatira were drawn into a pre-colonial land market driven by the logics of imperial extraction – in the form of sealing and especially whaling – and by the speculative ambitions of wealthy colonial entrepreneurs based in New South Wales. In 1832, for example, Te Whakataupuka [‘Tobuca’] affixed a copy of his moko to a deed that sold Preservation and Dusky Sounds to Peter Williams, a sealer from New South Wales, for sixty muskets.53 What is striking about this contract is that it formalised an earlier oral agreement that was made in 1829: the 1832 deed confirmed the rights that Williams had built up through occupancy and formally revoked any claims that Te Whakataupuka had to the land. The terms of this agreement allowed Te Whakataupuka to cement his paramount position amongst the chiefs of the southern section of the tribe by giving him access to a sizeable cache of firearms, which he deployed in raids to the north against his Ngāti Toa enemies and in attacks on whaling stations in the Cook Strait and coastal Otago. This agreement with Williams is indicative of the ways in which rakatira like Te Whakataupuka saw Europeans and European ways of being as avenues to enhance their mana, and as central to the future of their communities. It is telling that after Te Whakataupuka’s death, his nephew Tuhawaiki endorsed Williams’s title, in December 1835.54
After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, which southern rakatira signed at Ruapuke and Otakou in June 1840, a new colonial land market took shape, one underpinned by the Crown’s assertion of its right of pre-emption, spelt out in article two of both the English and Māori versions of the Treaty. This assertion of the economic paramountcy of the Crown, which was cemented with passage of the Lands Claim Ordinance (1841) that codified this right of pre-emption into law, was a crucial means through which the reach of the fledgling state was actualised on the ground. Accompanying this pre-emption were a commitment to investigate land sales that had taken place prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and a prohibition of the further alienation of Māori land through private sale. These investigations reflected concerns that influential humanitarians and key Colonial Office functionaries had raised regarding agreements entered into by some Māori leaders. But they were also a mechanism that allowed the state to retroactively assert its power as well as potentially maximise the amount of land that it had the ability to assert its rights over in future.

The investigations of pre-Treaty land sales greatly reduced the amounts of land that European purchasers could effectively claim ownership of and also voided the deeds that eight Kāi Tahu chiefs had signed in Port Jackson on 15 February 1840. These agreements had sold the South Island and its adjacent islands (with the exception of Ruapuke) to the prominent lawyer and politician William Charles Wentworth and the Otago-based whaling magnate Johnny Jones. Although these deeds were elaborate documents produced by a powerful lawyer and public figure in the political life of New South Wales before Kāi Tahu chiefs had ever seen the Treaty of Waitangi, they were discounted because the Crown asserted that it alone had the power to legally buy native lands and confer title. This suggests that paper contracts were not seen as innately reliable – the reliability of contracts was dependent on the role of the state in mediating and endorsing these agreements. In essence, paper agreements produced by the state had an inherent value that compacts with private entrepreneurs and colonial opportunists were unable to claim.

Of course, literacy and paper were the very basis of the eventual sale of Ngāi Tahu lands to agents of the New Zealand Company and the Crown from 1844 to 1864. The paperisation of economic exchange was the vital legal precondition for the legal alienation of ‘native land’. Signing deeds of sale had far-reaching consequences. Affixing a signature or tohu to these agreements on paper alienated traditional Ngāi Tahu lands but at the same time the processes of negotiation created new relationships between Crown agents and Ngāi Tahu leaders. Writing became a key instrument through which these rangatira could maintain these personal connections and ensure that the Crown fully understood the extent of
their traditional authority and the depth of their mana. Through letter writing, the rangatira pushed forward the process of textualising their status, affiliations, and extent of their authority. In the wake of the signing of Kemp's Deed, which sold vast tracts of Canterbury, Westland, and Otago to the Crown, the coastal Otago chiefs Mamaru, Haereroa, and Korako wrote to Land Commissioner Walter Mantell explaining the precise boundaries of their traditional lands as a way of asserting their rights to a share of the proceeds of the sale. On the very same day, three high-ranking Kāi Tahu men from the same region, Horomona, Te Huruhuru, and Paitu, wrote to Mantell listing traditional divisions of the land and explaining how the money should be parcelled up. The volunteering of this kind of detail was greatly valued by Mantell, who was trying to grasp the nuances of traditional rights and strove to precisely map the claims of the southern chiefs. During 1848, Mantell had built up an archive that recorded the names of hapū (clans or subtribes) on slips of cardboard that were designed to allow him to rearrange them to record interrelationships as he worked through the process of paying for the land. This project of textualising kin groups and their relationships to the land also produced a series of ‘Korero Charts’ that Mantell drafted in 1851 while he was serving as the commissioner of Crown lands for the Southern District of the Province of New Munster, which mapped the rights of the southern chiefs. The connections between Mantell and these rangatira—which increasingly were maintained through the written word—were a crucial element in the reordering of the socio-economic base of these communities, and also helped define the very nature of Ngāi Tahu itself.

Kāi Tahu leaders quickly saw writing letters and petitions as an important means of shaping the outcomes of these processes. In particular, they used letter writing to try and exercise control over the distribution of money to the chiefs who sold the land. In December 1848, for example, Reihana Moemate wrote to Mantell from Waikouaiti saying that his share of the proceeds of ‘Kemp’s Sale’ was £20. The Crown was paying £2,000 that was to be divided amongst the chiefs. In a similar vein, Matiaha Tiramorehu wrote from Moeraki to Mantell:

Friend Mantell, this is my word once more to you. Do not take any notice of Tikao’s reasoning that he be responsible for the distribution of the monies to all the chiefs. You must not do this Mantell. My opinion is that it is better that you be the one to distribute the payments to the owners themselves.

Tiramorehu believed that Mantell should exercise total control over the distribution of the cash for the land, to make sure that ‘the money won’t develop wings’. What is particularly striking about these letters is the ways in which Kāi Tahu writers used paper and literacy to reaffirm their personal connections with the agents of the Crown, to overcome the physical distance that separated them from men like Mantell, and to personalise power and authority in keeping with
pre-colonial political tradition that saw political power as being individualised and invested in certain individuals. While using the skills of literacy and the medium of paper allowed Kāi Tahu leaders to nurture their connections to powerful agents of the state, this project struggled against the logic of mature colonial authority. Whereas the fledgling colonial state sought out connections with chiefs to facilitate the negotiation of land deals, the significance of these types of connections was reduced as state structures became more elaborate and state power increasingly operated through bureaucratic routines. The nature of this shift was not immediately obvious to Māori leaders, but the privileging of institutions over individuals and processes over relationships tempered the ability of Kāi Tahu rakatira to press their claims on the state. This was made clear in the 1860s when Walter Mantell, who had become the key contact for Kāi Tahu leaders and a sympathetic advocate, found that even as ‘Native Minister’ he lacked the power to move the machinery of the state to address Kāi Tahu grievances in a meaningful way.

Before offering a discussion of the ways in which paper and literacy structured Kāi Tahu political struggles in the second half of the nineteenth century, it is important to note that this paper world was entangled with a range of new practices and habits beyond the land market and Kāi Tahu's struggles with the state. Many of these left only the faintest archival traces or were never captured by state-sponsored processes. There was a long tradition of Kāi Tahu consumption of the skills, material culture, and routine cultural practices associated with paper, but these are very difficult to recover. In particular, we know that Kāi Tahu individuals and families read a large number of texts that upheld ideal models of social comportment and exhorted them to reorder their lives. These representations were carried into Kāi Tahu communities via printed portions of the Bible, didactic religious texts, both Māori and English language newspapers, schoolbooks, novels, and a whole range of printed texts and artifacts. The ways in which Kāi Tahu read these texts, discussed them, and interpreted them often remains unclear, but these routine ways of operating were not passive; through consumption, Kāi Tahu individuals and communities were constantly engaged in making and remaking culture.

This cultural work was energetic, improvised, and productive even though many of the texts Kāi Tahu engaged with had been produced to serve the ends of a dominant economic and social order that sought to reform ‘native culture’. We get glimpses into the processes through which Kāi Tahu cosmologies were reordered in the writings of Matiaha Tiramorehu and Wi Pokuku, and the letters and petitions produced by both high-ranking leaders and humble Kāi Tahu folks.
that documented many of the basic political, economic, and educational aspirations of the community. But the vast majority of the day-to-day Kāi Tahu engagement with the new commodities, ideas and ideologies, practices and prescriptions of the colonial order remains obscure. This is in part a consequence of the nature of reading as a practice: it does not routinely generate written records. Moreover, much of the mundane writing of Kāi Tahu individuals escaped formal retention in state institutions and local repositories for a range of reasons. But documents long held in family collections reveal the growing importance of writing in the Kāi Tahu world by 1900. The diary kept by Annie Maaka between 1899 and 1920, for example, records the daily routines of a Kāi Tahu family, the continued importance of traditional economic practices such as te hopu titi (mutton-birding) and the abiding investment of Kāi Tahu individuals and families in their tribe’s political struggles, and hints at the ways in which writing had become an important tool for working out ideas and identities. These family collections are a reminder that by 1900 some Kāi Tahu individuals and families were keeping informal archives of their own, stores of knowledge that would record genealogical connections, document the experience of successive generations, and transmit information relating to important cultural practices and resources.

Two significant innovations related to the paper world were especially important in the transformation of Kāi Tahu mentalities and cultural practices from the 1850s. The first of these was the emergence of whakapapa books. It seems that from the 1860s, but especially between the 1880s and 1900, some key Kāi Tahu individuals and families began to use their literacy and the new media of paper to record their whakapapa in written form. This innovation suggests that paper had become understood as a medium that was useful for recording traditional knowledge, a quality of considerable importance given that the effects of disease and intermarriage with colonists had begun to seriously attenuate traditional lines of knowledge transmission. Typically these whakapapa were recorded in notebooks of varying descriptions or in the fronts of family Bibles. These whakapapa books exhibit several striking features, especially if we consider them in relation to the rākau whakapapa rods or staffs. First, these whakapapa books record the ancestors in detail, spelling names out, whereas we have seen the rākau were a more elliptical device, functioning as a kind of prompt. Second, and following from this, the qualified improvisation that was a key element of the oral recitation of whakapapa was lost in the whakapapa notebook, where each generation was carefully detailed (though this could be recaptured or recreated when notebooks were the basis for oral recitations). Third, where rākau whakapapa referred to one central lineage, the Kāi Tahu whakapapa books of the late nineteenth century recorded a range of lineages from a variety of sources and relating to different hapū. In some cases, these notebooks also contained whakapapa that connected to the early Ngāi Tahu.
These were provided by visiting North Island Māori who were familiar with the sequencing of these genealogies, which were distant in time and place from the Kāi Tahu world in the late nineteenth century. Reading these texts one has a sense of an opening up of genealogical knowledge, the emergence of a new era where knowledge was shared, circulated, and contested much more freely. Fourth, even as this shift diversified and amplified whakapapa, it marked a simultaneous codification of genealogical knowledge. While whakapapa books do exhibit some flexibility – they were often added to and annotated and absorbed new information from other (frequently written) sources – in time they also increasingly acquired an authority that could stand in the place of older forms of embodied knowledge and oral transmission. Within a social context that was being reshaped by Kāi Tahu women marrying colonists and their mixed-race descendants, growing numbers of Kāi Tahu settling in towns and cities, declining use of te reo Māori, and improving literacy rates, whakapapa books came to be seen as the authoritative source of genealogical knowledge. Fifth, whakapapa books transformed the accessibility of genealogical knowledge. No longer was such knowledge to be carefully shared by a tohuka in a wānaka or in some other ritual setting where hau (life force) was exchanged; instead these notebooks allowed this knowledge to be disembodied and consumed in a range of social contexts and physical locations quite distant and dislocated from those learned individuals who still retained genealogical narratives.

Whakapapa books were mobile, changing hands within families and being read by many people, including colonial ethnographers and collectors. This suggests that the ritual injunctions that had controlled such knowledge were significantly weakened and, in some contexts, completely set aside. In the case of whakapapa, paper as a medium allowed the dissemination of knowledge across space and, in so doing, made knowledge more diffuse. This diffusion simultaneously diluted the old cultural injunctions that controlled the transmission of embodied oral knowledge while also ensuring that elements of that old knowledge would survive the demographic and cultural displacements of colonialism, albeit often in attenuated forms. The history of these documents suggest that Kāi Tahu traditional knowledge did not completely die when it encountered colonialism as Te Maire Tau has argued, but rather that significant elements of the knowledge order persisted, even as they were substantially reordered and reconfigured by new skills and new media.

The other significant innovation was Kāi Tahu’s enthusiastic engagement with the Māori-language newspapers that flourished between 1845 and the 1930s. Some of these were produced by the state, some were published by religious leaders (often with a strong Māori involvement), while others were published by a range of Māori individuals and communities of very different political and religious persuasions. All of these newspapers were published in the North
Island, but a wide variety circulated in the South Island through agents and through personal subscriptions. Even a partial list of Kāi Tahu subscribers is revealing. It is clear, for example, that in the mid-1870s leading chiefs and new parliamentarians, tohuka, and bastions of the native churches alike were regular readers. The material that Kāi Tahu readers encountered in these newspapers explained (and debated) government policy and also discussed religion, offered advice on economic matters and household management, and conveyed a wide range of information about the world and its peoples. The cultural shifts associated with the rise of literacy and a world of paper were clearly conveyed in the material that Kāi Tahu writers contributed to these Māori newspapers. Individuals wrote in to explain new commercial and agricultural ventures, contest whakapapa and associated resource rights, disseminate accounts of meetings to both Kāi Tahu and a wider Māori audience, and organise the iwi's campaign to have heard its claims against the Crown violations of the Treaty of Waitangi and various deeds of purchase. These practices also allowed Kāi Tahu to be actively involved in an emergent Māori political sphere largely independent of the colonial state, which produced new ideologies (especially ‘Kotahitanga’ – oneness, or togetherness) that wove iwi together. Newspapers were a medium that allowed the iwi to be knitted together in new ways and to create forms of connection with North Island Māori communities. At the same time, engagement with this print culture connected southern Kāi Tahu to broader shifts in Māori aspirations and cultural practices and allowed them to affirm their own indigenous status as Māori, which was very important given the iwi's high rates of intermarriage.

This immersion in the world of print was of great political as well as cultural significance given the absolute centrality of newspapers to colonial politics. In 1849, the tohuka-turned-Christian Matiaha Tiramorehu wrote a lengthy letter to Governor George Grey to complain about government land purchases in the north of South Island and the failure of the colonial state to recognise Ngāi Tahu's claim to traditional lands at Kaiapoi and Kaikoura. Tiramorehu did not simply send this letter to the Governor. Instead he posted a copy to the New Zealand Spectator and Cook Strait's Guardian, a leading colonial newspaper published in Wellington, demonstrating his understanding of the power of the printed word within colonial politics.

Tiramorehu's letter makes it clear that by 1850 the battles of southern chiefs and families to reclaim resources and make political gains were being waged in a cultural world framed by paper and literacy. Kāi Tahu leaders used both the written and printed word to forward their political aspirations and to record their frustration and growing anger at the Crown's reluctance to meet
its promises of adequate reserves, schools, and hospitals. In 1857, for example, several Ngāi Tahu leaders wrote letters pressing their concerns on Walter Mantell, who had returned to London. In that same year Tiramorehu himself drafted a petition to the Queen on behalf of the Ngāi Tahu chiefs, which stressed their loyalty while underscoring Ngāi Tahu’s hope that their community would enjoy full equality with Pākehā before the law. A constant stream of letters and petitions flowed from Kāi Tahu pens. In 1866, a letter from Hori Kerei Taiaroa, which explained Kāi Tahu anger at the loss of the Princes Street reserve in the city of Dunedin, triggered the establishment of a judicial commission that reviewed the history of that reserve and, after a torturous legal process, ultimately resulted in the payment of £10,000 to Kāi Tahu in compensation and back rents. Writing also allowed leaders to convey to the government the consensus produced out of the traditional mechanisms of hui (meetings) and kōrero (speech). After gathering at Kaiapoi in March 1874, Matiaha Tiramorehu and 391 others sent a petition to Parliament that drew attention to the Crown’s failure to deliver on the promises that Ngāi Tahu understood to have been made during negotiations around land sales. The petition also argued that Kemp’s sale was tainted by his threat to give sale money to Ngāi Tahu’s rivals, Ngāti Toa, and that Kemp had intimidated Ngāi Tahu leaders with the threat that, if they did not consent to the terms of sale, ‘soldiers will be sent to take your land for the Europeans’. Drafting petitions and letters had become a crucial political practice, whereas the power and status of chiefs of the 1810s rested on their ability to wage war and assert their mana through oratory. For Ngāi Tahu leaders under colonialism, literacy and a clear understanding of the political process were key accomplishments of leadership.

From 1867 onward, Kāi Tahu voices were also raised in the colonial Parliament. In that year Māori men were fully enfranchised, with in addition, four seats in Parliament being designated for Māori members only. The work of Kāi Tahu parliamentarians such as H. K. Taiaroa and Tame Parata made it clear that Kāi Tahu were unwilling to acquiesce quietly to colonial domination, but at the same time were committed to using colonial institutions and cultural practices to pursue their aspirations. Taiaroa fought tirelessly in Parliament and pursued a range of issues, including a catalogue of concerns about the nature of the original land sales of the 1840s and 1850s, the colonial state’s failure to deliver various provisions that Ngāi Tahu understood to have been part of these sales, and more immediate matters of government policy or bureaucratic operation that impinged upon Kāi Tahu interests. He petitioned the Native Affairs Committee in 1882, for instance, asking them to add eight acres to the government’s grant of land made to him at the Otago Heads, which had been omitted by bureaucratic oversight. In that same year Taiaroa drafted another petition naming eight islets, sandbars, and reefs in Otago harbour that he claimed for Kāi Tahu, arguing that they were
not included in Kemp’s deed of sale. The official notes drafted in response to this petition reveal uncertainty about Taiaroa’s claim:

In no case do they [these locations] bear these names upon the survey map. No evidence has been adduced to show whether or not they are Crown lands. If they belong to the Natives the proper course to pursue is for the claimant to make an application to the Native Land Court to ascertain the title.85

This exchange tested the limitations of the Crown’s knowledge of its domains and serves as a potent reminder that Kāi Tahu traditions of naming and claiming did not depend on the practices of map-making, inscription, and formal recording that underwrote state-sponsored geographic knowledge.

The campaigns of Kāi Tahu parliamentarians like Parata and Taiaroa punctured some of the walls that separated Kāi Tahu from the colonists who had settled on their ancestral lands. In the first two decades of colonisation, many newly arrived Europeans suggested that Kāi Tahu were a tiny population of no political consequence that could be discounted in the colonial scheme of things: they were marginal, a problem for the Governor to deal with, and a population to be ‘uplifted’ by missionaries and humanitarians. But after the passage of the Maori Representation Act there was a marked shift in the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and in the colonial political terrain. The letters and speeches of Taiaroa and Parata were routinely and widely reported in Otago newspapers and the colonists were increasingly aware of both the Kāi Tahu political grievances and their cultural presence.86 Although these political claims stimulated some anxiety, they were also seen as markers of the relative sophistication of Kāi Tahu, embodying that tribe’s commitment to constitutional politics. Their willingness to engage peacefully with settler politicians was seen to mark southern Māori communities off from their North Island counterparts who had raised arms and rejected both the Queen’s and Parliament’s authority.

These new ways of communicating also transformed the internal political dynamics of Kāi Tahu communities. In the pre-contact world, the mana of chiefs was derived from both their genealogy and their ability to act in a chiefly manner, especially in accumulating resources and making war, and in the arts of whaikōrero (oratory). As we have seen, the traditional Kāi Tahu knowledge order marked off special forms of knowledge and concentrated it in the minds and bodies of a few. In a cultural world defined by wood, bone, stone, and oratory, great authority lay with tohuka and rakatira. Engagement with Euro-americans transformed the contexts within which these values operated – the political and economic horizons of the Kāi Tahu world were forced open. There were
new opportunities for trade and travel, there were new plants and animals and new commodities to buy and sell, and new ideas and experiences to evaluate and process. Between the first decade of the nineteenth century and the 1840s, two generations of Kāi Tahu chiefs attempted to exploit these possibilities, exhibiting considerable entrepreneurial spirit as they strove to enhance the wealth and status of their own whānau and hapū while also working to shore up Kāi Tahu Whānui’s takiwā (tribal domain) against the raids of their Ngāti Toa rivals from the north.

The sale of massive tracts of land to the state in the 1840s – which, as mentioned, Kāi Tahu leaders swiftly contested the terms and implications of – worked to consolidate the authority of a new generation of chiefs, men like Matiaha Tiramorehu and H. K. Taiaroa. These were men of high rank and considerable mana, who were also literate, Christian, and adept at navigating the practices and structures of the colonial world. H. K. Taiaroa, in particular, saw his position as a cross-cultural political broker as an opportunity, and attempted to achieve a centralisation of power that was rare in Ngāi Tahu history. Before his death in February 1862, H. K. Taiaroa’s father, Te Matenga Taiaroa, dictated a testament ‘To all my tribe, to my hapu, and to my son’, which argued that Ngāi Tahu Whānui had to fight to ensure that the state kept its promises made in earlier transactions, while simultaneously acknowledging the Queen’s sovereignty. That this was a recorded testament, that Te Matenga’s words were inscribed on paper, itself indicated the changes that cross-cultural contact had initiated. The old chief, born in the late 1790s before the advent of sustained contact with sealers, no longer relied simply on the Polynesian conventions where a chief’s dying words (ōhākī in Māori) were seen as powerful injunctions that should not under any circumstances be broken – he preferred instead the new authority attached to the power of the written word.

By 1871, H. K. Taiaroa enjoyed the authority that came with being a member of Parliament, but he also sought a new position of paramountcy in Ngāi Tahu’s internal politics. He claimed authority to function as the tribe’s primary representative in making its claims, and also requested control of money that tribe members had accumulated to fund its struggle. In June 1875, he convened a meeting at Otakou marae (meeting place, ritual centre) at which assembled Ngāi Tahu elders were presented with a ‘Covenant’ that proposed new parameters for Ngāi Tahu political life. This text, which explicitly drew upon biblical precedent to invest it with authority, gave sole charge of the campaign to contest earlier land sales to H. K. Taiaroa. It also allowed him to appoint lawyers and gave him discretion over the expenditure of the ‘fighting fund’. Sixty-one senior figures, including Tame Haereroa Parata, Horomona Patu, Teone Topi Patuki, Korako Karetaí, and Timoti Karetaí signed the covenant. In subsequent years, Taiaroa would claim that his power emanated from a binding agreement with ‘the whole
of the Ngāi Tahu’, even though few of leaders from the northern part of the tribe signed the Otakou covenant.

H. K. Taiaroa’s desire chafed against the political logic of the colonial order. It is certainly true that in the 1840s and 1850s the colonial state tended to personalise power in its dealings with Māori, and particularly attempted to deal with chiefs, but by the 1870s state authority was increasingly embedded in institutions and settler democracy also dispersed power. Authority in the colonial world lay in many offices and institutions, a distribution of power that was seen to underwrite the democratic order by checking tyranny and encouraging liberty. The colonial political sphere was constituted by both talk – on the hustings, in voluntary associations and institutional committees, in public meetings and local government, on marae, and in Parliament – and the constant movement of the printed word. Print disseminated the programme of the government through the printing of parliamentary debates, the publication of official reports, and newspaper coverage of politics in both Māori and English. But it also provided a crucial mechanism through which both central and local political agendas could be contested and challenged. So, despite print’s inherent tendency to open up sites of cultural contestation and disperse power across space, H. K. Taiaroa was quite successful in harnessing it to cement his own authority within the tribe and his position as a key intermediary between southern Māori and the state. For him, this new medium became an avenue through which traditional priorities of chieftainship, especially the pursuit of mana and the securing of his community’s economic base, could be pursued. He was both a political innovator and a man immersed in the demands of a tradition, a leader who struggled against colonialism’s inherent inequalities, even as he increasingly embodied the contradictions of the colonial order. Ultimately, his political campaign was dependent on his ability to navigate the paper culture of the colonial state. He spoke and wrote many words, and the flow of letters and petitions from his desk bore few fruit in the short term, but in the longer term his political activity fashioned an archive that recorded Ngāi Tahu’s grievances and their struggles, a paper trail that was a vital precondition for the final resolution of the tribe’s claims in the late 1990s.

H. K. Taiaroa’s career dramatises the transformation of both mātauraka Māori (Māori knowledge) and rakatiratanga (chiefl y power and culture) within the Kāi Tahu world. By the time he entered Parliament, the old world of wānaka, tohuka, and whaiōrōrō had been irrevocably transformed by the practices and conventions of the colonial order. The traditional ways of ordering knowledge in the Māori communities of the far south of New Zealand had concentrated highly valued knowledge in the bodies, minds, and mouths of select experts
and a range of durable objects, which only became meaningful repositories of information in the hands of specific individuals. This order was designed to protect tapu knowledge and to ensure the efficacy of the esoteric arts: only common forms of useful knowledge and folkways were widely shared. In the terms of the framework of Harold Innis, these conventions were ‘time-binding’, designed to ensure the accurate intergenerational transmission of knowledge and to reproduce traditional authority. This order was transformed by encounters with Euro-American outsiders who valued literacy and paper, skills and media that were oriented toward the exchange of knowledge and spreading news, information, and ideas across space, what Innis terms ‘space-binding knowledge practices’. At a fundamental level, the cultural logic of these practices and their associated media (such as paper) favoured the construction of a social order that valued education over rank, exchange over retention, and the expansiveness of empire over the confines of community. In this context, Kāi Tahu writers were less concerned with the quality of paper, as they made use of whatever was at hand, than with paper’s qualities as a light and portable medium for the exchange of information and opinion across space. Paper also allowed Kāi Tahu individuals, leaders, and families to build up new archives of knowledge in disembodied forms, paper storehouses of knowledge that were more open, portable, and porous than the traditional order.

The encounter between these two knowledge orders had highly unequal effects. While some colonists did see some value in Kāi Tahu understandings of the natural world, Kāi Tahu ways of ordering and transmitting knowledge had very little lasting impact on the mentalities of colonists. Conversely, the world of paper, literacy, and print irrevocably transformed the Kāi Tahu cultural practices and political traditions. In keeping with much recent work on African cultures of writing, this chapter has argued that literate members of Kāi Tahu Whānui played a significant role in driving these transformations under colonial rule; they developed a range of new practices as they entered into a colonial order where a range of important economic, legal, and social transactions depended on paper. But even with the advance of the use of paper, the old knowledge order was never entirely set aside. While traditional ways of communicating knowledge were transformed by the world of paper and writing, key epistemological frameworks such as whakapapa continued to underwrite Kāi Tahu mentalities in significant ways. New forms of cultural production such as letter writing, diary keeping, minute taking, and creating whakapapa books also formed distinctive new archives. These collections stored important forms of traditional knowledge for particular families and by extension the iwi as a whole. They also functioned as a kind of counter-archive, a politically useful resource that recorded long-standing rights and newer aspirations.
In these whakapapa books, the letters of rakatira, and the petitions and speeches of parliamentarians we catch glimpses of the old conventions of thought and practice, but never in an entirely unmediated form since traditional forms and patterns were transformed as they were brought into dialogue with Christianity, capitalism, and colonial power. In colonial contexts such as southern New Zealand, paper, in so many ways the historian's friend, conditioned and transformed knowledge even as it preserved crucial traces of the past.
CHAPTER TWELVE

WRITING AND THE CULTURE OF COLONISATION

Historical interpretations are rarely static. Engagement with new source materials, the development of innovative methodologies, shifting interdisciplinary currents, emergent political movements, and social change encourage historians to shift their analytical focus, to push against old theories, and to articulate new readings of the past. Over several generations approaches to New Zealand history have shifted in some significant ways. One of the most important of these reorientations is the recent insistence that culture and colonialism were intimately connected and, as a result, cultural issues are frequently at the heart of contemporary scholarship on colonialism. In explaining how the question of culture came to occupy centre stage in the historiography on colonial New Zealand, it must be recognised that this shift is not unique but rather part of a broader reorientation in the intellectual terrain of Anglophone nations. Over the past three decades there has been a remarkable rekindling of historical work on colonialism. Questions about the dynamics of empire-building and the nature of colonial culture have shifted to the very centre of historical debate and humanities scholarship. In the late 1970s, the study of empire had seemingly reached a dead end and it was not an intellectual enterprise that was generating new analytical models or much controversy. Literary scholars and anthropologists remained only marginally interested in the question of imperialism. Certainly Talal Asad's work signalled a new willingness amongst anthropologists to grapple with the question of colonialism, their discipline's implication in empire-building, and the ways in which the realities of colonialism influenced the governing assumptions of anthropology. But it was really from the mid-1980s that anthropologists began to interrogate their discipline's entanglement with colonialism in a sustained way. While there was a growing scholarly engagement with African and South Asian writers during the 1970s (primarily in Britain under the umbrella of 'Commonwealth Literature'), that work had not yet captured large international readerships or generated a scholarship that posed any real challenge to the disciplinary status quo. Nor had received understandings of the purpose of
criticism, the nature of the ‘canon’, and the project of teaching literature been shaken by the developing national literary traditions of former colonies.\(^2\)

In the discipline of history, historians of empire in the late 1970s were trapped within narrow lines of interest and interpretation. Endless dissertations on local colonial case studies – typically testing the Robinson and Gallagher thesis that suggested ‘imperial expansion’ was the outcome of local crises on colonial frontiers rather than being driven by any clear or coherent imperial ideology – continued to be produced by budding imperial historians.\(^3\) Senior scholars of imperial history routinely offered narrowly economic readings of both empire-building and anti-colonial resistance, reflecting the intellectual primacy of debating the costs and benefits of empire and the political primacy of the question of development. Unfortunately, these preoccupations meant that the study of empire was increasingly separated off from the mainstream of British historical writing and historians of ‘metropolitan’ Britain exhibited limited interest in the former colonies or what the empire had meant for Britain’s development. But the marginal status of work on empire and colonialism in the British context was hardly unique. Questions of empire were also marginal in European historiography: the histories and legacies of colonialism were not prominent as the new social history transformed approaches to the European past and historians of France especially began to exhibit strong interest in questions of culture and text.

By 1980 in most former colonies, imperial history was fading from view: it was seen as increasingly irrelevant to the pressing project of filling in the gaps in national history traditions.\(^4\) This diminishing significance reflected, at least in part, imperial history’s concern with understanding the broad dynamics of imperialism, including the impetus for imperial expansion, the mechanics of empire-building, the organisation of empire and the ‘costs and benefits of empire’.\(^5\) These concerns sat uneasily with the circumscribed analytical vision of national histories and, as a result, the history of colonised communities and long patterns of local development were typically left in the hands of scholars working in the former colonies. There is no doubt that this was a pernicious division of labour, but the growing gulf also reflected a divergence between the imperial history tradition and the concerns of scholars working on building national historiographies for the former colonies. Historians in the former colonies had turned away from exploring the nature of connections to the imperial metropole and because of the growing dominance of social history, they prioritised finely grained case studies of the production of social collectives (primarily defined by race and class), communities that were understood as the building blocks of the nation.\(^6\) This is not to say that colonialism was unimportant in national histories, but within this kind of framework the ‘colonial’ figured as a kind of national prehistory. It was the slightly awkward and embarrassing prelude that set the stage for the real story, the emergence of distinctive national political
and literary traditions and the consolidation of an independent national identity.

But even in the early 1980s, when some leading imperial historians were raising severe doubts over the coherence of imperial history and worried about the growing divide between imperial history and the national historiographies of former colonies, new political and scholarly currents were reframing the significance of colonialism as a historical problem. Indigenous activists and prominent intellectuals in former settler colonies began to argue that colonialism did not merely set the scene for the main drama of nation-building; rather, they suggested, the violence and dispossession enacted by the colonial order framed national development and colonialism’s legacies were largely responsible for the social, economic, and cultural marginalisation of indigenous peoples. In New Zealand, of course, these kinds of arguments were anticipated in works like Dick Scott’s *Ask That Mountain* and Tony Simpson’s *Te Riri Pakeha: The White Man’s Anger*, which focused new attention on the centrality of violence and state aggression in the shaping of nineteenth-century society. But in the wake of the 1981 Springbok rugby tour, Donna Awatere’s *Maori Sovereignty* offered a radical rereading of the place of race in New Zealand history and was fiercely critical of the complicity of white feminists and liberals in the established racial order. Ranginui Walker’s work as a columnist and his historical writings also dwelt at length on questions of race and colonisation: he imagined colonialism as a ‘cultural invasion’ that impoverished Māori, undercut chiefly authority, and created a deep-seated inequality between the cultural status of Māori and Pākehā. In academic historiography, James Belich’s *New Zealand Wars* was particularly important as it reread the military history of the wars as well as stressing the ways in which colonial and imperial interpretations of the conflict minimised Māori military capacity in order to shore up the cultural foundations of the colonial enterprise.

These kinds of scholarly re-evaluations that framed the development of colonial culture around dispossession and racial conflict rather than the transplantation of British social models and institutions to the colony were not unique to New Zealand. In Australia, from the middle of the 1970s, scholars like Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin had foregrounded the centrality of exclusion, exploitation, and extermination in shaping race relations in colonial Australia. Henry Reynolds’s work offered a radical rereading of the process of colonisation in Australia. In India, the Subaltern Studies collective began to undercut the progressive narratives of both nationalist and Marxist historians, stressing the centrality of conflict between social collectives and the inherently relational nature of social identities. Violence, suppression and dispossession were seen not as unfortunate side effects of the nationalist movement and the nation-building process, but instead as integral to it.

Thinking about Subaltern Studies, of course, shows that there was a marked
intellectual shift within history as a discipline. The new social history had prized the discipline open in the 1960s and two generations of historians who sought to write history from the bottom up were energised by interdisciplinary engagements: most importantly, they were reading economics and sociology. By the early 1980s, some historians were increasingly looking to anthropology, literary studies, and gender theory. Their ‘new cultural history’ was much more concerned with how meaning was made and the history of mentalities. For historians of colonialism, this turn towards culture was marked by a new engagement with Michel Foucault’s work, with Edward Said’s arguments about the role of Orientalism in both legitimating empire-building and constituting the European self, and an abiding preoccupation with the construction of cultural difference.

Many imperial historians based in Britain, and British historians more generally, operated with a business-as-usual approach – they seemed to hope that these faddish ideas from France and America would quickly disappear. But this position became increasingly untenable as they were challenged by a diverse body of energetic new work that sparked an intense sequence of debates that still intermittently rekindle. From Lancaster, John MacKenzie was focusing on the ways in which the empire shaped Victorian and Edwardian culture and his work on the culture of imperialism was a powerful blow to the vision of British history as an ‘island story’ of isolation. The work of historians of Britain’s Afro-Caribbean and South Asian communities, like Rozina Visram, as well as the influence of the Birmingham tradition of cultural studies, simultaneously emphasised the long histories of migration that reshaped Britain and the centrality of white racism in the constitution of a national identity that occluded Britons with non-white origins. Finally, feminist historians, especially Catherine Hall, Antoinette Burton, and Mrinalini Sinha, highlighted both the centrality of gender in the cultural politics of empire as well as the ways in which colonialism fed back into the politics of gender ‘at home’ in Britain. Taken together these were the elements that created the ‘new imperial history’, a loose and sprawling tradition of work characterised by its concern with the cultural realm and the complex patterns of cultural traffic that constituted the empire and Britain itself.

These international currents did filter into the new work on colonialism in New Zealand, but not in any consistent way. From the later 1980s, a growing body of work strove to understand the colonisation of New Zealand as a cultural project. While Belich’s *New Zealand Wars* was certainly an important contribution to this new vision (and had significant international impact), the work of Peter Gibbons really stands at the head of this new interpretative tradition. Across an arc of important essays, Gibbons offered a new reading of the colonial past that tightly laced together culture and colonisation. Two foundational arguments ran through these texts. First, he suggested that colonisation was not a chronologically
demarcated process that ended around 1850 (or even 1890). Rather than seeing the Liberal government, Gallipoli, or the literary nationalists of the 1930s marking a moment where the nation broke free from empire and transcended the colonial past, Gibbons stressed that colonisation was an ongoing process that moulded and delimited the possibilities of the nation-building process into the late twentieth century. While Gibbons here was arguing against the optimistic nationalist framing of the past à la Keith Sinclair, I think that in fact an enlarged understanding of colonialism as an extended process of invasion and occupation was actually more widespread by the early 1980s than he allowed. Secondly Gibbons drew new attention to the manifold and strong connections between cultural production and the processes of colonisation. He suggested that colonisation could be understood as a sequence of processes where exploration, invasion, occupation, appropriation, and nation-building depended on the creation of cultural asymmetries as well as political and economic inequalities. In particular, he focused attention on the centrality of the written and printed word in enabling colonisation. In his important essay on ‘Non-Fiction’ in The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English, Gibbons argued that the long-standing implication of writing in cross-cultural violence and imperial conquest was extended in colonial New Zealand:

...the basic conditions which generated non-fiction writing had been established [before the emergence of a self-conscious local tradition of writing]. These conditions were the extension of European power into non-European territories and the way in which writing was intimately engaged in expressing that power; writing, like Marx’s capital, arrives in New Zealand ‘dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt’. Writing in and about New Zealand was henceforth involved in the process of colonisation, in the implementation of European power, in the description and justification of the European presence as normative, and in the simultaneous implicit or explicit production of the indigenous peoples as alien or marginal.

Gibbons argued that the ‘archive of exploration’ produced by missionaries, traders and explorers had begun to textualise ‘New Zealand’ before Britain’s annexation of these islands in 1840. Between 1840 and 1890, Gibbons focused on the strong connections he identified between colonisation and writing, dubbing works of the period the ‘Literature of Invasion’. And he characterised writing from 1890 to 1930 as the ‘Literature of Occupation’, as writers increasingly appropriated local elements and Māori words and motifs as they strove to become ‘indigenous writers’.

Gibbons further developed his reading of the interweaving of writing and colonisation in later essays. In a 2002 piece he argued:
Writing and printing were crucial technologies in maintaining and extending the power of settler society over the indigenous inhabitants. The use of the written and printed word as a sharp instrument of colonisation, in such examples as treaties, proclamations, laws and ordinances, and prospectuses of colonising agencies, is well known.19

Yet, he contended, colonial power rested in print culture more generally. The spirit of colonisation suffused the ‘books and newspapers and journals and other mechanically reproduced materials with no direct relationship to the more obvious acts of colonization’.

Through these works, Gibbons suggested, ‘Maori themselves and their cultures were textualized by Pakeha, so that the colonists could “know” the people they were displacing. It is not too much to say that the colonists produced (or invented) “the Maori”, making them picturesque, quaint, largely ahistorical and, through printed materials, manageable.’

It should be noted that this reading of colonial knowledge, as a hegemonic sequence of texts produced by the colonisers, was increasingly out of step with work in other colonial historiographies. At the conclusion of his 2002 essay, Gibbons suggested that ‘cultural colonisation’ was a way of ‘examining and accounting for the form and content of some Pakeha cultural activities’. Colonial texts, in this view, were the product of the minds and pens of the colonisers: Māori ‘collaboration’ in the making of these texts and their ‘appropriation’ of them were essentially beyond the purview of ‘cultural colonisation’. These questions were part, Gibbons suggested, of the ‘total context’ within which the practices of cultural colonisation operated, but he failed to illuminate the ability of Māori to shape, reshape and contest these texts.

Conversely, in India there has been a long tradition of examining the ways in which the presence of the colonised imprinted colonial texts. In the early 1980s Ranajit Guha, for example, was arguing that the ‘rebel consciousness’ of various subaltern groups framed the letters, reports, and narratives produced by colonial officials.

More recent work by Eugene Irschick and Chris Bayly has stressed the ‘dialogic nature’ of much colonial knowledge. Bayly, Norbert Peabody, and Michael Dodson have reconstructed the ways in which precolonial traditions of thought and practice moulded the development of colonial knowledge under, first, the East India Company between 1765 and 1857, and then the Crown Raj (1858 to 1947). Unlike the bifurcation that structures Gibbons’s argument, this South Asian work imagines colonial culture as a series of spaces, albeit highly uneven ones, where ideas, arguments, and ideologies were openly contested and reformulated by a range of experts, institutions, and individuals, both colonisers and colonised.

Working in the wake of Peter Gibbons, two scholars in particular have developed his vision of ‘cultural colonisation’. Giselle Byrnes traced the ways in which surveying enabled colonisation and the transformation of the land into a
commercialised object. She has also examined the place of travel narratives, maps and place names in processes of cultural colonisation, which, she argues, have ‘rendered the European presence as normative, and correspondingly, the Māori as marginal’. Chris Hilliard explored the culture of writing between 1890 and the 1940s, specifically the ways in which colonisation shaped the development of a national literary culture, demonstrating the real power of the ‘cultural colonisation’ line of analysis to illuminate the dynamics of textual production in early twentieth-century New Zealand. Thinking through ‘cultural colonisation’ allows a rereading of the past from the juncture of cultural and intellectual history, or, as Hilliard put it, ‘a cultural history whose primary disciplinary reference point is intellectual history’. Of course, it was also Hilliard who began to pick at the seams of this approach. In 2002 he argued that the reductive tendencies of this method of analysis needed to be guarded against: ‘While hardly anything in New Zealand is unconnected with colonisation, not everything is adequately explained by its colonial entanglements.’ Cultural colonisation was not the best set of analytical tools for all our history; it does not furnish us with a ‘skeleton key’ to unlock the entirety of the past. Within this critique of cultural colonisation lay a growing awareness that as an approach it certainly illuminated the projection of authority and dominance at the heart of colonisation, but it shed little light on the transplantation and meaning of a whole range of colonial cultural practices – practices that had at most an angular relationship with the consolidation of colonial power.

An important arc of essays written by Michael Reilly also marked a significant development in approaches to cultural colonisation. Reilly’s work came out of a different set of intellectual genealogies but shared some of the preoccupations of the Gibbons tradition. In exploring the history of colonial collecting and ethnographic writing, Reilly read colonial intellectual activity within a broader Pacific frame (seeing connections between the endeavours of men like John White and Pacific collectors like William Wyatt Gill in Mangaia). Reilly’s work also pushed New Zealand history writing in challenging directions as his disciplinary affiliations with Māori Studies posed some critical questions about the limits of Pākehā historical perspectives and the authority of history as a discipline. Not surprisingly, given his scholarly location, Reilly’s work also exhibited a sustained interest in the ways in which Māori themselves were involved in the production of ethnographic knowledge. Throughout his essays, Reilly has exhibited a more sustained engagement with post-colonial thought – including Pacific thinkers like Epeli Hau‘ofa as well as the influential figures who have inspired so much post-colonial criticism: Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha – than any other New Zealand historian.

Taken together, the body of work produced by scholars like Gibbons, Reilly, Byrnes and Hilliard, produced a powerful reassessment of colonisation. As a
consequence of their scholarship, colonisation was reimagined as fundamentally a cultural project rather than primarily a set of economic or political asymmetries. This cultural reading of the colonial past swiftly became influential in New Zealand – with remarkably little contestation – for two main reasons. First, it gained purchase swiftly because of the shape of the existing historiography. There was no very strong alternative interpretation of colonisation emerging in academic writing on New Zealand’s past and nor was there a strongly embedded prevailing interpretation. In fact, work on the process of empire-building in New Zealand was really quite diffuse in its concerns and in its analytical vision. Much of it was informed by the kind of left-liberal consensus that has moulded so much of our scholarly culture. Since the 1980s this political orientation has generally proven to be receptive to work that has prioritised race, representation and the critique of empire. Here the New Zealand case diverged markedly from other colonial contexts, especially India and South Africa, where new cultural readings of empire-building confronted firmly entrenched Marxist traditions of interpretation which analysed the colonial past within the broader history of capitalist development and were deeply concerned with the material base of colonialism. In India, this Marxist tradition was initially internalised by and then subsequently partially displaced by the work produced in the wake of Subaltern Studies. Conversely, in South Africa the Marxist tradition – which had always exhibited a distinctive interest in the nexus of race and class – has remained stronger and has ceded less ground to culturalist readings of empire.

Secondly, work on cultural colonisation in New Zealand was in tune with broader shifts in the political and intellectual terrain. One of the key planks of the resurgence of Māori political activity and cultural production in the 1970s and 1980s was the idea that colonialism was a project to displace the culture of the colonised and that Māori communities lost language and culture, as well as the land, as a result of colonisation. Here historical research and political arguments were mutually reinforcing. At the same time, academic research increasingly reflected and reinforced the state’s growing embrace of biculturalism. Landmark works like Claudia Orange’s *Treaty of Waitangi* or Anne Salmond’s *Two Worlds* and *Between Worlds* were texts that framed early cross-cultural encounters and, in Orange’s case, the development of the colonial state, in a way that dovetailed neatly with the project of building an explicitly bicultural vision of the nation’s past and future.

Reading the colonial past through the lens of culture was, therefore, a crucial transition in our historiography. Most importantly, this new approach greatly enlarged our understanding of what colonialism was. Colonialism was no longer simply a process that could be accessed through examining the development of the state’s ‘native policy’, but rather the colonising impulse was seen as permeating the culture. This meant that legislation, government records, or parliamentary
debates were not the best way to access the colonial past. Sources that seemed to belong to the domain of culture – travel narratives, ethnographic texts, literature and art – took on a new analytical importance. These materials offered historians valuable windows into the colonial imagination and, more significantly, were increasingly seen as having played a key role in constituting the asymmetrical cultural terrain of colonialism. Most importantly, this work suggested that the production of difference, especially the binary opposition between Māori and Pākehā was fundamental to the process of colonisation: this ‘Othering’ (and then the subsequent Pākehā appropriation of Māori resources and symbols) was the very basis of the colonial order.

The kind of mapping exercise that this chapter has undertaken so far is useful because it identifies a very important analytical tradition in work on colonialism in New Zealand, begins to historicise its development, and makes it possible to read this approach in a productive way in both national and international contexts. The remainder of the chapter will briefly evaluate this way of viewing the past so that historians can identify ways that we might move ahead. A key concern is the need to recalibrate our understanding of what colonialism was and its connection to writing as a practice.

There are various weaknesses within the work on cultural colonisation that can be quickly noted. Most obviously, it has narrowly focused on the connections between writing and dominance, rather than writing and cultural transmission. This means that some very important work – such as Charlotte Macdonald’s examinations of the place of writing in the production of affective relationships of various kinds and the ways in which the meaning of writing was encoded by gender, martial status and age – have been neglected within a historiographical framework that is mainly concerned with the ways in which writing enabled the dispossession of Māori. Most importantly, this occlusion means the connections between cultural transmission, the reproduction of Anglo-Celtic models of social organisation and cultural practice, and the actual dynamics of constructing colonial dominance remain unclear.

Examinations of cultural colonisation have also been moulded by a relatively weak interface with scholarship on the history of printing, reading, and the book trade in New Zealand, a significant body of work that could allow historians to assess the circulation and influence of various types of texts. Important recent work on Māori newspapers and on Māori traditions of writing – here I am especially thinking of Lachy Paterson’s and Brad Haami’s work – have not yet been incorporated into broader models of colonial politics or cultural life. Print culture became a crucial forum for debate within te ao Māori (the Māori world)
and a significant cultural bridge that linked, albeit imperfectly and unevenly, the politics of the tangata whenua (people of the land) and colonists. This kind of work calls into question the notion that ‘Māori’ were produced or invented by the colonists. Any history of that identification would have to take relationships between hapū (subtribes) and iwi (tribes) seriously, to be committed to exploring the long history of pan-tribalism, and to foreground the role of tangata whenua themselves in delineating what it is to be Māori, rather than see this category as primarily a colonial inscription.

Cultural colonisation’s reduction of writing to texts that can be analysed through the lens of ‘representation’ is a key limitation. The prioritisation of representation as an analytical problem and the ways in which representation has then been subsequently deployed are particularly problematic. Representation is, of course, a strategy that tends to view writing in terms of its textual outputs rather than as a practice (and set of processes) embedded in social relationships and material culture. Often, work on nineteenth-century New Zealand offers up a quote or small slice of text to demonstrate the nature of understandings of cultural difference, racial thought, or simple racism. The same text is then seen as indicative of a wider set of attitudes and assumptions before being interpreted as doing real work – in enabling colonisation, in marginalising Māori, or securing white dominance. Rarely, however, are the mechanics of these processes actually reconstructed: in academic historiography at least there are not many detailed treatments of how a particular idea or argument actually was deployed as an instrument of oppression or dispossession. Much more frequently, in fact, work on representation becomes merely attitudinal: texts reveal colonial prejudice, prejudice which then becomes an explanation of colonialism tout court.

John Stenhouse’s reassessment of A. K. Newman’s 1882 essay, ‘A Study of the Causes Leading to the Extinction of the Maori’, highlights some of the limits of analytical approaches that prioritise representation or simply attempt to understand colonialism through ‘images’ that Pākehā produced of Māori.32 Stenhouse noted that previous historians saw Newman as articulating ‘widely held’ beliefs, including a Social Darwinism that was seen as ‘quite prevalent’, and that Newman deployed medical knowledge to shore up ‘European dominance’.33 Yet Stenhouse’s essay shows that Newman’s arguments, which suggested that Māori were destined to die out because indigenous practices were accelerating the ‘natural’ decline of the race, were in fact neither authoritative nor did they fit easily with what other settlers thought. Newman’s arguments were attacked by influential figures such as Gilbert Mair, William Travers, and Sir James Hector when they were first aired at the Wellington Philosophical Institute in 1876. When Newman presented the first version of the 1882 paper he was again challenged, by Dr Morgan Grace (who predicted that the Māori population would soon begin to rebound) and, once again, by Sir James Hector. Stenhouse’s reading
of Newman’s work underlines the importance of the institutional context of knowledge production and also foregrounds the extremely energetic nature of the colonial public sphere. Stenhouse’s work points to a simple, but important methodological insight. Reconstructing debates, unpicking controversies, and tracing the dissemination and reception of arguments, offer historians far greater insights into past intellectual and cultural terrains than can be gained by simply focusing on the construction of otherness within particular texts.

So, extreme arguments may have been articulated, but the simple fact of their articulation does not allow historians to gauge their cultural authority, influence or reception. What I am suggesting here is, that in analysing colonial texts it is necessary to pay much closer attention to the spatial/social location and institutional frameworks from which the text was produced. Historians also need to be very aware of the broader discursive field the text entered and the patterns and pathways of print culture that shaped its circulation and reception.

A valuable starting point for this approach is Peter Mandler’s insistence that we should always scrutinise the ‘relative throw’, that is ‘the weight and significance’, of any text within an intellectual formation and how that relative throw shifts according to place as well as time. This kind of strategy, I believe, allows historical analysis to connect text with context, but it also opens up the question of consequence too: how texts actually influenced and determined action. This is not only a way of salvaging causality, but it is a crucial move if we are to insist that textual analysis matters – we must be committed to tracing the material effects of discourse in specific and concrete ways.

It needs to be stressed that these criticisms are not discounting the value of cultural analysis. Its real power comes when we push beyond a superficial recounting of race and representation and when we reject the temptation to read the meaning of all practices or beliefs or objects as being totally determined by their implication in colonialism. Before examining some limits of ‘cultural colonisation’, it needs to be noted that there were extremely important connections between writing and colonisation. Based on my own work on the place of knowledge in the colonisation of southern New Zealand, I think it is possible to identify four modes of writing where there was a strong connection between writing and the process of colonisation. In making these connections we need to resist the temptation to simply identify some specific genres because genre does not necessarily dictate the problems or arguments that texts produce.

The first of these modes of writing is what can be termed ‘imperial potentiality’. This mode placed the colonists’ assessment of the land and resources within the framework of an imagined imperial future. An example is Edward Shortland’s vision of the transformation of the north Otago interior into an important sheep farm for the empire, after spending time with the Ngāi Tahu chief Te Huruhuru on the Waitaki river. This tradition of writing was an important instrument for
forcing these islands into the view of the British and Australian money men and merchants, the Colonial Office, and advocates of emigration and underscoring their potential for the empire in the long term. Given the aggressive nature of British commercial expansion and imperial ambition, it is hardly surprising that this mode of thinking and writing was durable. For the southern portions of Te Wai Pounamu, for instance, we might identify key examples: in the records of Captain James Cook’s voyages; the reports and published narratives of Shortland and Tuckett in coastal Otago in the 1840s; and editorials, letters to the editor and published travel narratives in the local, Australian, and British press that promoted the settlement of undeveloped regions into the 1850s (and beyond).

The second and closely related mode of writing can be termed ‘colonial promotion’. These texts extolled the virtues of the colony as it existed and stressed its ability to offer immediate returns. Within the historiography to date, this type of literature has primarily been understood through the lens of ‘boosterism’, which imagines these texts as unreliable propaganda that substantially exaggerated the potential and resources the colony offered. While there is no doubt that the spirit of boosterism underpinned much promotional literature, it is a relatively narrow reading of these texts. It is important to note that dwelling exclusively on the connections between boosterism and migration occludes the importance of familial and affective networks which disseminated information about colonies. These forms of social connection, as Angela McCarthy has shown, frequently influenced both the decision to migrate and the socio-economic context of life in the new world after migration (as new colonists found accommodation, work, and social connections through these networks). More broadly still, stressing boosterism, or the ‘New Zealand myth’ or ‘ideal’, actually illuminates only a narrow slice of this literature. Most importantly, it fails to grapple with the empirical content of published works. This can be seen particularly clearly in the Otago Journal, which was used to provide information about the Otago colony to recruit potential colonists in Britain. This publication included a large number of migrant letters, but it also furnished a host of statistics in an effort to provide both details and ostensibly objective information about the conditions of the settlement. So in the fourth issue, published in June 1849, a table provided temperatures from both attached and detached thermometers, barometric readings, and measurements of wind direction and velocity, recorded three times a day between 16 and 30 November 1848. The seventh issue of the Journal, published in May 1851, can be regarded as an exemplar of the British ‘useful knowledge’ tradition: in fourteen short pages of double columns it packed in detailed descriptions and statistical measures of the colony’s geology, topography, economic base, and communications infrastructure as well as a careful description of the colony’s population assessed according to gender, marriage, religion, class, occupation and education.
Reading this literature through the lens of boosterism also underestimates the importance of the colonies when viewed from Europe. European colonists were drawn to New Zealand because it allowed them to escape the environmental constraints of a resource-poor and environmentally depleted Europe where sustained population growth was putting tremendous pressure on a finite land base.\textsuperscript{38} Promotional literature was therefore a product of both aggressive empire-building and the distinctive preoccupations of a European capitalist imagination simultaneously convinced of the improving power of agriculture, commerce and industry and anxious about the limits of Europe’s resources.\textsuperscript{39} Within the political economy of the British Empire, promotional literature also functioned as a vitally important instrument for the extension of British territorial reach, through settlement and the incorporation of distant and lightly developed territories (or colonies) into the global networks of trade created by the empire. These texts were central in enabling the displacement of comparatively small tribal societies. In New Zealand’s case, as Belich has demonstrated, migration was the central tool for securing white dominance as the tangata whenua were effectively swamped by waves of migration from Europe.\textsuperscript{40}

The third mode of writing where there was a strong connection between writing and the extension of colonial authority was ‘ethnographic assessment’. The cultural work carried out by colonial ethnography has been explored by several historians, anthropologists, Māori Studies scholars, and in many dissertations. These scholars argue that ethnographic writing produced understandings of cultural difference that enabled and authorised colonialism. Work on later collectors, and especially the scholars connected to the Polynesian Society, has also explored some of the ways in which these intellectuals textualised Māori culture and used this project as an instrument of self-fashioning. There needs to be much more work on the role of the state in producing and harnessing these knowledge traditions. As it stands, the connections between these texts and state action remains quite unclear. More attention must also be devoted to the distinctive regional traditions and preoccupations that structured this body of ethnographic writing. Exploring this issue would allow historians to embed ethnographic texts more firmly within the institutional frameworks and real locations that framed them (as Jeff Sissons has done for Tūhoe) and would also allow the question of variations between hapū and iwi to be taken much more seriously.\textsuperscript{41}

Finally, the fourth mode is ‘improvement writing’. Improvement was an idea ubiquitous in colonial political and institutional life and it suffused print culture. Improvement was the colonial keyword. The idea of improvement was a powerful social and political device for mobilising action, used to isolate problems, identify remedies, and catalyse action. Of course, it could be directed inward – self-improvement was an abiding concern within colonial culture. But
even self-improvement was commonly understood as best achieved within a context of mutuality and, as a result, mechanics institutes, literary and debating societies, and mutual improvement societies were vitally important social and intellectual spaces in the colony during the second half of the nineteenth century. While these forms of improvement were central in the transmission and localisation of inherited British models of social organisation, their connection to the construction of colonial authority was not nearly as clear or as direct as programmes of environmental improvement or schemes for the ‘uplift’ or ‘civilisation’ of Māori. Improvement was important in these specific domains for three reasons. First, it provided a justification for the act of colonisation: the colonists were improving the quality of the landscape, eliminating the practices that were holding Māori back, and, in both cases, making New Zealand modern. Second, the notion of improvement was extremely elastic and flexible: it was an idea with a long history in Britain and had become commonplace. Few colonists could object to it. Thirdly, it was a powerful idea because it promised the ability to translate belief, aspiration, and the written word into action and outcomes. James Beattie has rightly stressed that colonial improvement was often shot through with contradictions, ambiguities and anxieties. Nevertheless, ‘improvement’ was the most consistently powerful idea that could be mobilised to legitimise the transformations unleashed by colonial rule.

These four modes of writing were central in constructing, consolidating, and perpetuating colonial power. It is possible to trace, in these traditions, concrete ways in which writing fed debates and moulded public opinion, and actually shaped action. But it is essential that historians understand these four modes within the larger field of cultural production, a cultural terrain suffused by, but not reducible to, the written word. In simple terms, these textual traditions coexisted and interrelated with a whole host of other forms of both spoken and written expression. Writers in the colony were not restricted to producing texts explicitly implicated in the colonising project nor did they only read these kinds of texts. In other words, historians need to follow Mandler in thinking about the ‘relative throw’ of particular texts, but they should also think about the weight, significance, influence and durability of whole textual traditions.

Particularly close attention need to be paid to some important textual traditions whose relationship to colonisation seems ambivalent or ambiguous. In the terms of Chris Hilliard’s work, these are traditions that sit at the limits of ‘cultural colonisation’. They cannot be fully understood through the lens of colonisation, at least colonisation primarily understood as dispossession, but nor can the cultural work they carried out be apprehended without recognising their implication in colonisation.

One starting point for exploring such complexities is to give much greater consideration to the connections between writing and state activity. Writing was
a central instrument of the state and underpinned a whole range of techniques of
governance, from the drafting of reports to the Colonial Office, to the production
of legislation and the Government Gazette; from the operation of Parliamentary
Commissions to the collation of government departments’ annual reports and the
analysis and interpretation of trade statistics and population data. The constant
bureaucratic shuffling and shuttling of paper is something frequently taken for
granted, but it was a very particular means of directing state action and framing
state power. The work of Mary Poovey, Zoë Laidlaw and others suggests that
writing became firmly connected to the dynamics of governance around the
1830s, as political authority became increasingly disembodied, depersonalised,
bureaucratised and routinised; paper-dependent modes of governance were the
lifeblood of the colonial state as it developed here.46

Equally pressing, the connections between culture, commerce and colonisation
require exploration. Of course, writing and commercial life were increasingly
intertwined in the decades before the annexation of New Zealand. Writing about
commerce became a key mechanism through which basic facts of the economic
systems were created and writing was central to the creation of economic
expertise. Writing itself became the chief mechanism through which commercial
life operated and was policed.47 Joel Mokyr has also suggested that writing and
print were key instruments in organising knowledge in early modern Europe
and that they were pivotal in the ordering and reordering of knowledge at the
heart of the industrial revolution.48

The cultural frameworks of capitalism were quickly reproduced here, yet
little attention has been devoted to the process of transplantation. And little
consideration has been given to the operation of the cultural edifice of the
colonial market economy. Māori had to adjust to the logics of accumulation
and investment that underpinned effective action in a capitalist economy. They
also had to grasp the ways in which writing articulated with economics. Most,
if not all, major economic acts were undertaken within a colonial economy that
was dependent on the circulation of paper currency, the authority of written
contracts and mortgages, and underpinned by substantial sets of quite particular
literacies and numeracies. And, of course, the circulation of the printed word in
its manifold forms was an integral part of the colonial economy: the movements
of texts and commodities was central in giving New Zealand real shape as a
nation space.49 This is a slightly different argument than the one forwarded most
recently by Peter Gibbons. In an abrupt shift from the cultural colonisation thesis,
Gibbons has urged that New Zealand historians should decentre the question of
national identity and instead focus on the ‘world in New Zealand’. This would
entail, he argues, the construction of ‘macrohistories of production, trade and
consumption’ to highlight New Zealand’s place in broader global patterns and
‘microhistories’ that examine the connections between consumption and the
creation of collectives.50 While I do not disagree with the outlines of this call from Gibbons, this decentring does not require historians to abandon the insights of the scholarship on ‘cultural colonisation’. Rather, we need to embed the cultural dynamics of colonisation more firmly in the domains of politics and economics and should be alive to the possibilities offered by cultural analysis of colonial politics and commerce.

This kind of reconsideration is essential if historians are going to remodulate understandings of both writing and colonialism as sets of cultural practices. It will allow us to delineate much more clearly the strong connections between writing and the forms of thought and action that actually disempowered Māori. At one level, the prescription sketched here would greatly expand historians’ vision of these connections. Rather than seeing the writing-colonialism nexus operating primarily in ethnographic texts, travel narratives, and literary output, it would refocus attention on the cultural elements of economic and political practice vital to securing real dominance. But, at the same time, it would also guard against the fuzziness that often characterises work on colonial knowledge production and reproduction, work that frequently identifies writing or literacy (or statistical thought or map-making for that matter) as practices that automatically consolidated colonial hegemony and eroded Māori culture.

Implicit within these last two points is an important argument about the relationships between politics, economics and culture: historians need to reconnect New Zealand scholarship on colonialism with the history of capitalism. This means paying close attention to the material aspects of colonialism and recognising that economics had a culture and that culture had an economics. How would our vision of the colonial past be reshaped if we understood the struggles that played out here were part of the broader tectonic shifts fashioned by those great engines of modernity: migration, empire, and capitalism? How would our understanding of cultural difference on the ground in these islands be enriched if we saw them, at least in part, as a response to the growing global uniformities arising out of the globalisation of technologies of production, systems of economic activity, and increasingly common experiences of work during the long nineteenth century?51

Our understandings of what colonialism was and the extent of its legacies have been radically transformed since the 1980s. Historians have become deeply concerned with the cultural dynamics of colonialism and the ways in which colonial dominance was constructed through culture and representations (or notions) of cultural difference. This is a moment where we need to work hard to reconnect the domain of culture in more concrete ways with the history of
politics and economics. This process of reconnection might simultaneously enlarge our understandings of colonialism, especially by lacing it back into the history of capitalism and modernity, and refine it, producing much more precise readings of the connections between culture and colonisation. There is great scope for historians to interrogate these linkages and to re-evaluate the colonial past, to produce new interpretations that offer a much more careful and specific reading of the connections between writing and colonisation, and to be much more committed to reconstructing the role of transplanted cultural practices in processes of community-building. Hopefully these new histories will venture to prize open the domain of culture and bring it into a productive new dialogue with economics, politics and the social and emotional relations of everyday life. These are important challenges if we are to develop a richer picture of the texture and complexity of the imperial social formations that took shape on the ground in these islands.
PLACE
National histories have colonised too much of New Zealand’s past. While there have been recent calls to think transnationally as a corrective to the national focus of much historical writing on these islands, historians need to produce critical work that thinks under as well as across the nation. An abiding preoccupation with the story of the nation has been a key factor in encouraging cultural and intellectual historians to invest considerable energy into producing histories of identities like ‘Māori’, ‘settler’ or ‘Pākehā’, and ‘New Zealander’. Much of this work, however, has focused on the work of a narrow cohort of politicians, intellectuals, and writers whose understandings of landscape, race and history have been seen as both legitimising colonial authority and articulating the foundations of a distinctive set of identities that marked this place and its peoples apart from Britain and the rest of the empire. This chapter explores the dynamics of colonial intellectual development, but it is underpinned by a quite different set of analytical concerns. It examines how colonists in a specific location accessed information, developed cultural understandings, and where and how they shared their ideas. Rather than focusing on a set of textual exchanges between members of an emergent national intellectual elite, this chapter scrutinises the intellectual life of a particular group of colonists from a variety of backgrounds, who lived in a certain location, and who came together in a variety of ways to discuss their understandings of the past, the present and their aspirations for the future. This kind of approach firmly locates cultural production and consumption in specific practices, institutions, and sites. In ‘placing’ intellectual life it undercuts the nation as the default or natural unit for historical analysis.

The focus of this chapter is Gore – a significant site for analysis – and its immediate district. Across three generations the town produced a range of influential intellectual figures, including: Robert McNab (b. 1864), the historian and Liberal MP for Mataura; James Herries Beattie (b. 1881) the ethnographer, collector, and historian; and the historian Alexander Hare McLintock (b. 1903). In light of this tradition, the local historian George Griffiths has dubbed Gore New Zealand’s ‘Little Lichfield’, invoking the Staffordshire town that produced a remarkable lineage of writers and public figures. More generally, however,
Gore can sustain close scrutiny because a significant body of material relating to local institutions has survived (especially in the papers of Herries Beattie). Its vibrant print culture offers a rich window into the town’s social and intellectual life. Drawing on this material, this chapter does not focus on the role of Beattie and McNab in producing ‘identities’, but rather attempts to reconstruct the most important practices and sites through which knowledge was accessed, made and shared in Gore. Where many studies of colonial intellectual life have been grounded in post-colonial readings of texts, a finely grained local study grounded in archival work highlights the value of assessing both the structures and processes that determined the pattern of colonial intellectual life. Particularly important to this reframing is an emphasis on the importance of both the spoken and written word, and the often-complex relationship between these modes of communication, which were integral to the community formation in Gore. Knowledge, sociability, and the creation of social and cultural connectedness were strongly linked.

My argument should not be seen as a simple riposte to Miles Fairburn’s vision of an ‘atomised’ society, in which loneliness, isolation, and conflict were enduring features. In many ways, the material here can be reconciled with Fairburn’s stress on the transformations that began to undercut atomisation around 1900, but its main aim is to help shift the grounds of historical analysis away from the nature of the ‘ideal society’, or a concern with a national intellectual pattern, towards a greater commitment to reconstructing both local complexity and the role of knowledge production in community formation. Gore is not held up here as a microcosm of ‘New Zealand’, nor is it seen as representative – too much time has been spent debating the extent to which Amuri county, Littledene, Caversham, Johnsonville, Kaponga, and Taradale stand as suitable grounds for generalisations about the nation. Instead, my hope is to focus new attention on the everyday practices and places that enabled colonists to share and test ideas, and suggest some new ways in thinking about the connections between intellectual life and community formation in the final third of the nineteenth century.

Much recent work on the place of knowledge in British imperial formations has stressed the ability of native knowledge traditions and indigenous experts to shape colonial knowledge. There has been a tendency to extrapolate from the most important case studies of these processes, such as Eugene Ischick’s path-breaking study of the Madras hinterland, to insist that all colonial knowledge was ‘dialogic’. But in most colonies, including New Zealand, the indigenous imprint on colonial knowledge was uneven. In the case of Gore, we can see cross-cultural engagement clearly in the work of a few individuals – especially in the collecting and writing of Herries Beattie – but matauraka Māori, te reo and mahika kai (Māori knowledge, language and food-gathering practices) remained beyond the experience of the majority of colonists in this part of Southland.
Unlike parts of coastal Otago, Bluff, and Riverton, where Kāi Tahu communities were socially visible and worked hard to maintain their way of life, Gore had no resident Kāi Tahu population. Interactions between colonists and Kāi Tahu in inland eastern Southland between 1880 and 1910 were limited. Yet despite this lack of direct cross-cultural engagement with the mana whenua (tribal group who exercise authority over the locality), it is important to recognise that knowledge production in Gore remained profoundly colonial in nature. Being colonial was defined by both a set of relationships between the colonists and the peoples that they dispossessed, and a set of relationships that connected those colonists to the United Kingdom, Ireland, and component parts of the empire. Institutions, practices and debates in Gore were determined by the material and social realities of a specific colonial location: the absence of pre-existing urban structures; a small and often transient population; mediocre communication linkages; and a settler cultural world that was an ad hoc assemblage of a divergent body of languages, institutions, and practices drawn from Europe, particularly the United Kingdom and Ireland, but especially Scotland and England.

Gore was settled relatively late. The town was established north of the inland tracks used by Kāi Tahu Whānui and the settlement grew with little reference to pre-existing indigenous patterns of mobility. Gore developed as a ferry town where colonists could cross the Mataura river. While a handful of pastoralists settled in the district in the 1850s, the discovery of gold in the Waikaka and Nokomai rivers in 1862 made the river crossing a significant staging point for miners travelling inland. But it was the expansion of the railway north from Invercargill in 1875 that breathed life into the tiny hamlet as small stores, hotels, and lodging houses were quickly built. In 1880, the opening of the Waimea railway line, which ran west to Lumsden and beyond, promoted further growth, spurring the closer settlement of rural land and the emergence of new manufacturing and service industries in Gore itself. At the close of the nineteenth century, Gore stood at the centre of a mesh of networks that connected it to small settlements and farming communities across northern and eastern Southland and the southern portions of Otago. By this stage, Gore was firmly connected to both Dunedin and Invercargill by road, and was an important stopping point on the main trunk rail line as mail to and from these main points north and south moved in and out of Gore three times a day.

Gore’s population grew rapidly, from 709 in 1886 to 3,500 in 1905. In 1905, the Cyclopedia of New Zealand listed an extensive range of industries and businesses in Gore as well as a substantial number of public facilities and institutions. This inventory emphasised the comparative sophistication of the town and the
A few years earlier, the local correspondent for the Otago Witness noted Gore’s modern infrastructure and precocious adoption of new technology, suggesting that ‘our town is not likely to lose the go-ahead name one occasionally hears applied to it, viz., “The Chicago of the South”’. A few years later, Frank T. Bullen, the popular British novelist and lecturer, observed:

[Gore] gives itself, with a sublime air of importance, the proud title of “Chicago of the South”. It would be ludicrous if it were not said in such deadly earnest; and yet when the visitor sees the energy and the up-to-date methods manifested by this tiny community he is bound to take his hat off to its citizens.

By 1900 an important constellation of buildings, institutions, and societies shaped the community’s intellectual life. In particular, schools were an essential foundation for the town’s development. Education was a deep concern for early settlers. In many communities, informal classes for children were launched in hotels, stations, and homes before teachers were formally appointed or schools built. Gore’s first private school was established in 1876, but such ad hoc arrangements were soon set aside; public schools opened in 1879 and 1885 and a public high school was erected in 1897. Gore’s sizeable Catholic community – mainly Irish, but with smaller numbers of German and Polish-speaking families – were enthusiastic supporters of the town’s Catholic schools from 1890. Despite these growing resources only a small number of children were able to go onto high school in 1900 and even fewer completed these ‘advanced’ studies. Some aspiring students felt this lack of high school education was a profound check on their aspirations and a substantial determinant of their future financial security and social status.

While completing high school might have been a prized stepping stone towards a profession, by 1900 a primary school education – focused on the acquisition of core literacy and numeracy skills – was fundamental for a growing array of jobs, particularly in ‘town’ settings and an important condition of what we might think of as social citizenship.

Churches were also key sites forming world views in eastern Southland. Before 1880 (and even later in rural areas), groups of children and adults gathered in schoolhouses and individual homes for religious services. The 1880s and 1890s witnessed a boom in church construction across the district. Building churches was a top priority, not because they were ‘bait’ to lure new colonists – as David Hamer has claimed – but rather because churches were vital social, educational and spiritual centres. Churches were important sites of knowledge sharing and opinion making: morals were shaped by sermons and biblical teaching; memorised verses and hymns were linguistic touchstones; services frequently contained discussions of both domestic and foreign missionary work; and the conversations that preceded and followed service allowed the sharing of news
relating to families, farms and businesses, as well as pressing local matters. Alison Clarke has suggested church-going and, more broadly the continued authority of the Bible, shaped the fundamental moral outlook of most settlers in southern New Zealand at the close of the nineteenth century. The significance of the church was particularly strong in rural Southland where attendance rates were substantially higher than the national average. Significant numbers of young people in Gore district were also involved in the numerous faith-based groups. Bible classes were successful in creating spaces for young adults in Southland to extend their Christian knowledge and in the 1890s large numbers of youths were drawn into the distinctively Protestant forms of faith-based sociability offered by Christian Band and Christian Endeavour.

Sunday schools wove together faith and education, playing a pivotal role in community life. Sunday schools drew strong community support in the far south with 74 per cent of children in Otago and Southland enrolled in a Sunday school in 1896. A significant percentage of the remainder would have had some connection to Catholic educational institutions, meaning that approximately 80 per cent of children under the age of fifteen were involved in religious education to some degree. Around Gore, Sunday schools preceded the establishment of both day schools and churches. Sunday schooling was especially significant for at least some of the 20 per cent of children who did not attend public school on a regular basis in the 1890s. This is hinted at by the large attendance at the Sunday schools in Gore run by relatively small denominations, such as the Wesleyans. These figures suggest a vast majority of settlers in Gore wanted their children to gain a basic education and that they were happy for part of that education to be gained in an explicitly Christian context.

The other feature of Sunday schools that made them central to community life was their libraries. Just as in Britain, where Sunday school libraries strongly supported by working-class Christians were a prominent part of Britain’s educational landscape, these libraries were significant sites where young colonists accessed print culture. In some cases, communities worked together to establish libraries. In 1880, an alliance of Protestant denominations held a concert in East Gore to raise funds to start a non-denominational Sunday school library. By this stage, several church hierarchies were pushing ahead with extensive library initiatives. Most notably, the Sabbath School Committee of the Otago and Southland Presbyterian Synod created a funding mechanism that enabled Sunday schools to build up libraries. By 1891, the vast majority of Sunday schools had dedicated libraries (distinct from congregational libraries geared to adults), which on average held over two hundred books each. Drawing upon London and Edinburgh publishers, Presbyterian churches in Southland also distributed a range of books and magazines for little or no charge to children who attended Sunday school. In a society where books were relatively expensive, these gifts
were valued, even if they were not quite as popular amongst young Presbyterians as novels, which were viewed with some scepticism by the church’s leadership.37

Beyond churches and schools, information, ideas, and arguments were exchanged in a range of public meeting points and spaces. Initially, hotels were crucial gathering places and some offered dedicated meeting spaces and this pattern endured, particularly in the countryside past 1900.38 In Gore itself, Green’s Assembly Hall opened for business in 1878. It hosted many events that were too large or inappropriate for hotels, quickly becoming an important venue for political meetings, public lectures and dramatic productions.39 Over the next decade a strong culture of society-formation emerged: in 1878, the Gore Dramatic Club and the Oddfellows Lodge were founded; in 1880 the Good Templar Lodge opened; in 1882 the first public events by Caledonian Society, the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, and the Literary and Debating Society were held; in 1887 the Orange Lodge and the Oddfellow’s Hall were erected; in 1888 the Masonic Hall was opened and the district’s farmers’ club set up; and in 1889 the Druid’s Lodge was established and the Horticultural Society was formed.40 The sharing of information and the circulation of knowledge were important threads within a thriving associational culture that engaged a substantial portion of Gore’s population.

Athenaeums (associations for the advancement of learning, particularly in the fields of science or literature) helped underpin the institutionalisation of intellectual life. These typically offered a reading room, a lending library, and some limited meeting space. Small towns like Knapdale, Clinton, Pukerau, Tapanui and Waikaia had established atheneaums by the 1890s, while others like Wyndham, Mimihau and Knapdale had libraries (often with literary societies attached).41 Moves to establish a public library and reading room began in Gore itself with public meetings in spring 1881.42 Progress with raising funds and constructing the building was slow. By June 1883, the Mataura Ensign was exasperated, asking its readers: ‘How is it that we as a community have allowed the Committee to “diddle” along in this somewhat apathetic way for so long without taking steps to remedy the present unsatisfactory state of affairs?’ The Ensign was convinced that an athenaeum was a key instrument in improving the town’s intellectual life and would also be central to its reputation as well: ‘If such places as Clinton, Pukerau and even Tapanui can carry through projects of this nature, a town with the past history and future prospects of Gore ought not to be behind its neighbours.’43 Stung by the Ensign’s rebuke, the Athenaeum Committee pushed construction ahead, and once the building was completed the institution became an important centre of the town’s intellectual life. The Athenaeum Committee defined the athenaeum’s role as providing a public reading room that carried a ‘supply of Colonial, English and other newspapers and periodicals’ and establishing a ‘Public Library, embracing literary, scientific, and other works,
and also making provision for rational amusement’. The library listed some 567 volumes in its 1889 catalogue, a collection that featured significant bodies of fiction (307 volumes, mainly contemporary novels), ‘biography, history and travel’ (cumulatively 139 volumes), and science (91 volumes). The athenaeum also hosted ‘entertainments’ of various types, including songs, speeches and displays. In 1893, one such display included collections of shells from the Pacific, various photographs, antique books and coins, and a collection of ‘the weapons of the Fijians’. Events like this combined entertainment with education and sociability with popular science and attracted children, teenagers and adults alike.

These institutions – athenaeums, Sunday schools, meeting rooms, and various associations and clubs – enabled a range of voices to be raised in public discussion and the spoken word to be central to local life. Teachers and inspectors assessed the literacy of local children, like their counterparts throughout the colony, through their ability to speak well and pronounce words accurately as they read, connecting elocution with social cultivation. The spoken word was the very foundation of family life, it suffused the world of church, and was what made meeting at hotels, sports events, and community organisations socially meaningful. Most importantly, talk was central to the ways in which knowledge was generated. Talk – both formal and informal – was, for example, a vital way of communicating experience and experimentation among farmers and crop-growers. In 1892–3 one local farmers’ club had a busy calendar of social gatherings and political discussions, in addition its members heard papers on ‘Bee Culture’, ‘Turnip Growing’, ‘Breaking Up Tutu and Fern Land’, ‘Branding and Earmarking Sheep’ and ‘Dairying’ and discussed pest control, including the various measures that members had used for the ‘destruction of small birds’. This kind of localised low-level scientific work – which included observation, data collection and experimentation – rarely filtered up to provincial philosophical societies or specialist print culture, so it has been largely overlooked in the historiography on colonial science.

Talk was also a crucial way in which basic scientific knowledge was shared within the community – the gender-specific lecture series offered by the American doctors John Charles Harrison and Anna Longshore-Potts on the human body and reproduction, for instance, were extremely popular. These kinds of events connected people in Gore to new ideas and international debates. In Gore’s Sunday schools, churches, community halls and lodges there were regular talks that brought the world to Gore in this manner. In June 1893, for example, H. J. Lewis, the minister of the Congregational church, was in the middle of a series of lectures on world religions (‘The Religion of Egypt’, ‘Brahminism’, ‘Buddhism’, ‘Confucianism’, ‘Mahommedanism’, and the ‘Religions of Ancient Greece’), while the Reverend J. D. Jory of Balclutha gave a lantern-slide lecture in the Oddfellows Hall on his time as a missionary in Fiji. A couple of months
later R. L. Begg presented a public lecture to an audience of 150 describing his travels through Australia, Sri Lanka and India.51

Even though Gore produced, as we shall see, a thriving print culture, the spoken word remained heavily embedded in the town’s newspapers, as in most colonial newspapers. The detailed recounting of speeches and political debates was a staple of both the Mataura Ensign and the Southern Standard. Frequently extensive transcriptions of whole speeches were reproduced from the shorthand notes of local journalists. This kind of reporting became especially prominent at times of heightened political contention, such as the debates over women’s suffrage in the winter of 1892 or the disputes over the location of the Gore bridge in 1893. Newspapers were valued in part because they were able to transmit speeches made in Gore to readers across the district, and not all the reported speech was that of local dignitaries or visiting luminaries. The regular ‘What Folks Are Saying’ column in the Southern Standard offered a sequence of short one- and two-sentence snippets, capturing local opinion and gossip in a manner that suggested overheard conversation, and provides a particularly striking illustration of the interweaving of spoken and published words. Speech and print were interlaced in colonists’ cultural life.

Newspapers were fundamental to Gore’s life. Accounts of the latest happenings in Waikaka, Waimumu, Waikoikoi, Waipahi, Waiwera, Kelso, Otama, Chatton, Gore and Mataura were regular features of the Dunedin-based Otago Witness and Invercargill’s Southland Times. Both papers maintained extensive networks of local correspondents.52 This pattern of reportage and reading reminds us that even after the provinces’ abolition, they remained important sources of social identification and continued to shape the circuits of colonial life. But Gore and its surrounds had their own papers too. Many small towns launched papers in the final decades of the nineteenth century: Riversdale had its Waimea Plains Review, Clinton the Popotunoa Chronicle and then the Clinton County Gazette, Waikaia its Herald, and Mataura produced the Southern Free Press. By 1890 most of these local papers had been absorbed into the Mataura Ensign, Gore’s longest running and most influential paper. Initially launched in May 1878 by Joseph Mackay, proprietor of the Bruce Herald (Milton), the Ensign was initially a weekly, but quickly became a bi-weekly and then, from 1895, a tri-weekly publication. Its self-defined role was to offer local readers ‘judiciously selected general reading matter, full district reports, trenchant editorial comments, and the advertisements of leading business residents’.53 From 1882, the Dolamore family, especially Alfred Dolamore who also served as Gore’s mayor, controlled the paper, and after 1887 its politics were expressly defined in opposition to its
new rival, *The Southern Standard*. The bi-weekly *Standard* had good circulation in the Mataura and Waikaka valleys and across the Waimea plains. It distinguished itself from the *Ensign* by its commitment to rural stories and ‘progressive’ politics, in the 1890s championing the cause of liberalism and women’s suffrage. The two papers also were aligned with rival local political factions and competing regional newspaper empires. In opposition to the *Ensign*’s support of the Dolamore family in local politics, the *Standard* was sympathetic to the pro-suffrage, pro-temperance politics of Herries Beattie, an editorial position that was not surprising given that Beattie was the president of the paper’s founding board of governors. The *Standard* also had formal links with both the *Otago Witness* and *Otago Daily Times*. Despite these divergent political orientations, both the *Ensign* and *Standard* were dependent on Gore's telegraphic and postal links, which provided stories from both near and far. From the mid-1880s, the papers received breaking national and international news by telegraph (sourced through a telegraphic combine or news agency), while depending on the post office (which was established in 1867) and rail connections for more extensive international stories, literary content and local news.

A sustained reading of both these papers suggests that they broadly conform to the ‘village and the globe’ model identified by Rollo Arnold in his discussion of the settler press in the mid-1880s. Local affairs, things that transpired in Gore and its surrounds, received extensive treatment and formed the largest body of the paper’s content with a larger minority of content being international in flavour (slanted towards Australia, the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the United States) and a smaller minority being ‘national’ in character. It is certainly true that what we might see as *national* politics captured the imagination of local readers in 1892 and 1893, but it was essentially the *local* aspect of these developments that garnered most interest and analysis: the MP for Mataura G. F. Richardson’s vacillation on women’s voting rights, the remarkable public exchanges between local men and women over suffrage, and Richardson’s electoral fate in the 1893 election. At the same time, however, the *Ensign* and *Standard* coverage of local events and developments were shaped by transnational press networks and international debates. The *Standard*’s arguments for enfranchisement borrowed extensively from overseas sources, offering, for example, an analysis of voting patterns in municipal elections in Kansas to suggest that women might be more engaged with electoral politics than men.

Fairburn has suggested that reading British papers and magazines enabled colonials to escape a ‘socially arid world’ and allowed them to re-enter a culture of ‘community events, celebrations, recreations, and endless opportunities to chat, exchange opinions and ideas’. There is no doubt that British papers and periodicals played an important role in colonial intellectual life and that well
into the 1880s there was an almost insatiable hunger for news from ‘home’ amongst Anglo-Celtic settlers. Yet, these colonists did not only find community in metropolitan print culture; local newspapers were thick with community news and both the *Southern Standard* and *Mataura Ensign* offer an image of a rich local social life, full of picnics, balls, dances, lectures, dramatic productions, ‘entertainments’, society meetings, public debates, public shows and exhibitions, and sporting matches. All these occasions offered opportunities for social engagement even though many settlers lived with undeveloped road networks and in relative isolation. It would be wrong to discount Fairburn’s claim about the continued relevance of the British press to settler’s lives, but in the case of Gore, Fairburn’s willingness to allow the importance of sociability in metropolitan print culture while discounting the cultural significance of the local press (and the evidence it provides of colonial sociability) seems a puzzling double-standard. One explanation of this tension is tied to questions of scale. The *Ensign* and *Standard* suggest that, while Gore was part of an emergent ‘New Zealand’ as well as ‘British Empire’, the district and the province remained central to colonial life around 1900. Even after the mobilisations of the 1890s invested national politics with a new salience, and key players in intellectual circles were articulating a distinctive nationalism within an imperial frame, these Gore papers remained deeply invested in speaking to local audiences who were worried about bridges, the fate of the local library, the operation of road and domain boards, and the latest news from Dunedin and Invercargill.60

At the heart of these local and regional concerns was the question of farming. Both the *Standard* and *Ensign* offered extensive coverage of agriculture and pastoralism. They provided information that was relevant for farmers themselves, but also for the craftsmen, bankers, solicitors and local leaders who were dependent on the capital and commodities generated by primary producers. Given this dependence between town and country, it is hardly surprising that Gore papers offered regular detailed reports on Dunedin produce and grain markets, regional beef, sheep, hides and tallow markets, the extension of cultivation, the progress of hay-making and harvest time, and the destruction of rural pests.61 Although the *Standard* was seen as the ‘farmer’s paper’, the *Ensign* also provided extensive treatment of rural matters and saw the dissemination of useful knowledge to farmers as an important function. This was gratefully received in the district. In 1883, the *Ensign’s* Chatton correspondent wrote:

> I am very pleased to see that your proprietor is giving the readers of the ENSIGN an outline of farming, as well as some very valuable information on the management and experience of farmers in the lower portion of the Mataura valley. These short sketches cannot but be of benefit to the farming class, tending as they do to disseminate the experiences of others throughout
the country for the benefit of all. It is, generally speaking, by the experience
that has been gained by others that we get our most valuable information.62

Rollo Arnold has discussed the importance of international information and
news relating to agriculture, horticulture, and raising stock in the New Zealand
Farmer and New Zealand Country Journal.63 While Southland readers may have
drawn on these national publications to access the latest developments from
across the empire and Anglophone world, the Ensign and Standard allowed
information about specific issues to be quickly disseminated within a distinctive
environment where agriculture had developed relatively late.

Gauging the reception of these papers is always difficult, but in the case of Gore
we do have an intriguing series of observations in the journal of the young Herries
Beattie. In his 1893 diary a twelve-year-old Beattie noted that by reading the local
papers he learnt ‘anything important’ and ‘what is going on in public’.64 Through
the Standard and the Ensign he followed local news, such as the debates over
suffrage and the impact of the measles epidemic, as well as reading international
news. His diary suggests that these news stories – such as the marriage of the
Duke of York, debates over Home Rule in Ireland, conflicts between France and
Siam, and the sinking of the HMS Victoria off Tripoli – were a key part of both
familial and public conversation in Gore. Beattie observed that his friends also
read the papers and ‘then come to school & tell the news to their mates’.65

Beattie’s diaries offer some other insights into reading practice and the place
of books in everyday life. It is clear that reading was a way in which the ‘world’
entered Gore: Herries was an enthusiastic consumer of books about empire
and adventure. He was fond of titles such as Achilles Daunt’s In the Land of the
Moose, Bear and Beaver and when playing games imagined himself as a Native
American in the mould of ‘Fennimore-Copper’ [sic].66 This love of Fenimore-
Cooper was encouraged by his Standard Three teacher, Mr McNeill, who read
to his class, much to Herries’s pleasure: ‘I delighted in hearing thrilling stories of
bloodthirsty hair-raising scalping harassing mocosined [sic] Indians.’67 Books were
an important anchor for both the intellectual and emotional life of the Beattie
family. Amongst Herries’s papers is a list of the books his mother, Mary Roden
Thomson, carried with her to New Zealand in 1862.68 These mementoes from
‘home’ – whose value, at least partially, lay in the inscriptions that articulated
connections to particular people, institutions, and places – were freighted with
emotions that were replayed in the Beattie family traditions of gift giving, where
books were particularly prominent.69 Across the district books were important
items, presents and keepsakes given to mark birthdays, marriage and regular
attendance and the completion of school and Sunday school.70 Less ritualised
exchanges of books seem to have been fairly commonplace as well. As in Britain,
books circulated freely in families of all social stations.71
The movement of books between friends and family, as well as the flow of books into the community through libraries, missionary groups and Sunday schools was just one element in an escalating traffic in the printed word that was a crucial element of the cultural landscape. The constant shuffling and shuttling of paper was supported by technologies which made communication cheaper and faster, and by the growing significance of writing and reading as regular practices for the vast majority of settlers in the far south. The colonists of the south were an increasingly literate population. In Otago and Southland in 1874, 68 per cent of settlers could read and write, while 8 per cent could read but not write, leaving 24 per cent of the population as non-literate. By 1901, 84 per cent of the population could read and write, 2 per cent could read only, and 14 per cent remained illiterate.72

Gore’s settlers were writers as well as readers. The area developed during a period characterised by a remarkable extension of communications infrastructure and the amplification of older practices of letter writing. Many individuals maintained extensive webs of correspondence, encompassing local social networks, more expansive links within the colony, and a diverse range of relationships to ‘home’ and to other colonial sites. These kinds of connections, as Angela McCarthy has shown, fashioned ‘bands of fellowship’ that linked friends and families to each other and their homelands in meaningful ways.73 Correspondence grew as commercial life intensified, and associational culture grew from the 1880s. Long after the advent of the telegraph and telephone, letters were fundamental to the operation of most businesses and institutions.74 This new level of correspondence remained fairly stable into the early years of the twentieth century as this substantial transformation in the nature and scale of interpersonal communication was consolidated. The constant traffic of writing and receiving of letters, lettercards, and postcards had become central to many key aspects of economic and cultural practice by 1900. They were an almost ritualised act of community-building as well as connections near and far were fashioned, maintained, and transformed by the written word.

Many of the issues explored in this chapter – talking, reading, writing, and the development of an associational culture – came together in one particularly important set of institutions: mutual improvement societies. These drew on long-standing English and Scottish traditions of mutual education and institutional models familiar to many settlers from their homes in the United Kingdom. These societies were generally easy to establish once colonial towns had developed a modest population and a basic infrastructure (essentially a public meeting space) and like their British counterparts offered opportunities for remedial
education, opportunities that were particularly important in a recently settled region like northern Southland. The colonial tradition of mutual improvement, as it developed around Gore, diverged from British models in the much greater role that churches and para-church organisations (such as Temperance societies) played in the organisation of these groups. This was particularly noticeable in Gore itself, where mutual improvement societies developed along congregational lines, whereas smaller rural centres typically had a mutual improvement society that would serve the whole community. In Gore, however, distinct Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian mutual improvement societies operated, and a Congregationalist one was established after a schism tore the East Gore Presbyterian congregation apart. These societies flourished in the 1890s, with the Gore Presbyterian Mutual Improvement Society boasting 150 members in 1893. The Gore Literary and Debating Society, established in the mid-1880s, and societies sponsored by local temperance groups, worked alongside the denominational societies. Faith, morality and intellectual life were woven together in the Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Improvement Society (GYM), which was an important part of Gore’s busy civic life.

These mutual improvement societies served two very important functions. First, they provided forums for discussion and debate. The 1899 syllabus of GYM reveals a programme built around a range of topics of the kind that engaged newspaper editors and politically active individuals throughout the country: capital punishment, tax policy, prohibition and federation. These kinds of subjects were also the occasion for meetings and exchanges between groups. Around 1900 the Gore Literary and Debating Society met with its Riversdale counterpart to debate ‘Should the Empire Federate?’ Societies might also stage lecture series on topical issues. In 1899, GYM hosted a lecture series comprising five lectures and a concert. These included the Reverend William White, the Presbyterian minister from Wallacetown, who discussed the ‘Growth of Democracy’; the lawyer and coroner J. W. Poynton lectured on ‘Microbes’; while Miss Caroline Freeman of Dunedin’s Girton College spoke on ‘The Cry of the Children’. Designed to disseminate knowledge to a broad audience, these lectures also attempted to cultivate ‘a taste for mutual improvement among the young people of both sexes’. Two years later members of the public paid 2s 6d to hear a sequence of six lectures and a ‘popular concert’ sponsored by the same society. The speakers were significant figures including: Robert McNab, the historian and MP, who spoke on ‘Federation’; Dr George Copland (son of well-known minister and physician James Copland) on the ‘Senses’; the Reverend White on ‘Socialism’; and Reverend Dr Rutherford Waddell on ‘How to Read A Novel’.

As these kinds of events suggest, these societies aimed to ‘improve’ their members. The banner head of the first ‘journal’ of the GYM proclaimed: ‘For the
dissemination of useful knowledge and the enlightenment and improvement of members of the above society. Meetings were designed to sharpen members’ ideas, to elevate their moral and religious understanding, and, most importantly, to refine their ability to explain their beliefs through the written and spoken word. Most societies had special evenings or timeslots which were devoted to allowing (or requiring) their members to practise these skills, such as debate nights, sessions of ‘impromptu speaking’, ‘object nights’ (where speakers discussed a specific artefact), recitations of poetry, the staging of theatrical skits, mock trials and spelling competitions. These efforts demonstrate that speaking skills were highly valued in the colonial public sphere.

But writing was another important part of the improving process. Most societies, including the Gore Girls’ Literary Club, produced ‘journals’: handwritten magazines collated by the senior members of the society (occasionally a designated ‘editor’) which allowed talks, debates, pieces of fiction and ‘letters to the editor’ to circulate amongst the society’s members. These literary skills were broadly appreciated, as the Standard observed in 1895: ‘One of the most desirable and delightful accomplishments of modern times is to be able to write readily, and to convey to paper one’s thoughts in a clear, concise and pleasant manner. This accomplishment is not entirely a gift, as many think, but can be obtained with practice and study.’ Both the Ensign and Standard followed the activities of these societies closely and the Standard had a regular self-contained column for local mutual improvement societies.

These societies were significant forums for young women as well as men. There was some divergence between the objects of these societies along gender lines. The societies dedicated to young women had a stronger focus on literature than on politics and science. Whereas the Gore Literary and Debating Society – dominated by men in the 1880s and remained so after its reinvention in the first decade of the twentieth century – had an abiding concern with political and scientific matters, the Gore Girls’ Literary Club was primarily that, a club focused on literature. Their 1904 syllabus devoted three weeks to Hiawatha, four weeks to the Arthurian romances, three nights to As You Like It, and also had a poetry evening. The syllabus did have two talks by prominent local men, including an Anglican minister, and a single talk on fossils; but the overwhelming focus of the society’s work was literature, a pattern that was replicated in the other extant syllabi from that society. In mixed-gender societies, such as the Presbyterian and Wesleyan mutual improvement societies, women were active members, holding offices and wielding considerable influence. These societies frequently had ‘Lady Presidents’ and regularly held ‘Ladies’ Evenings’ and ‘Men’s Nights’ when an entire evening’s programme was provided by one gender. As the historian Rosemarie Smith has shown, these occasions were central in catalysing
the intense debates over women’s suffrage in Gore during 1892 and 1893, debates that captured the whole community’s imagination and were instrumental in the ousting of G. F. Richardson from the Mataura seat in 1893.91

What can these societies tell us about the connections between intellectual activity and community formation? Even though he recognises the emergence of ‘associational machinery’ in the late nineteenth century, Fairburn nevertheless discounts the significance of the kinds of associations that this chapter has examined.92 He suggests that they were weak, ‘thin’, and tended to be ephemeral, arguing they were unable to produce an ‘associational machinery of control’ or the moral glue to wield ‘atomised’ colonists together.93 Conversely, Erik Olssen has argued that ‘voluntary organisations’ had grown rapidly in the cities by 1890, but these associational cultures had not taken root in the country where church and lodge remained key community nodes.94 In eastern Southland it is clear that a strong associational culture had flourished in Gore itself and that significant attempts to develop formal structures that provided mutual connections, in the guise of athenaeums, reading rooms and especially improvement societies, were underway in most small settlements. As Derek Drinkwater has argued in the Australian context, these institutions were central to processes of community formation and key sites for the cultivation of political understanding and literary taste. This pattern was manifested in many parts of New Zealand.95

Two further observations are necessary. First, colonists concerned with improvement and institution building were perennially anxious about their progress. These societies required a hefty commitment and investment and there was widespread apprehension that their energy would be sapped by poor attendance and constant turnover in membership. In 1899, as it entered its sixth year, the GYM equalled the record for longevity of a local mutual improvement society, proving to be a very durable institution lasting through to the First World War.96 These societies faced challenges quite different to their British antecedents, which frequently developed in isolated villages and mining communities with stable and largely self-contained populations.97 The particular mobility of young male colonists, who regularly left the district in search of work, to take up educational and professional opportunities, and to establish independent families, meant that the societies’ membership were in constant flux.98 Societies worked hard to consolidate a base membership and develop habits of attendance. The GYM rules allowed any individual who missed two successive meetings without sufficient written explanation to be struck from the membership list.99 A little more generously, the Gore Literary and Debating Society allowed members three consecutive absences before being struck off.100
Gore’s associational culture was nourished by a series of particularly energetic families and individuals who were invested in the district and were involved in a wide range of groups. These groups had larger numbers of members who were less committed or more transient, moving in and out of societies, and there was an undoubtedly a third group in the district who had limited investment in associational culture. Even though there were limits to the reach of these institutions, and other community building practices could flourish with limited institutional support, reading and writing, talking and listening, produced social connections as well as knowledge. If we take the histories of these practices and institutions together, it seems clear that intellectual activity of various types was an important component of life in late-Victorian Gore and the life of the mind was a significant element of community formation.

Second, we must recognise that conflict was an integral element of the process of community formation. Fairburn has suggested that the construction of community depended upon a series of bonds and networks that ‘maintained a high level of conformity and order’. But conformity or absence of conflict are not necessarily indicators of community, especially in a relatively new society, nor is conflict necessarily an indicator of a lack of community, an argument that is foundational to Fairburn’s broader claims about the atomised nature of colonial life. Even the most successful institution in Gore witnessed conflicts over ideologies and priorities. In 1900, a debate over the importance of temperance work divided the GYM. When its committee voted to stress the primacy of mutual improvement, the society’s president J. A. Forbes, a prominent printer and stationer, tendered his resignation, as did one other senior member. These were accepted as the remainder of the committee voted in favour of maintaining a primary emphasis on mutual improvement. At the next meeting, the committee also diluted the strength of the society’s temperance platform, no longer requiring full members to be ‘pledged’ abstainers. In response to the success of this motion, Forbes, who was elected a life member of the society after his resignation as president, promptly wrote to the society demanding that his name be removed from the list of life members. This skirmish was relatively minor in comparison to the other clashes that captured the community’s imagination in the preceding decade, including the schism that divided the local Presbyterian congregation, the rift between Gore Domain Board and Gore Borough Council, the conflicts over the construction of the Gore bridge, the disagreements over the enfranchisement of women, or the ongoing debates over the Salvation Army. These disputes were fed by tense verbal exchanges in public spaces and received extensive newspaper coverage in both the Standard and Ensign.

At the heart of these clashes were competing visions of development, rival agendas for improvement, and divergent visions of where moral and political authority ultimately lay. The debates do not reveal the limits of community, but
instead demonstrate that ‘community’ itself was produced out of contestation. Community in Gore was never complete: it was not produced out of ideological agreement and complete social cohesion; rather it was an effect of debate, dispute, and the ability of protagonists to find accommodation and acceptance. Ultimately the conflict between the Gore Domain Board and Gore Borough Council dissipated, the Salvation Army increasingly won acceptance as temperance came to enjoy cultural authority in the region by the early 1900s, inter-denominational ties developed between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, and GYM grew larger and more dynamic after its reinvention. Debate was not necessarily an impediment to the articulation of community; it helped define broadly shared aims and values as communities calcified. Of course, all communities are by their very definition exclusionary and some groups – including larrikins, ‘swagmen’, itinerant workers, and the local Chinese – were not part of the district’s culture of sociability and clearly beyond the boundary of community. The ‘vortex of the locality’, to borrow W.H. Oliver’s phrase, was strong but the centripetal pull of institutions and ‘town’ was never all-powerful. Contestations became somewhat rarer within Gore’s public life after 1900. An initial stage of intense contestation seems to have been an important precondition for the emergence of the ‘tighter’ bonds that may have characterised rural communities from the 1910s.

The firm connections between knowledge production, sociability and community formation in Gore around 1900, affirm Rollo Arnold’s argument that ‘[e]ach significant New Zealand locality ... became an arena for continuous debate, lobbying, decision and action’. Political, cultural and intellectual life was embedded in the locality, even though patterns of correspondence, reading, and talk suggest the people of Gore and its surrounding settlements were deeply interested in developments in more distant parts of the colony as well as Australia, Britain, other parts of the empire, and North America. Although the power of nation state grew in the wake of the abolition of the provinces – and was further enhanced by the state’s growing role as a dispenser of resources and public works funding to local communities – at the outbreak of World War One the immediate sites of sociability and connection in Gore were still essentially local. What Oliver and Thomson termed ‘the nationalisation of regional life’ proceeded slowly and unevenly. Place had abiding significance in the development of colonial knowledge. Rather than seeing the production and circulation of knowledge as the outcome of a set of abstract textual processes, we can find it generated by everyday practices, deeply embedded in the structures of local life. The timing of Gore’s development, the particularities of the district’s demography, and its specific histories of institution building shaped patterns of knowledge production. These powerful local forces defined the venues in which knowledge could be shared and helped shape its distinctive features, especially the distant imprint of Māori, the persistent weight of the spoken word and the growing weight of
the written word, and the centrality of churches, temperance, and associational culture in Gore's intellectual life. Intellectual engagement was a key aspect of community-building. There is much to be learnt from the close scrutiny of patterns of sociability, institutional development and cultural practice. Our understandings about ‘community’, ‘knowledge’ and that key contemporary touchstone ‘identity’, need to be much more attentive to questions of place and space, connection and conflict, and the abiding importance of the locality.
It is time to reassess the historiography of colonial New Zealand in the wake of three decades of post-colonial historical writing. The brief sketch that follows of the four most significant variations of post-colonial history suggests that these traditions – when taken collectively – have fundamentally recast our understandings of the nature of colonisation and its consequences. But these traditions of critical post-colonial reflection have also worked to produce a static and flat view of the past built around a remarkably stable vision of the nation state. There have been recent calls to rethink received versions of the national past, most notably in Giselle Byrnes’s introduction to the *New Oxford History of New Zealand* that advocated the adoption of an explicitly transnational approach to history of these islands. A turn towards transnationalism in itself, however, is only a partial response to the challenge of rethinking New Zealand’s histories. Historians need to grapple with questions of location, space and scale more generally, thinking under and beyond as well as across the nation. If this undertaking is to enrich our understandings of the changing social formations that have developed in these islands, this new work has to pay much closer attention to the relationship between economics and the cultural domain. One key tool for undertaking this is the question of circulation. Taking circulation seriously will allow historians to explore the dynamics through which specific places developed and the ways in which the nation space took shape. It will also enable historians to think much more carefully about these islands’ place in the much broader stories of the development of imperial regimes, global capitalism, and modernity itself from 1769 onwards.

At the outset, it is useful to sketch the main traditions of post-colonial historical writing that have developed in New Zealand, building upon the historiographical discussion offered in Chapter Twelve. To define post-colonialism as a lineage of scholarship and critique that draws upon a canonical body of texts by literary critics and theorists, such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha, is
restrictive and misleading. Such a definition merely identifies one variant, albeit the most intellectually visible within universities, of post-colonial intellectual work. Following Ania Loomba, it is more useful to think of post-colonialism more broadly as creative, scholarly and political work designed to advance the ‘contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism’. Working with Loomba’s formulation it is possible to identify four main streams of post-colonial historical writing that have coalesced in New Zealand.

The first of these is a tradition of critical Māori writing that challenged the popular idea that New Zealand had exemplary ‘race relations’ and which highlighted the continuing consequences of colonisation. These critiques were part of the deep-seated cultural and political mobilisation that is frequently identified as the ‘Māori cultural renaissance’. Ranginui Walker offered articulate and forceful assessments of New Zealand’s past and its contemporary dilemmas in a long-running sequence of articles in *Listener*, arguments that were extended through his two most influential books, *Nga Tau Tohetohe* and *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou*. Although it was not a work of historical scholarship, Donna Awatere’s *Maori Sovereignty*, which grew out of a series of articles she wrote for the feminist journal *Broadsheet*, catalogued what Awatere saw as the Pākehā cultural imperialism at the heart of New Zealand’s history. In this withering polemic she argued that colonisation was a systematic programme to undercut the ‘Māori nation’ and suggested that racism lay at the heart of both Pākehā identity and state practice. Māori, she argued, had been ensnared in a ‘death machine’ by the Pākehā colonisers.

The second strand of work is a looser assemblage of critical revisionist scholarship primarily produced by Pākehā historians and anthropologists during the 1970s and 1980s, partially in response to the kinds of arguments developed by Walker, Awatere and other Māori leaders. This historical work offered revisionist reassessments of the colonial past, striving to explain Māori marginalisation, expose the limits of the stereotypes produced of Māori during the colonial past, and reassess the position of Māori in the making of New Zealand. This approach tended to be grounded in the languages of liberalism and scholarship and was more moderate than the forcefully activist language of Walker and Awatere. This enabled the re-evaluations of New Zealand history developed in these texts to gain greater purchase amongst Pākehā, especially those on the political left and in the universities, professions, and government service. Some key works here included: Alan Ward’s assessment of the development of racial amalgamation policies and their consequences; Paul Clark’s re-evaluation of the Pai Mārire religious movement that attempted to overthrow received colonial images of savage and fanatical Hauhau; Judith Binney’s reassessments of Te Kooti and Rua Kenana; and James Belich’s landmark study of the New Zealand wars, which deconstructed the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict by foregrounding the sophistication of Māori strategy and the depth of Māori agency. Belich’s
work, of course, highlighted Pākehā racism, and by the mid-1980s this was an abiding concern of revisionist histories of colonialism. While land loss and its consequences were significant themes in this new work, they emphasised Pākehā racism rather than imperial strategy or colonial capitalism as the main drive wheel for the colonisation of New Zealand. Historians, inside and outside the universities, were effectively challenging Keith Sinclair’s 1971 argument about the superiority of New Zealand’s race relations. This new scepticism about the historical pattern of Māori-Pākehā relationships found increasingly fertile soil in a political terrain energised by Māori activism and the prominence of anti-racist politics in the wake of the 1981 Springbok tour. A significant element of this reassessment of the colonial past was an effort to trace the connections between race and sexuality – overthrowing the legacies of Victorian New Zealand depended on casting off its legacies of social reserve and sexual repression as well as its racism. Echoing earlier indictments of Pākehā Puritanism developed by R. M. Chapman and Bill Pearson, historians now saw missionaries and colonists as transplanting a particularly noxious mix of sexual anxiety and racism to New Zealand during the nineteenth century.

A third significant body of work began to take shape after the Treaty of Waitangi (Amendment) Act of 1985 granted the Tribunal the power to inquire retrospectively into Māori historical claims against the Crown. The place of historical work in the Tribunal has been widely dissected and debated, but here it is worth underscoring that, as it has developed, this tradition of post-colonial scholarship is particularly notable for three reasons. Firstly, it has valued Māori oral tradition and historical practices as evidence that must be assessed in adjudications on historical Crown actions: in other words, it has adopted a strategy that has consciously challenged the privileging of written documents that has frequently been at the heart of western historical practice. Secondly, this juridical history is narrowly framed as an enquiry into the actions of the Crown that contravened the Treaty. This approach has put the state at the centre of both Māori and national history, while simultaneously reframing the colonial state through the abstract formulation of the Crown. Thirdly, the Tribunal has played a part in the shaping of a new discourse on the ‘principles of the Treaty’ and these have subsequently fed back into the historical scholarship of the Tribunal. This has created a kind of interpretive feedback loop where past actions are adjudged by an idealised late twentieth-century codification of a set of rather messy texts and negotiations concluded at a variety of sites in 1840. Suffice it to say that even as principles provide a valuable blueprint for organising relationships between the state and iwi Māori (tribal communities) today, they fail to illuminate the realpolitik of empire-building where treaties functioned as important instruments to legitimise imperial intrusion and to lever open new lands and resources.
The final substantial cluster of research that can be thought of as constituting post-colonial historical writing in New Zealand is a body of work largely produced by university-based historians on ‘cultural colonisation’. This scholarly tradition is closest to the post-colonialism that developed out of the work of Edward Said on the place of textual representation in empire-building and identity formation. In the New Zealand context, this work has focused on the ways in which colonisation rested on assertions of cultural superiority, the appropriation of Māori culture and the control of landscape, flora, and fauna. While this approach has been particularly developed through Michael Reilly’s work on colonial collectors, Giselle Byrnes’s studies of surveying and toponyms, and Chris Hilliard’s work on the colonial culture of writing, it was Peter Gibbons who played a key role in establishing this way of seeing the past. In an arc of articles across two decades, Gibbons forwarded two key arguments as I showed in Chapter Twelve. First, he suggested that colonisation was not a chronologically demarcated process that ended at some point around 1900. Instead, Gibbons stressed that colonisation was an ongoing process that continues to shape the nation-building process until today. Secondly, Gibbons drew new attention to the manifold and strong connections between cultural production and the processes of colonisation. He suggested that colonisation could be understood as a sequence of processes, where exploration, invasion, occupation, appropriation, and nation-building depended on the creation of cultural asymmetries as well as political and economic inequalities. In other words, Gibbons reimagined colonialism as a cultural project, where power rested in the point of the pen as well as the end of a musket, and in this view, books, maps, and museums were as much instruments of domination as courts and prisons.

Taken collectively, these four traditions of post-colonial writing have transformed our understandings of the colonial past here in New Zealand. In sum, they have all suggested that colonial domination was a cultural as well as a political project and, as such, they have tended to offer cultural explanations of colonisation. In fact, all of these traditions have placed ‘race’ – culturally understood – at the heart of their interpretations of colonialism. There has been some interest in the intersections between race and gender – as well as a small body of work on the ways in which race and religion intersected in the nineteenth century – but generally, race has been privileged while other markers of difference, especially class, have been pushed aside. All too often this new scholarship has been framed around an essentialised and undifferentiated opposition between Māori and Pākehā, underplaying, ironing out or simply ignoring the complex fissures on either side of the racial divide, as well as occluding those groups who simply do not fit into this neat dichotomy.

These approaches to the past have also produced one other consequence: they have all consolidated the primacy of the nation as the key unit of analysis.
Treaty-focused historiography has framed the period following 1840 around iwi-state relationships. Of course this reflects the vital role that the Tribunal has played in the nation’s political economy, functioning as an outlet through which the state can manage the historical grievances of Māori iwi. But the sheer weight of this research, which is frequently ordered around a narrative of resource loss, means that we know comparatively little about the broader functioning of Māori economic life, even though recent work by Hazel Petrie and Michael Stevens offer some significant insights. But it has not only been in the Tribunal historiography where the nation state has assumed centre stage in our historiography of colonialism. Even though the critical revisionist work of the 1970s and 1980s challenged the optimistic tone of the established tradition of national history, it cemented rather than questioned analytical primacy of the nation. In fact, this work can be read as reaching towards a kind of decolonised vision of national history where the primacy attached to Britain in both the imperial history tradition and in early Anglocentric writings of historians of New Zealand like Condliffe and Morrell were fully and finally rejected. Ironically this meant that J. G. A. Pocock’s call for thinking about New Zealand as part of an extended archipelagic British history – first articulated in Christchurch in 1973 – was made at the very moment when New Zealand historians turned their backs on both Britain and the empire.

In a similar vein, scholars who have explored the dynamics of the cultural colonisation have been preoccupied with the colonial past as the foundation of the modern bicultural nation. This narrative framing has tended to abstract the colony from its broader imperial contexts and from its significant connections to Australia, the Pacific, Asia and the Americas. In fact, what really occurred within academic historiography in the 1970s and 1980s was an inward turn. The authority of national history quarantined New Zealand research on colonialism from some key international debates. For example, there was no engagement by New Zealand historians with the influential ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ thesis of empire-building developed by Peter Cain and Tony Hopkins in the late 1980s and 1990s. Only recently has this inwardness begun to be prized open. In addition to some of the essays in the *New Oxford History of New Zealand* (such as those by David Capie and Damon Salesa), a cluster of writings on the connections between Asia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century, and Lyndon Fraser’s and Angela McCarthy’s work on Celtic migration have begun to provide a skeletal frame for our understanding of New Zealand’s place in the nineteenth-century world.

At the same time, while research on local and regional history has continued to be strong, it generally lacks the authority of texts that address national questions. A great deal of popular historical writing is local history, but frequently this lacks an analytical edge. Of course, there have been some very rich academic studies of local social formations, including Erik Olssen’s work on Caversham and Rollo
Arnold’s work on Kaponga. The tendency has been, however, to read these local studies as microcosms of the nation and their representativeness has been subject to strong debate. Most importantly, Miles Fairburn has repeatedly asserted that the social history of colonial New Zealand should be grounded in the nation as an analytical unit. This position prioritises the nation over the actual site of research: it means that Erik Olssen’s studies of Caversham, Caroline Daley’s social history of Taradale, or my own recent work on Gore is only significant when it can illuminate the ‘national pattern’.

Miles Fairburn, author of *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* (1989), was critical of the calls for a more disaggregated approach to colonial social history, made by historians such as Raewyn Dalziel and Clyde Griffen in response to his book. Fairburn argued that it really was the national pattern that mattered and that there was little substantial regional variation throughout the colony. In an essay he co-wrote with Stephen Haslett, Fairburn used a limited body of quantitative data to argue that there was nothing unique about Wellington’s social pattern – it replicated the broader New Zealand patterns and these patterns had the same causes. The idea of ‘considerable regional variations’, Fairburn and Haslett contended, was an ‘untenable historiographic convention’. Since then, it is notable that the questions of the national versus the local have not deeply concerned New Zealand historians, certainly not in the way in which questions of race, gender, or national identity have attracted critical interest. While there have been some excellent pieces focused on specific localities – such as Caroline Daley’s work on Taradale or Pamela Wood’s study of hygiene in colonial Dunedin – these have rarely kindled a debate on questions of place or space in New Zealand history (which is not so surprising in Wood’s case, as she explicitly offered Dunedin as a microcosm of New Zealand). Most importantly, these kinds of local studies become readily assimilated into a national history, regardless of the author’s intentions. Other historians tend to use such localised studies in a fairly unreflective manner to make generalisations about an aggregated New Zealand, or they are regarded as a brief backdrop to the emergence of a coherent national identity, the main plot line of the drama of national and frequently nationalistic histories.

In the remainder of this chapter some ways to press against the ascendancy of an aggregated and naturalised national history will be explored. An important starting point for this is an insistence on the fundamentally constructed and artificial nature of ‘New Zealand’. It is true that some historians already gesture towards this. Peter Gibbons has been the most forceful when he noted in 2003 that New Zealand was and is ‘a discursive construction, a shorthand device for referring to a multiplicity of places, peoples, products, practices and histories’. Yet the nation state has frequently been deployed anachronistically. At one level the uncritical use of ‘New Zealand’ has persisted because of a lack of other easy options: there are stylistic and analytical difficulties with other potential ways of
framing the story of the nation built in this particular South Pacific archipelago. However, the primacy attached to the nation in the post-World War II period has reflected the desire of successive generations of New Zealand historians to make the past speak to our political and cultural present. They have been preoccupied with the ‘search for national identity’ and sought to reconstruct how the processes of ‘making peoples’ produced racial identities, at least those of Māori and Pākehā.28

This deep concern with the lineages of our contemporary identities has privileged the nation. Historians tend to use ‘New Zealand’ unproblematically, neglecting the ways in which this unit has shifted, been made and remade. The nation state’s consolidation was and is dependent on projecting and actualising a nation space. This was driven forward by the state as various government officials, agencies, and departments produced a sophisticated apparatus of maps, atlases and charts that documented the geography of the nation and presented it as a coherent and clearly defined unit. This project was reinforced by the state’s creation of a symbolic repertoire including currency, stamps, a coat of arms, a flag and a national anthem. This was a messy and frequently ad hoc process, where developing international conventions, intercolonial exchanges, local popular initiatives, and the continued weight of British initiative and opinion were strong. Once fixed upon, these were not simply empty symbols, but articulations of state power – power that was exercised through legislation and the operation of the legal system. The New Zealand Gazette and the printing of various proclamations were central instruments for the state to articulate its policies and power to the public. These laws, of course, asserted the paramountcy of the state and its monopoly on the deployment of coercive power. They were also designed to regularise the function of the political process and to standardise the operation of the market and key social institutions like schools, hospitals and prisons, as well as producing a standardised national time.

Perhaps because there has been relatively little work on the culture of the state, historians have tended to treat the actual geographical unit of New Zealand as a given. This was certainly the case in the Frontier of Dreams television series and its companion volume, a large format national history. While the first chapter opened by cautiously referring to the ‘land we call New Zealand’, the remainder of that chapter and the volume as a whole deploys ‘New Zealand’ unproblematically, using it as a designation for the fragments of land that sheared off Gondwanaland around 200 million years ago. This created a tension between a geological and geographic narrative that emphasises dynamism and the anachronistically stabilising use of the modern term for these islands.29 Of course, how the appellation ‘New Zealand’ was attached to these islands and became the commonly used term – at least in Europe – is a long and complex story that involves Dutch, French, and British exploration, cartography, and
imperial intrusion. Ultimately the name ‘New Zealand’ became authoritative in a European context because of its constant reiteration in print culture and on cartographic artefacts like maps, atlases and globes. It was given real political shape with Lieutenant-Governor Hobson’s proclamation of British sovereignty over ‘the Southern Islands of New Zealand commonly called the “Middle Island,” and “Stewart’s Island”, and the Island, commonly called “the Northern Island”’ on 19 June 1840.30

Hobson’s proclamation and the maps of the early nineteenth century remind us that what made up New Zealand was not necessarily self-evident. In many of these maps the Chatham Islands do not feature. Of course, when they were ‘discovered’ in 1791 by the Vancouver Expedition and claimed for Great Britain, they were not imagined as part of ‘New Zealand’ at all. It was through a ramshackle sequence of imperial statutes and colonial legislation that various off-shore islands – from the Chathams to the Three Kings, from the Kermadecs to the subantarctic islands – were incorporated into the political territory of New Zealand.31 Thus the nation space is the product of complex legal processes that have frequently reshaped the spatial and legal boundaries of the nation. Indeed, the legal scholars Marston and Skegg have noted that New Zealand’s Parliament has tended to ‘define the spatial ambit of New Zealand in different ways in order to fit the purpose of a particular piece of legislation’.32 Even in our contemporary moment, the geographic boundaries of New Zealand are not necessarily fixed or stable: it was as recent as 2008 that the United Nations Commission for the Limits of the Continental Shelf confirmed New Zealand’s sovereign rights to 1.7m square kilometres beyond the 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone.33

As this brief discussion suggests, New Zealand can be understood as both an artefact of the cultures of European empire-building and a territorialised legal entity that was the product of a complex set of imperial, international, and national statues and laws. As Matthew Henry has shown, by the early twentieth century the nation’s borders were selectively reinforced and reinscribed through immigration law and the operation of a passport and permit system, a system that itself was part of the growing international regulation of human mobility by states and a mechanism that was central to the production of citizenship across the globe.34 Henry’s arguments about how borders were imagined and policed could be a useful starting point for a deeper historical account of the constitution of national boundaries post-1840. Key studies by Radhika Mongia, Craig Robertson, and Adam McKeown of the technologies and routines of governance that instituted global borders and sharpened definitions of territorial sovereignty could also energise work on the legal production and reproduction of the nation space.35

Thinking about the regulation of human movement is a reminder that nations were given shape by communication and transportation networks. These fashioned
the pathways that regularised human movement within the nation, as they connected distinctive regions into larger systems of mobility and exchange, and enabled the consolidation of national markets and information flows. In the New Zealand context, communication technologies and transportation networks were fundamental to the assertion and operation of state power and the consolidation of the nation space. Colonial development proceeded from the scattered coastal settlements that developed around whaling stations, missionary communities, timber-processing sites, and pioneering merchants. Even with the progress of systematic colonisation along Wakefieldian lines in the 1840s and 1850s, colonial New Zealand was an essentially littoral society in 1860: all major settlements had direct access to the ocean and the sea was the highway that connected these outposts. Ports were the key clearing houses for imports, exports and inter-regional trade. They were transit points for migrants and maritime workers, key sites for information exchange and the heartbeat of the colonial economy. The sea connected each of the key centres of colonisation with their hinterlands and Australia, Britain, and beyond. Given the continued dominance of sail power and the vagaries of a temperate maritime climate, travel often remained slow and services irregular into the 1880s. Ultimately, it was the development of the networks on the land that enabled more extensive colonisation and the filling out of the nation space. The construction of bridges and the growth of road, rail and telegraphic networks were central in connecting up the coastal enclaves that constituted the initial bridgeheads of British colonisation. Roading developed slowly given the scattered nature of settlement, the challenges posed by extensive river networks and the cost of road building and the provision of ferries, fords, and bridges. Even though coastal shipping provided key connections for the colonial economy around 1880, roads and railways were powerful agents for ‘opening up’ the interior, allowing colonists to extend the pastoral frontier and access valued resources, especially timber, in inland districts.

Of course, railway construction was particularly important in the expansion of state power and the consolidation of the nation space. Rail enabled much faster travel, services ran regularly, and the pulling power of steam locomotives meant that larger loads of passengers, materials, and commodities could be moved swiftly between significant urban centres within the nation. It was not coincidental that Julius Vogel drove forward the massive state-sponsored public works projects of the 1870s and was the architect of the abolition of provincial governments in 1876. But even as these transitions certainly invested new power and authority in the central government, such expanding networks were not all encompassing and the gaps and fragilities of these networks had material and cultural outcomes. The difficult coastline and slow extension of road and rail networks meant that the Catlins, for example, were relatively isolated and colonists in the district repeatedly stressed the underdevelopment that resulted
from this lack of infrastructure. From further north, Nelson lost its status as a key colonial port, swiftly eclipsed by Lyttleton and Port Chalmers, and remained relatively isolated because of the underdevelopment of its overland connections. The weakness of such connections had real political consequences. Hawke’s Bay separated from Wellington in 1858, and in 1869 Marlborough ceded from Nelson: in both cases, these political ruptures were at least in part the consequence of the poor transportation linkages and divergent visions of the importance of infrastructure in local development. Connections to the outlying islands were dependent on the weather and irregular shipping timetables, and remained very patchy well into the twentieth century. In comparative terms, linkages to New Zealand’s new colonies in the Pacific were more regular and efficient, but taken collectively the sinews linking these outlying islands and colonial holdings to the North and South Islands were thin and loose at the start of World War I. These connections were not subject to the ‘time-space convergence’ produced by the telegraph, railways, and steamships that Eric Pawson has suggested were central in the consolidation of ‘New Zealand’ as a political and cultural space between 1880 and 1940.

Gibbons was correct, of course, to note that ‘New Zealand’ might be a useful ‘shorthand device’, but we must be careful not to overestimate the speed or extent of its consolidation, or simply equate it with the North, South and Stewart Islands. The other danger with historians’ uncritical use of ‘New Zealand’ as a primary analytical unit or site of argument is that it is an imaginative abstraction. Treating the nation as the default level of analysis moves scholarly focus away from the specific places where people have lived and built their homes and the very particular locations where the consequences of state policy or circuits of mobility have played out. Ultimately, the uncritical deployment of ‘New Zealand’ as an analytical device can blind historians to the ways in which the processes of colonisation and intercolonial exchanges naturalised the nation.

From 1769, New Zealand has developed within a context of the growing emergence of the nation state as a key structure to govern economic and political life at a global level. But this was not a quick or easy triumph: many scholars have demonstrated the profoundly uneven development of modern nation states across the globe. This was a story, of course, that was entangled with the struggles inherent in empire-building and colonialism. Judith Binney’s recent work on Te Urewera is a powerful reminder of some of the long-term consequences of the struggle to secure state sovereignty in the face of opposition from social and political orders established long before the onset of colonialism. So while Caroline Daley’s assertion that ‘New Zealand was born modern’ should stimulate new debate over the nature of colonial cultural sensibilities, we must not think New Zealand was born complete or fully formed in 1840.

One strategy for reassessing the consolidation of the nation state is offered
by the important arguments sketched by W. H. Oliver and Jane Thomson in the early 1970s. In their work on the East Coast they suggested a gradual and uneven ‘nationalisation of provincial life’ unfolded from the 1890s, where the isolation and particularities of the Gisborne region were slowly eroded by the growing significance of the state and the stronger pull of national politics.\(^{46}\) This was an important argument that recognised the real depth and weight of intra-regional connections and regional affiliations of various kinds, while simultaneously recognising how the growth of state capacity built new connections between the citizenry and the machinery of governance. But this line of analysis – which would have been grounded in a careful consideration of the interfaces between local, regional and national markets, the integrative work of communication and transportation networks, the growing significance of national media, and the intersections between local and national politics – has not been pursued with any commitment by New Zealand historians. In the 1970s and 1980s, historians were increasingly preoccupied with thinking about the nation through the lens of identity, rather than thinking carefully about its structural moorings or the social processes that the nation was produced from. Oliver and Thomson’s argument might provide a useful starting point for future work committed to exploring the uneven development of national structures and for evaluating the persistence of regional and local traditions that are not easily assimilated into the national imaginary.

The previous chapter suggested another way in which historians might denaturalise the nation and challenge the priority of national histories: it stressed the importance of thinking under the nation and taking place seriously.\(^ {47}\) The turn towards cultural analysis in humanities scholarship has frequently emphasised community and the production of imagined collectives including race and nation, a shift that has frequently occluded the specificities of geography, producing what the geographer John A. Agnew has identified as a broad ‘devaluation of place’ in scholarly analysis.\(^ {48}\) At the same time, the primacy of textual criticism and questions of cross-cultural representation in academic history writing has tended to produce readings of the colonial past that underplay the importance of locality and its broad cultural significance. Of course, as Gavin McLean has recently observed, there has been a long established and enduring tradition of writing local histories, a tradition that tends to be underestimated by university-based historians.\(^ {49}\) It is certainly true that much of this tradition is convention-bound and provides a shallow sense of the broader contexts that influenced local development, but these works have engaged readers because they offer a rendering of the past that is accessible, and that conveys a connectedness to place, a sense that readers typically share with the author.
Local histories often invoke an image of a fixed and stable closed place, defined by a strong sense of distinctiveness and community. They stress the development of local institutions and celebrate the contributions of founders, pioneers, and heroes. Often written by and for a certain social grouping that has been prominent in the place’s historical development and social life, they stress a coherent identity. Conventional local history narratives place a heavy emphasis on institutional development, narrating the foundation and growth of institutions and organisations: schools, churches, libraries, museums and athenaeums, lodges of various kinds, sports clubs, literary societies, and various voluntary organisations. Framing local history as the development of local institutions, however, produces a picture of the locality that tends to emphasise stability and fixity, especially once towns reach a certain level of maturity. But such an image is fundamentally misleading, producing a partial image of life in the locality and encouraging a vision of the past that is enclosed, self-contained, and coherent.

While places are unique, their character and the sense of place that inhabitants have are rarely as seamless as local historians would have us believe. Those who settled or moved through a location developed a range of divergent relationships to place. Chapter Thirteen hinted at this, highlighting the centrality of conflict in shaping community life in Gore during the 1880s and 1890s, and the ways in which members of the Salvation Army or residents of Chinese origin had at best an angular relationship to the population of the town as a whole, its buildings and institutions. Charting these kinds of divergent positionings in the processes of community formation allows historians to explore how communities emerged out of social conflict and also underscores the value of histories that are committed to recovering the distinctive perspectives possessed by specific groups.

Critical work in geography offers a counter-narrative to this kind of popular writing about the local. Places are not simply fixed on a map inhabited by a unique, singular and stable community. As Doreen Massey has argued, places are not defined by some distinctive history internal to itself, but are ‘constructed at a particular constellation of social relations meeting and veering together at a particular locus’. In other words, each place is unique as a result of its particular topography and demography and also because it sits at a specific point where a unique set of networks, movements, and exchanges intersect. Places are constantly being remade by the work and changing shape of these convergences. This kind of vision is a useful way of progressing Felix Driver and Raphael Samuel’s call to re-vision what local history might be, as they posed the question: ‘Can we write local histories which acknowledge that places are not so much singular points as constellations, the product of all sorts of social relations which cut across particular locations in a multiplicity of ways?’
We might return to Gore as a case study to tease out the possibility of such perspectives. The strong tradition of local and regional history relating to Gore emphasises the development of local institutions and the important contributions that pioneers, founding families, and local notables made to the development of the town. One of the things missing from these works is the constant swirl of people and things moving in and out of a place. These connections and movements actually made places. Gore demonstrates this clearly. Although the Southland Provincial Council, going back to at least 1862, had plans to create a town near the ‘Long Ford’ over the Mataura river, Gore only emerged as a substantial settlement as the result of the construction of new transport networks in the 1870s. A small number of colonists had settled the area in the late 1850s, led by the pastoralists Alexander McNab and Peter McKellar. The discovery of gold in the Waikaka and Nokomai rivers in 1862 increased the significance of the river crossing and the associated settlement, which became a staging point for miners travelling west. At the same time, an accommodation house and ferry service was established by Daniel Morton and in the following year Cobb and Co. set up stables in the town to serve its expanding services, linking both Invercargill and Dunedin to the goldfields. As the traffic of prospectors declined in the mid-1860s, the fledgling settlement diminished: in fact, between 1865 and 1874 Gore primarily existed as a transit point on the Invercargill to Dunedin postal route.

It was the expansion of the railway northwards from Invercargill in 1875 that gave rise to Gore as a permanent settlement. In real terms, Gore was the direct product of this rail connection and in this regard it echoes the small North Island towns that sprang up around the construction of the main trunk line, explored in an early article by Peter Gibbons. After the arrival of crews working on the railway, small stores, hotels, lodging houses and entrepreneurs offering services settled in Gore. The businesses built by these colonists ensured that Gore became an important stopping point on the Invercargill–Dunedin line and by the end of the 1870s it had emerged as the key service centre in eastern Southland. The regularity of the Dunedin–Invercargill service meant that mail to and from these main points north and south moved in and out of Gore three times a day. These rail networks ensured that communities to the north and east, like Waikaka, Pukerau, Clinton, Kelso, and Waipahi, and Edendale and Wyndham to the south, viewed Gore as their primary commercial and service centre. Another important set of linkages ran out west to the ‘Elbow’ (near Lumsden), which enjoyed a daily mail service from Gore. Roads and rail lines linked Mandeville, Riversdale, Balfour, Waikaia and Lumsden into Gore’s western orbit. As the junction point for these networks Gore became larger and more significant in the economic and cultural landscape; its population expanded five-fold between 1885 and 1905, when it reached 3,500.
With this growth, the town offered an array of services and developed capacity for small-scale processing and manufacturing. By the middle of the 1890s it boasted several hotels, a good range of shops (including bakers, butchers, bookshops, chemists, and draperies), legal and banking facilities, and also a wide variety of skilled tradesmen including blacksmiths, bootmakers, watchmakers, saddlers, coachbuilders, printers, a sail maker, and cordial manufacturers. Each of these enterprises drew materials, workers and customers from the rail and road connections that converged on the town and in turn used these routes to distribute their goods. The money, things, and the news their workers and customers carried with them pulsed in and out of the town on a daily basis. These flows were the lifeblood of local institutions and associations. But while clubs and societies were central to the development of intellectual life and civic culture in the district, in the 1880s and 1890s they were not stable. The movement of young men within and beyond the district meant that there was a high turnover of membership and that institutional life tended to develop around a few key families who were firmly rooted in the district and committed to fostering associational culture.

In New Zealand, our existing historical scholarship underplays the significance of these communication structures and patterns of movement. Local histories tend to see transport and communication as simply elements of the internal development of a particular settlement, while national histories tend to treat them as forces simply connecting places. Historians must place greater importance on the role of transport and communications in dictating the contours of the colonial economy, in shaping the rhythms and routines of colonial cultural life, and in shaping the specific social formations that emerged in each locale and district. Places like Gore, or Greymouth or Greytown for that matter, were produced out of the confluence of trajectories and pathways where people become entangled in the dense and fluid webs of social relations that take shape in a very real material environment, a landscape that itself influenced the nature and timing of institutional development and the broader patterns of economic activity and cultural practice.

Therefore, we might think of places as knot-like conjunctures where the ceaseless small-scale mobilities of life in a location interlocked into the more extensive networks that enabled the regular movement of people, things, and words. The shape of the knots shifted – as new networks developed, old linkages declined, and the relative significance of various connections oscillated – they changed, they were dependent on time. In this view, places are not the static, local antithesis of an inherently mobile imperial system or global network. They are, to an extent, always global because they are a product of their intersection with long-distance networks created by empires and other transnational complexes. Massey suggests that through the work of connections and mobility, places are constantly made and remade, shaped and reshaped, they are ‘moments in
If anyone should think that this is an obtuse formulation, then they might think through the events in Otago in June and July 1861. The massive inundation of miners attracted by news of payable gold fundamentally transformed the Otago colony: in 1858 fewer than 1,800 colonists lived in Otago, but by end of the 1860s more than 15,000 lived in Dunedin alone. This surge of population drove colonisation west beyond the Taieri, for it was gold that finally dragged the colonists into the largely ‘unknown’ interior. The arrival of these miners propelled Dunedin’s commercial and civic development and they gave rise to significant networks that firmly linked southern New Zealand to the Australian colonies, primarily Victoria, and Guangdong in China, after 1865.

Historians mainly access these flows of people through various written sources. Archives – colonial newspapers, pamphlets, diaries and letters – give us fleeting glimpses of particular moments and vectors of movement. But colonial sources can be actively reread through the lens of mobility and circulation, rather than reducing individual sources to being a kind of metonym: where a particular source is simply equated with its place of production. The Mataura Ensign or the Southern Standard, for example, can be mined for information on the local institutions and politics in Gore, but a careful reading of these papers with a more flexible understanding of place produces an awareness of the constant movement of people, things, and goods. Massey’s argument – that places were produced by the intersection of the trajectories of various groups across the landscape – accords with newspapers that reported on the movement of shearing gangs and itinerant rural workers, followed touring lecturers and showmen, informed readers of visiting professionals of various types from surgeon dentists to clairvoyants, phrenologists to midwives, and dissected the sequences of public speeches across the district that were a stock in trade of political candidates.

Reconstructing these trajectories or following the path of one or more of these mobile people is an obvious strategy if we want to know more about how this kind of cultural traffic worked and what its effects were.

Newspapers brought the world to the district. They carried stories of local people who travelled within the empire and beyond, but they were also replete with international news that was of general interest to local readers and that was also directly relevant to heated local debates over issues like women’s suffrage or the public standing of the Salvation Army. In fact, both the Southern Standard and the Mataura Ensign record the unending to-ing and fro-ing of local life: people coming to town for livestock markets and auctions; travelling for balls, dances and soirees; groups of people gathering for sports matches, clan gatherings and the meetings of lodges; audiences congregating for lectures, lantern slide shows, recitations and debates; individuals and families travelling to see circuses, exhibitions, agricultural shows, and public displays; and groups of colonists setting out on picnics and excursions of various types. The advertisement column – the
The key to the financial success of any colonial paper – perhaps provides the strongest and most consistent record of the unceasing motion that made the economic and social life of the district. Advertisements for lost dogs, wandering livestock, and missing friends, as well as the lists of imported seeds that drove forward the ecological transformation of the district and the imported wares of the local tea merchants, outfitters, drapers, and millineries, capture the movements, large and small, that were the stuff of daily life. In a similar way diaries such as that produced by a young Herries Beattie in Gore in the mid-1890s, or the journals of Mary Cranstoun of Edendale, record the exchange of news, books, and labour between families in the district, give hints at patterns of cultural consumption, as well as documenting travels across Southland and beyond.

Placing these complex patterns of mobility and circulation under sustained scrutiny might produce some very productive reassessments of the past. Here we have to fight against one key concept that frames our understandings of the colonial past. We typically talk and write of ‘settlers’ rather than colonists; yet the Anglo-Celtic colonists of New Zealand were anything but settled. They were highly mobile individuals who travelled great distances within an empire that had fashioned a truly global network of transport routes. Many colonists remained mobile after they arrived in New Zealand and the circulation of people, money, goods, and news was the lifeblood of colonial life.

One starting point for thinking through circulation is Damon Salesa’s argument that colonialism in the Pacific reshaped and redirected the ‘circuitry’ of mobility and social relations within Pacific communities. Salesa argues that Samoan patterns of exchange and mobility were dynamic long before contact with intruding European powers and that Samoans, like other Pacific peoples, actively continued to shape their patterns of movement even as they moved through colonial circuits in the early twentieth century. In the New Zealand case, we can also see how cross-cultural contact and colonisation reshaped established Māori patterns of movement and slowly created a new circuitry on the land and along the coasts. Although many images of ‘traditional’ Māori society stress its deeply grounded nature – as identity was tied to specific awa (rivers), maunga (mountains), and rohe (boundaries) – movement was in fact a key aspect of the lifeways of whānau (family), hapū (subtribe) and iwi (tribe) before Captain James Cook’s arrival. Whānau and sometimes hapū and iwi did travel long distances: people travelled to visit kin, to harvest and exchange particular foodstuffs, and to wage war. Some iwi – or at least iwi in the making – migrated long distances. For example, key groups of Ngāi Tahu embarked on a long sequence of movement from their original homeland on the east coast of Te Ika a Maui that took them to Heretaunga, before pushing into Te Wai Pounamu in the early eighteenth century. The assertion of Ngāi Tahu dominance in the south was a long and complex process involving further migration, war and intermarriage with Ngāti
Māmoe (who had also migrated south from Te Ika a Maui) and Waitaha. As Ngāi Tahu Whānui (the broad family of Ngāi Tahu) emerged out of this process, they fashioned a socio-economic system that was dependent on mobility and exchange: they fashioned complex circuits across the landscape, down the rivers and along the coasts, allowing them to exploit the riches from a host of mahika kai (food workings) sites.66

The intrusion of imperial agents from 1769 and the formal colonisation in 1840 were powerful forces that helped reorganise patterns of movement and the dynamics of community formation in the Māori world. The period between the mid-1810s and 1840 witnessed an intensification and stretching of Māori patterns of mobility. There was significant movement as many Māori communities attempted to gain access to new crops, animals, tools and weapons from the sites where Europeans traded, such as Tamaki, Kawhia, Kororareka, Mahia, Kapiti and Otakou. These engagements were important catalysts for a new sequence of military campaigns, migrations, and settlements. The recently consolidated Ngāpuhi iwi, which enjoyed a significant military advantage thanks to their precocious adoption of muskets, launched a sequence of devastating raids to the East Cape, Auckland, Coromandel, and Rotorua between 1819 and 1823. Ngāti Toa were also at the heart of the ensuing transformations. After a decisive defeat at the hands of Waikato and Maniapoto, Ngāti Toa migrated from their tribal home around Kawhia to the Kapiti region in 1821–22. After asserting their authority over the region in the wake of the battle at Waiorua in 1824, Ngāti Toa then launched a sequence of long distance raids into the South Island from 1831. And four years later, Ngāti Mutunga and Ngāti Tama, displaced from northern Taranaki, travelled to the Chatham Islands, enslaving, killing and asserting their dominance over the Moriori people. These campaigns, migrations and displacements rewrote the demographic and political map of Te Ika a Maui, Te Wai Pounamu and Rekohu.

Where contact with agents working at the frontiers of the British Empire before 1840 encouraged substantial movement and migration, the consolidation of British rule reduced Māori mobility and calcified takiwa (tribal domain) and rohe (boundaries). Patterns of movement and migration began to stabilise around 1840. This was not simply because, as Dorothy Urlich suggested, an ‘equilibrium’ had been reached in the Māori system of warfare, but because colonisation and the assertion of British sovereignty began to quickly reshape the circuitry of the islands.67 Under colonial rule tribal boundaries that had only taken shape in the previous couple of decades were now seen as durable and ‘traditional’. Moreover, systematic colonisation closed off some possibilities for moving across the landscape and created a new geography of roads, markets, towns and ports that Māori swiftly adjusted to. These increasingly provided a material matrix that shaped the socio-economic position of hapū, a highly influential set of circuits.
that defined the prospects of communities even as they defined themselves in relationship to awa (rivers) and maunga (mountains).

Thinking through circulation illuminates the transformation of the Māori world as colonisation progressed, but it also encourages historians to think in a more sustained manner about the relationship between colonisation and capitalism. Recent New Zealand historiography has understood colonisation through a very narrow, albeit extremely important, economic lens: that of Māori land loss. But, as Peter Gibbons has suggested, it is time to think much more broadly about how international trade networks, imperial markets, and intercolonial networks shaped the development of this particular colonial economy.68 There is clearly a great deal of scope here for new quantitative work about patterns of production, consumption and distribution, but there is also a pressing need to explore the cultural dynamics of markets and the meanings of consumption. The work of Frances Steel and Felicity Barnes on the role of commodity exports in shaping visions of New Zealand is an important start here.69 Their work, like James Belich’s recolonisation thesis, has primarily illuminated New Zealand’s relationship to Britain. However, the significance of other interconnections remains unexplored, although there have been some exploratory assessments of the significance of commercial linkages to India and China.70 New Zealand’s colonial development was significantly conditioned by the ‘open economy’ that took shape in Britain between 1750 and 1850, an economy that, as Joel Mokyr has shown, was grounded in the democratisation and diversification of consumption and the great value attached to news, information and knowledge.71 Colonies like New Zealand were heirs to these traditions as well as significant markets for the outputs of British innovation.

The broader culture of colonial capitalism certainly requires further imaginative historical analysis. The development of banking institutions, bookkeeping practices, cultures of consumption, the profile of key professions and ideas about work and the market all require sustained analysis if we are to understand the depth of the transformations wrought by colonisation and the processes through which these islands were incorporated into the developing global capitalist order.72 Thinking through economic practices is crucial because it will enable some important institutional structures and economic routines to be seen as foundational to the development of the colony as a whole, rather than seeing them as technical or arcane elements of business history. A commitment to rematerialising the linkages between colonialism and capitalism is necessary to avoid the crippling line of argument developed by Nicholas Dirks. This approach treats colonialism as simply a cultural formation that floats free of the exigencies of capitalism, underplaying the significant conjunctures between local forces and imperial impulses in shaping colonial societies.73 A failure to recognise the centrality of capitalism in moulding empire-building and colonial cultures has made it hard for
post-colonial critics to countenance the highly uneven economic consequences of imperialism or even explain why colonialism occurred in the first place.74

There are real analytical benefits if historians put questions related to mobility and circulation at the heart of our work on the culture of colonisation. Miles Fairburn’s concern with transience as a key structural condition for the creation of an atomised society remains a paradigm-shifting contribution to our historiography. Yet his work only captured part of the social problem and the accompanying analytical challenge for historians of nineteenth-century New Zealand. Colonies were part of empires, which were extended and highly uneven systems of appropriation, circulation and exchange. Empires depended upon their ability to move capital, commodities, soldiers, colonists, merchants, and information across space – circulation was their lifeblood and mobility was a key condition for their very existence. In the colonies, local community leaders and politicians who invested in building New Zealand as a productive and settled colony had to grapple with the challenge of building enduring communities out of this vortex of movement. Too often the anxious politics of the 1880s and 1890s has been seen simply through the lens of race – in anti-Chinese agitation – or class – the persistent anxieties attached to ‘swagmen’.75 The deep challenge that faced the project of nation-building was the need to secure the stability and naturalness of the nation in the face of the persistence of local and provincial loyalties as well as the challenges posed by an age of restless mobility. The architects of the nation state had to create a stable society despite the extension and acceleration of movement, both within and across the nation. Nation-building coincided with an age of massive migration, out of Western Europe but also out of India and China, and it proceeded hand-in-hand with attempts to regulate, regularise, and filter those great flows of people.76 The divergence between the fixity or rootedness celebrated by nation-builders and the hyperactive movement that was at the heart of the economy and culture of nineteenth-century New Zealand seems like a highly productive starting point for exploring the tensions at the heart of the colonial order of things.
CONCLUSION

WRITING THE COLONIAL PAST

History as a discipline is about posing questions. Historians assess the meaning of particular sources, interrogating their provenance, meaning and significance. They use their archival work to challenge established interpretations and, often, to question broader cultural and political ideas. As these new analytical visions are disseminated through talks, essays and books, they raise questions for other scholars, feeding a cycle of reflection and debate. In keeping with those traditions of critical reflection, the essays gathered in this collection have a strong historiographical sensibility and discuss the important cultural work carried out by writing about the colonial past. Many of them have reflected on how historians work, including the ways in which they use sources, impose temporal and spatial limits on their work, and imagine the relationships between archives and the places they study. It is important to think about archives because they provide the foundation from where the richest historical thought and writing comes. Of course, archives can take many forms. Beyond traditional manuscript and printed sources they can include objects, visual materials of various kinds (including photos), oral histories and print culture artefacts. Ideally, however, these repositories should provide the grounds for historical inquiry and argument. Each of these collections will have a different texture. Their materials will have a distinct pattern of generation in time and space; they frequently will be moulded by particular and uneven concerns, meaning that they might cast much light on just one aspect of a specific question; and they may well be encoded by the particular material and political circumstances of their creation.

Thinking through the provenance, quality and significance of an archival collection underpins historical research. A historian's understanding of past actions and their key analytical categories should speak directly to what they find in the archive. However, archives impose limits on what might be said and they require historians to think carefully about gaps, silences, and contradictions. Most importantly, the complexity found in the archives should be visible in the histories we write and historians must resist the allure of the easy or the simple or the expected. For this reason, good historical writing should always challenge ideology – even those we approve of and support. Historical writing
should be attentive to complexity, whereas ideology rests on clarity, coherence, and typically imagines that ideas can remake the world in a predictable way.3

This vision of an archivally grounded history has two important consequences. Firstly, it suggests that historians should ideally develop arguments that are generated from archival research, rather than deploying ready-made ‘theoretical frameworks’ that are deployed from the work of other historians or theorists. Of course, archival work alone is generally insufficient to develop effective analysis and larger interpretative models. Historians do need to engage with a range of historiographies and relevant work in other disciplines to provide a full range of conceptual tools. Secondly, historical analysis that is grounded in the archive tends to produce a vision of the past that depends on ‘splitting’ rather than ‘lumping’. This distinction between ‘lumpers’ and ‘splitters’ – which goes back to Darwin’s reflections on the classification of species – can be useful for demarcating boundaries between different types of historical work.4 ‘Lumpers’ tend to group events, social actors or processes into large categories and see history as being driven by often dramatic relationships and encounters between small numbers of groups; conversely, ‘splitters’ tend to order evidence in a larger array of smaller and more finely variegated groupings. This strategy places more emphasis on a variety of social distinctions and produces a vision of historical change that is messier and frequently less dramatic than the clearer dynamics produced by ‘lumpers’. The dominant figures in the crafting of New Zealand’s national history tradition have been ‘lumpers’, and over the past five decades that tradition has been typically organised around the process of making two peoples, Māori and Pākehā, within the context of a search for national identity.5

The power of ‘lumping’ is best seen in James Belich’s work: his monograph on the New Zealand wars, his two-volume history of New Zealand, and his most recent volume placing New Zealand within the story of what he calls the ‘Angloworld’.6 These works share a vision that stresses the values shared by peoples of British origins and the contests and conflicts that resulted from their encounters with non-European peoples. Although Belich has a telling eye for detail, his writing primarily marshalls evidence to offer bold and clear theories that explain the past: ‘the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict’, ‘recolonisation’, and the ‘great tightening’. While these concepts identify important processes and shifts, Belich abstracts these elements from their broad, shifting and messy cultural field. Belich is a model-builder and he offers theses that are bold and powerful, but he does not grapple with contradictory evidence or nuances of cultural analysis.7

The relationship between national histories and archives is frequently one of extraction: evidence is culled from any location in order to exemplify or establish a ‘national pattern’. In part it was the nature of this dynamic that underpinned the argument at the beginning of Chapter Thirteen, that the nation has ‘colonised’
the past. Nepia Mahuika has suggested that national histories in New Zealand tend to draw from and assimilate iwi (tribal) histories without grappling with the particularities of their cultural vision or distinctive mātauranga (knowledge order). Although the relationship between iwi and New Zealand histories might have some distinctive features, this relationship is not unique. National histories rest upon the assimilation of the particular experiences of specific locations and social collectives into the larger narrative of the nation. Commonly, those stories that are not easily absorbed into that narrative are either ignored or seen as aberrant, provincial, or inconsequential.

The privileging of the national over other levels of connection and social action is most obvious in Miles Fairburn’s contention that it is national history – New Zealand history – that is the most appropriate level of analysis for the colonial past and that there were no significant variations between places and regions within the colony. This argument fails to recognise how social action in the nineteenth-century routinely operated at the local, district and provincial level, rather than at the national level as Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen demonstrate. Even as strong commonalities – which Miles Fairburn and Stephen Haslett have suggested render provinces as meaningless units of study – developed between localities and regions, historians must remain sensitive to both the persistence of these sub-national attachments and the significance of social, economic and political action that operated below and above the nation.

Fairburn has not been alone in attaching primacy to the nation. Many New Zealand historians have framed histories of these islands around a narrative of nation-making that hinges upon the ultimately progressive development of a bicultural nation out of the inequalities of a colonial order imprinted by the racial prejudice of ‘settlers’. Such an approach underplays the importance of the locality and region, dislocating New Zealand from its place within the British Empire. As a result, recent New Zealand historical writing has not examined the significance of metropolitan political influence, British capital, the persistent authority of many inherited Anglo-Celtic cultural institutions and practices, and New Zealand’s place within the wider networks that structured the empire. But the most troubling weakness – which certainly characterises my own early work as well – is the limited consideration given to the ways in which capitalism framed the transformation of these islands in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As used by New Zealand historians, ‘colonisation’ is insufficiently rooted in the history of capitalism. Of course, established frameworks for the writing of colonial and national histories see colonisation as beginning in 1840. This ‘zero point’ is certainly important in terms of understanding the development of state power and the erosion of traditional Māori authority, but it was also seven decades after New Zealand was drawn into the trade routes and markets of the British Empire. Jim McAloon’s assessment of ‘Resource Frontiers’ underplays
the weight of Asian markets and trade in shaping forms of imperial extraction in these islands to 1840, but it stands as the most significant recent work to reconstruct the impact of empire. The evidence he collates demonstrates the danger of following Belich’s contention that empire in New Zealand was a ‘myth’ until the 1860s.11 McAloon’s essay can be productively read alongside Peter Gibbons’s more recent argument that New Zealand’s nineteenth-century history could be usefully relocated in larger frames, especially commodities and the history of consumption.12 More generally, however, McAloon is an important figure because he is the only New Zealand historian who has participated in international debates over the nature and significance of imperial finance in the nineteenth century, and because he remains committed to the analytical usefulness of class for making sense of colonial society.13

This call to grapple with the development of capitalism is not to suggest that historians should abandon the study of the state. It remains important to chart its development, trace how it elaborated and consolidated its authority and to define what were the limits of its powers. Alongside its large investment in the history of New Zealand military participation in twentieth-century wars, the History Group of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage has examined the history of various government departments and some of this work could function as the basis for the elaboration of a more critical historiography of the state in New Zealand.14 Historians have not been apologists for the state in this country, but with some notable exceptions (such as Richard Hill’s monumental work on the development of policing) there has been a close relationship between the interpretive vision of historians and state-sponsored visions of the past.15

Central to this common understanding has been a stress on the fundamentally benign nature of the state and the liberal idea that New Zealand’s past can be plotted as a progressive story framed by the development of better policy. This is reflected in historians’ particular investment in the Liberals and the first Labour government, architects of the ‘social laboratory’ of the 1890s and the modern welfare state from 1935. Running alongside this has been an emphasis on the fundamentally good-hearted nature of New Zealanders, a quality that implicitly marks our national community off from other obvious comparisons, including South Africa, the United States, and Australia.16 Michael King’s powerful and popular general history embodied this kind of story. It concluded:

And most New Zealanders, whatever their cultural backgrounds, are good-hearted, practical, commonsensical and tolerant. Those qualities are part of the national cultural capital that has in the past saved the country from the worst excesses of chauvinism and racism seen in other parts of the world. They are as sound a basis as any for optimism about the country’s future.17

This vision is positive and reassuring, but it is partial. It significantly underplays
the extent of conflict and violence that shaped these islands’ histories over the past two-and-a-half centuries, underestimates the cultural rifts that continue to shape cultural and political life, and says nothing about the importance of inequality. King essentially argued that the national story was a positive progression from assimilation to biculturalism, suggesting that the innate goodness of New Zealanders, as well as the embrace of more enlightened policy in recent decades, are the foundations for a distinctive form of post-colonial rapprochement.

Historical writing has been, of course, a foundation of the Waitangi Tribunal’s ability to function as an agent of reconciliation, and has contributed significantly to the return – albeit within limited parameters – of power and resources to iwi. But even while historical scholarship has been central in these reallocations, this process has been directed by the state and has been at the heart of the state’s reinvention of itself.

Over the past three decades – through practice, legislation, and its culture-making institutions – the state has reimagined a bicultural nation built around the Treaty of Waitangi as its foundational document. Miranda Johnson has usefully described this process as the ‘re-founding of Aotearoa New Zealand’. As Johnson notes, while the Tribunal has recognised the particularity of the attachments to specific places of Māori claimants, it has operated with a clear view of the integrity of New Zealand as a nation state and has used the ideal of ‘partnership’ to simultaneously recognise Māori difference (and cultural survival) and to affirm the sovereignty of the contemporary state.

Other scholars have noted the historical difficulties that lie at the root of this enterprise. However, my concern is less the suitability of the Treaty as a blueprint for nation-building and more the relationship between historical writing and the state. The willingness of historians to work within a state-sanctioned bicultural vision of the nation’s past – producing accounts of ‘Making Peoples’ or offering genealogies of modern biculturalism – has naturalised both the nation and the contemporary state’s strategies for dealing with the violence and inequality of the colonial past. Here, of course, the operations of the Tribunal are of particular importance. In practice, its reports have not only assessed the evidence and arguments laid before it; the Tribunal has also transformed oral testimony as well as written histories produced by the historians retained by both the state and claimants. Most importantly, it has ultimately folded historical accounts grounded in mātauranga-a-iwi (tribal knowledge and epistemology), or that place Māori actors and experiences at the centre of historical narrative, into a set of reflections that are framed around a bicultural historical model.

There is no doubt that Treaty-focused narratives have enriched our understanding of certain aspects of the past, especially on the diminishing political power and economic resources of many nineteenth-century Māori communities. We must remember, however, that they illuminate only some types of connections, primarily
between iwi and the state or else between an aggregated vision of Māori and the state. So while the state’s incitement to discourse through the Tribunal has drawn a great deal of Māori historical knowledge into the public sphere, the political and intellectual power of that knowledge is itself contained. Such state-focused frameworks are limited in their ability to explore important sets of structural relationships, including those that developed between particular colonists or colonial families and specific Māori individuals and whānau (family). Equally importantly, frames that are organised either around Māori-Pākehā oppositions or iwi-state relations cannot adequately explain relationships within communities, whether we are thinking about groups of colonists or the relationships between various hapū (sub-tribes). Nor are they especially useful for understanding the links, rivalries, and exchanges between iwi. For example, the complex patterns of alignment and conflict on the east coast of the North Island during the 1860s are very difficult to map onto any simple model that understands the ‘New Zealand wars’ as a conflict between Māori and Pākehā, or a clash between the state and those iwi that resisted state power.24

As Kāi Tahu scholars Tipene O’Regan and Michael Stevens have suggested, histories of whānau, hapū and iwi need not be framed around their relationship with the state, especially after the settlement of claims to the Tribunal.25 The significance of whakapapa (genealogy) and the particular meaningfulness of key southern sites with the rohe (boundaries) of Kāi Tahu whānau shape Stevens’s work, but his accounts of changing patterns of resource use, cultural practice, and the functioning of families as both affective and economic units offers an innovative approach to iwi-based history. In his work, the state does not disappear from view, rather it is put in its place as just one of the significant forces that have shaped the opportunities and experiences of Kāi Tahu whānau of the Foveaux Strait region.26

Stevens’s work is significant because it offers a kind of perspectival history. It is firmly located in the coastal communities and waters around the southern edge of Murihiku, but at the same time traces the significant connections that have shaped the histories of those people and environments. These include precolonial linkages that were made as Ngāi Tahu Whānui took shape and the significant long distance trading connections that linked these southern people to their northern kin and other communities in Te Wai Pounamu and Te Ika a Maui.

Of course, the growing centrality of the Treaty in New Zealand political discourse and, more specifically, the historical powers invested in the Tribunal in 1985 has invested the colonial past with great legal, political and economic utility. We must recognise that the Tribunal has played a significant role in restoring some economic capacity to those iwi whose claims have been settled. Yet, as many commentators have noted, Tribunal processes are at odds with some of the key norms of historical scholarship. Most fundamentally, in the preparation
and adjudication of claims, historians operate in an adversarial context where their work speaks from a particular structural position within the process.

At the same time, as historians have negotiated their path through this adversarial system, the historical logic of the Tribunal processes – which are built around the assessment of alleged Crown breaches of Treaty texts signed in 1840 – has produced a new understanding of the relevance of history. The very nature of the Tribunal’s enquiries have encouraged a desire to seek direct causative connections between colonisation in the nineteenth century and the shape of today’s socio-economic and political inequalities.27 The tendency to identify the inequities of the colonial order as the primary determinant of contemporary economic and social disparities means insufficient attention is devoted to more recent political processes, the potency of larger macro-economic forces and the influence of everyday economic practices in the intervening period. This kind of time-folding, or what Frederick Cooper describes as interpretative ‘leap-frogging’, fails to pay close attention to the often messy and overlapping sequences of change. It certainly can produce a reading of the past that is potent because of its clarity, but can fail to identify the multiple roots of social problems.28

In Encircled Lands, Judith Binney suggested that ‘myths and stereotypes from the “days of Empire” persist, and reinvent themselves’.29 Her discussion then focused on a controversy in the early 2000s over repairs to an old logging road into Maungapohatu and Te Urewera National Park. Binney quite rightly suggested that public debate over this initiative glossed over some significant history, not least Tūhoe’s gift of land to the state in 1921 for roads that were never built. But describing these exchanges at the start of the new millennium only within the frame of colonialism is unduly constraining. Certainly it might be possible to identify some modes of thought that echoed old colonial traditions in this debate, but these exchanges must also be located within the context of recent political discourse on government fiscal responsibility, critiques of the ‘special rights’ afforded to Māori by the contemporary state, and discussions over public access to national parks.30 Of course, it is true that some local people may see this controversy primarily as a restatement of colonial prejudices, but historical work should attempt to reconstruct the nature of an event (or controversy or debate) as well as recognising the importance and cultural weight of varying perceptions of the event.

Michael Belgrave’s assessment of the research produced for the Tribunal has stressed the difficulties in establishing the precise relationships between the inequalities produced under colonial rule and the marked disparities that shape life in New Zealand today.31 In part, of course, this reflects the particular nature of the historical questions posed in the Tribunal’s process. As he notes, a fundamental limitation is ‘the understandable requirement that claims be against the Crown, since the Crown alone has the power to supply redress. The
historical imagination of both the evidence before the Tribunal and the Tribunal reports is severely constrained by this requirement.’ In effect, this means, that in terms of the Tribunal’s operation, the ‘Crown has to be found, if not all knowing and all seeing, at least all responsible’. Of course, this constraint means that the Tribunal has no power to reflect on the actions of individual colonists, the broader cultural impact of colonial capitalism and the structural difficulties that Māori communities faced as they were incorporated into a colonial state and market economy in a meaningful way.

While it is true that all historical writing must speak to the present, a basic element of any historian’s creed has to be attentiveness to the complexities and difficulties of the past. An ethical and politically engaged history has to recognise its own limits, including the fundamental challenges posed by archives and the constraints that arise from historians’ craft of synthesising and translating a complex and diverse body of source material into some sort of flowing argument or narrative. In working through archives historians are crossing time, an experience that requires careful reflection. Frequently New Zealand historians have found elements in the past that sit uneasily with their own political commitments and values. On many occasions that gulf and the nature of the historical change that produced it have not been explored: rather, the divergence between the past and the present has typically been used to affirm the progressive nature of the present. Colonial ‘racism’ and ‘prejudice’ has been used to account for the inequalities of the colonial order (when in themselves they are an insufficient explanation), but this emphasis also tends to underscore the enlightenment of contemporary Pākehā liberals. In a similar vein, polemical attacks on colonial ‘Puritanism’ have largely failed to explore the complex intersection between religious affiliation, social practices and affective regimes in the colonial past, but they have been a powerful tool for the contemporary cultural vision of nationalist intellectuals and secular liberals.

The question of historical change takes on a particular importance in the New Zealand context because of the challenge of two forms of post-colonial historical inquiry. The first of these is the tradition of work on ‘cultural colonisation’ shaped by Peter Gibbons and discussed at length in Chapter Twelve of this volume. A key characteristic of this approach has been to stress the ongoing nature of colonisation. This formulation has been both productive and problematic. It has been important because it emphasised the long-term consequences of colonial domination. In the United States many see the Revolutionary War of the 1760s to the 1780s as bringing British colonialism to an end and marking the end of the ‘colonial period’, meaning that colonialism was seen as something practised by the British and which predated the project of nation-building. And in the popular imagination that process of nation-building from the 1780s is still frequently seen to have little connection to the dynamics of colonisation and empire-building,
despite the massive erosion of both Native American and Mexican sovereignty and resources that underwrote the consolidation of the United States as a territorial unit. In New Zealand, ‘cultural colonisation’ developed as an attempt to prevent this kind of historical writing, where colonialism is quarantined in the distant past and its consequences seen as the responsibility of the British state and Britons. Rather than time-folding, which sees contemporary phenomena as the direct and unmediated consequence of nineteenth-century events and policies, cultural colonisation emphasises a continued and unbroken history of cultural appropriation and domination. Gibbons’s work was an important intellectual and political intervention because it stressed the persistence of colonisation, argued that Pākehā culture continued to be seen as normative and ascendant, and suggested that contemporary Pākehā were the heirs and beneficiaries of this state of affairs. But in stressing the ongoing nature of colonisation, this kind of argument fails to grapple with the uneven spatial, social, and temporal development of colonisation. Most importantly, as also noted in Chapter Twelve, it was largely silent about the limitations of colonialism as an explanatory framework: cultural colonisation can explain some key features of the colony’s development, but it does not explain everything. Most importantly, the shifting social and economic relations that followed the consolidation of capitalism’s global reach powerfully shaped colonial life, as Chapters Six and Eleven suggested. That unfolding capitalist economic and cultural order was shaped by the increasing consolidation of the uniformities of thought, practice and experience that Chris Bayly has identified as being at the heart of the birth of the modern world.

Recognising colonisation’s limits as an adequate explanation for all practices, processes, and transformations during the nineteenth century is important. But it is even more imperative to be wary of the ability of colonisation to explain very recent history. This is particularly the case given the constitutional changes that followed from the Statute of Westminster Adoption Act of 1947, whereby the New Zealand Parliament took up the full external autonomy offered by Britain’s Parliament in 1931. This curtailed the ability of the British Parliament to legislate for the dominion. Moreover, colonisation is hardly an appropriate framework for understanding New Zealand after its economy, state and external relations were reordered in the wake of Britain’s entry into the EEC in 1973. The importance of such political and economic relationships reminds us that colonisation was grounded in the domination of Māori and the alienation of their resources by ‘settlers’, but at the same time it was also preconditioned on the structural economic and political dependence of the colony on Britain.

Imagining ‘cultural colonisation’ as an unbroken and continuing process does limit the ability of the historian to describe and account for social change. Ultimately this interpretative framework rests on a belief that New Zealand history has been shaped by an underlying continuity in both the intention of
Europeans and in the outcomes of their actions. This formulation is unsatisfactory for two main reasons. Firstly, as noted in Chapter Twelve, it places Māori and Māori history entirely outside the processes of empire-building, colonisation, and the fashioning of a nation state. Secondly, this way of thinking about the past fails to grapple with historical change itself. By placing primary stress on the persistent nature of colonisation, historians limit their ability to identify uneven and unpredictable rhythms of economic, social and political transformation. ‘Lumpiness’, William Sewell has observed, ‘rather than smoothness, is the normal texture of historical temporality’. This ‘lumpy’ texture is the result of moments of accelerated and intense transformation that punctuate periods of smaller scale change and institutional stability.38 Key moments of transformation – especially in the mid-1970s and then again in the mid-1980s – fundamentally reshaped the structure of the state, institutions and social relations in New Zealand in such a way that ‘colonisation’ is a weak analytical tool for understanding contemporary life.

The arguments put forward throughout this book offer a kind of critical reassessment of the value of historicist thinking. Historicism has been criticised by some New Zealand scholars working within another important strand of post-colonial analysis, kaupapa Māori research (research grounded in Māori perspectives and methods).39 This employs Māori epistemologies, social models and language as a framework for conducting and conceptualising research. Significant divergences exist between kaupapa Māori and historicist approaches to the past: put simply, historicism suggests that the nature of specific human communities is defined by their history, and that their social organisation, cultural practices, and worldview are historically contingent. However, for some Māori scholars, historicist thought is fundamentally incompatible with kaupapa Māori. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, for example, articulated a wide ranging critique of historical writing, its role in enabling or legitimating colonisation, and the difficulties in using history to recover the experiences of indigenous and colonised peoples. Tuhiwai Smith claimed that ‘history [as a discipline] is mostly about power’ and for this reason ‘history is not important for indigenous peoples’ because ultimately it cannot bring about justice.40

In many ways, an even more fundamental critique of history has been developed by Te Māire Tau who has emphasised the profound limits of the ‘historical method’ and ‘textual analysis’ for making sense of Māori pasts and present.41 Tau stresses the fundamental epistemological gulf between Māori and Pākehā worlds, emphasising the primacy of te reo Māori and whakapapa as the foundation for understanding Māori and their pasts. In this view, western theory, textual analysis, and the primacy of written history are of limited value for making sense of Māori experience. But further than that, western approaches are actually corrosive:
the Maori past is in danger...it will be historicised and subverted into a form that our tohunga never intended....If the past is subject to the processes of current historical method, matauranga Maori will be the ship to sink, to be replaced by western disciplines and perspectives.42

In a similar vein, Nepia Mahuika has argued that kaupapa Māori provides the best grounding for writing Māori history, but that such work should be grounded in the specific frameworks of specific hapū and iwi, their ‘particular aspirations or historical interpretations’, and mātauranga-a-iwi.43

In practice, however, Māori histories are written in a variety of idioms and many significant works are essentially historicist. In part this reflects the fundamental power of historicist approaches to describe and account for social change. This is obviously important for Māori communities who wish to understand the limits and constraints that they now face. So although Te Maire Tau formulated an important critique of historicist approaches to the Māori past in his essay ‘Ghosts on the Plains’, that essay itself combined close textual analysis with a carefully historicised account of the transformation of the Ngāi Tahu world in the nineteenth century.44 The landmark history of modern Māori protest, Hīkoi, written by Aroha Harris, offers a powerful Māori-centred story that works within many of the conventions of narrative political history.45 Angela Wanhalla’s work on intermarriage and sexuality can be firmly placed within international work on the place of gender in histories of cross-cultural contact and feminist studies of gender in colonial societies.46 Michael Stevens has blended family history, the history of science and a strong sense of British imperial history within a specifically Kāi Tahu analytical framework in his assessment of both continuity and change in Kāi Tahu practice.47

This range of work on Māori history raises a fundamental challenge facing historical writing in New Zealand: the need for synthetic arguments that connect particular case studies and identify deep-seated processes. Since the 1970s there has been a flowering of scholarship that has, in part, been the product of the Waitangi Tribunal and the state’s continued investment in producing a vision of the nation’s past through the History Group at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. But university-based historians and their postgraduate students, as well as a range of professional and amateur historians outside the academy, continue to produce a variety of publications that generate valuable new knowledge about the past. Accordingly, New Zealand historiography has grown steadily and there are now sizeable concentrations of work on a range of particular issues. It is true that some themes attract relatively little interest – especially academically rigorous local history, maritime history, economic history in general, and colonial politics beyond the state’s relations with Māori – and these gaps are thrown into
high relief by the substantial bodies of work on the Treaty, on the development of state ‘native policy’, women’s history, and on colonial print culture.

Unfortunately, larger works of synthesis and interpretation that attempt to make sense of broad patterns of colonial development have not accompanied this sustained growth of specialist research. General histories offer sustained discussion of nineteenth-century New Zealand, but these works have not offered any coherent reinterpretation of the colonial past. Three works stand out because of their ability to draw a wide body of issues together and to engage in sustained reflections on how histories are written. Miles Fairburn’s *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* remains a crucial work because of the breadth of its argument about the ‘atomised’ nature of colonial society; however, after an initial debate over its thesis, its central ideas are rarely tested in any sustained way.48 In his *Making Peoples* James Belich effectively balanced synthesis, historiographical comment (including a riposte to Fairburn’s vision of ‘atomised’ colonial life), and the creation of new analytical coinages, which are suggestive but again have been subjected to limited sustained scrutiny.49 Most recently, Erik Olssen and his co-authors have produced a volume that initially appears to be a monographic treatment of social mobility, but whose depth of archival research, range of data sets, comparative vision and analytical ambition means that *An Accidental Utopia?* offers an innovative reading of the past that encompasses work, family formation, social organisation and political culture.50

These works draw connections, bring bodies of scholarship into new and productive relationships, and re-examine the broad shape of the historiographical terrain. They are valuable because they break down the barriers that separate different traditions of historical work and traverse the domains – the social, the cultural, and the political – that have been central to Western models of the organisation of human life from the nineteenth century.51 Fortunately, the divisions between these spheres of human activity and between divergent traditions of scholarly work in New Zealand history have never been drawn as strongly as they have in larger nations that support more specialised historiographies. Nevertheless, we need more work that is prepared to map broad patterns and pursue large questions, but it needs to sit alongside and engage with the more specialised and localised research that should be the lifeblood of history as a discipline.

*Webs of Empire* suggests that another important project is to pursue the history of connections. Such an approach simultaneously offers an important way of breaking out of the ascendancy of national history and a way of reframing how we imagine New Zealand. This collection expresses some substantial reservations about the primacy attached to the nation in historical writing about these islands, and about histories framed by a kind of implicit cultural nationalism and the ‘search for national identity’.52 But these reservations do not amount to a desire
to see national history disappear. National histories are crucial given the primacy of national politics today, they respond to the interests of many readers, and are key sites for synthesising and reflecting upon divergent historiographical streams. Thinking through connections, however, enables a move towards a vision of New Zealand’s history that recognises both the nation’s fundamental constructedness (as discussed in Chapter Fourteen) and how it is made and remade by the work of networks, connections, and webs of exchange. During the nineteenth century many of these webs were part of the structure of the British Empire. Other networks operated within these islands and some of these were essentially shaped by and under Māori control. Others still reached out to places, people, institutions, and regions beyond New Zealand that were not part of the British Empire. These meshes of connection were dynamic; like a web they were always in process; they had the power to link up points in space and create strong threads of interdependence; but they could also be broken or atrophy over time. Taken together, these webs were constantly remaking the places and peoples that made up New Zealand; the colony was always in process, as the nation still is today. Thinking through the history of such connections will also allow historians to identify with greater confidence the gaps and limits of colonial power and the spaces within which some key Māori mentalities and practices persisted. If historians can map how these connections took shape, came into crisis and were reinvented, chart their shifting geographic profile and social reach, and record how they came to an end, our historiography will be richer and more nuanced. We will then have a greater understanding of how colonisation operated and the changing consequences of the imperial entanglements that transformed these islands in the nineteenth century and which continue to haunt political, economic and cultural life today.
I am grateful for permissions to republish these essays from Cambridge University Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, Duke University Press, ATF Press, Cambridge Scholars’ Press, Auckland University Press, Victoria University Press, Otago University Press, Archifacts, the New Zealand Journal of History and the Journal of New Zealand Studies. The essays that have appeared in print previously have been lightly edited here: referencing and spelling has been standardised, typographical errors have been corrected, a few short passages have been trimmed to minimise repetition between the essays and some passages have been revised in order to make them clearer. Of course, some central preoccupations and bodies of evidence run through the collection, but when I do canvas familiar terrain my arguments typically contain new emphases and push off in new directions. Finally, in several places I have also noted significant connections between the chapters that make up this volume.

Chapters Six and Eight, as well as the Introduction and Conclusion, were original essays for this volume.


Chapter Fourteen: Originally published as ‘On Place, Space and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 45, 1 (2011), pp.50–70.
ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION


9 For example, Aberdeen Weekly Journal, 24 December 1879, p.4 and 1 October 1898, p.6; Birmingham Daily Post, 19 October 1860, p.4; Evening Post, 29 October 1902, p.4 and 15 November 1911, p.7; Otago Witness, 24 March 1860, p.2; Lyttelton Times, 18 February 1860, p.2; The North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times (Tasmania), 28 February 1913, p.2; The Register (Adelaide), 1 May 1909, p.12; The Mercury (Hobart), 25 June 1923 p.6; Northern Bulletin (Rockhampton), 13 July 1893, p.3; South Australian Register, Supplement, 26 November 1883, p.1. While conducting research in the Auckland Institute Library in 2003 I stumbled across the foreign correspondent and diplomat Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace’s 1903 account of the Duke and Duchess of York’s 1901 imperial tour: The Web of Empire: a Diary of the Imperial Tour of their Royal Highnesses the Duke & Duchess of Cornwall & York in 1901, London, 1903.


12 Scholars of Asian migration to the United States have developed or


20 I hint at the importance of these distinctions in chapter 13.

21 Outcomes of these conversations include Antoinette Burton (ed.), *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, Durham, NC, 2005; Craig Robertson, *The Passport in America: the History of a Document*, New York, 2010; and chapters 2 and 10 of this collection.

22 ‘Kāi Tahu Whānui’ refers to the broad family of Kāi Tahu kingroups, including people who identify with Waitaha and Kāti Mamoe.


CHAPTER 1


2 These arguments remain controversial. The Oxford History of the British Empire systematically marginalised the importance of race, while David Cannadine’s recent Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire, stressed rank and ritual rather than race.

3 By the ‘long nineteenth century’ I mean the period from the revolutionary age of the 1780s through to World War One. This era, in which powerful modern political ideologies took shape and key modern forms of social organisation crystallised, was first identified as a meaningful and coherent unit of analysis by the great British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm.


12 Antoinette Burton, At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain, Berkeley, 1998.


14 New Zealand Herald, 19 September 1885. This review was critical of Tregear’s reliance on etymological rather than structural comparison in The Aryan Maori, but this methodological objection was less significant than its rejection of the possibility of any cultural commensurability between Māori and Pākehā. And it was, in any case, only partially accurate as Tregear’s work opened with a recognition of the basic divisions between what he termed the ‘monosyllabic’ languages of East Asia, the ‘agglutinated languages’ of Central Asia, and the inflected languages of the ‘Semitic and Aryan races’.


18 Ibid., pp.11, 19.


21 Sorrenson, Maori Origins and Migrations, p.18.

22 Howe, ‘Some Origins and Migrations of Ideas leading to the Aryan Polynesian theories of Abraham Fornander and Edward Tregear’.


31 This was an integral part of the elision of ‘the exotic, the mysterious, the fantastic’ in British depictions of Indian society from the 1770s noted by O. P. Kejariwal: _The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India’s Past 1784–1838_, Delhi, 1988, p.25.

32 The Vedas are a large collection of Sanskrit texts composed between 1500 and 500 BCE.


35 Cited in Howe, _Singer in a Songless Land_, p.49.


38 Trautmann, _Aryans and British India_, pp.42–47.

39 Ibid., pp.53–54.


42 John Turnbull Thomson, _Rambles with a Philosopher or, Views at the Antipodes by an Otagoian_, Dunedin, 1867, pp.86–87.


45 Massey, _A Book of the Beginnings_, II, p.597.

46 Ibid., II, pp.537, 596–97.

47 For biographical information see Peal’s obituary in _The Calcutta Englishman_, 12 August 1897; for Smith’s views on Peal’s contribution to New Zealand ethnography see his draft obituary: Polynesian Society Collection, MS-Papers-1187-226, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

48 Peal to Smith, 1892 [marked received 16 April], Polynesian Society Collection, MS-Papers-1187-270, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

49 Peal to Smith, 15 October 1894, ibid.

50 Peal to Smith, 17 January 1892 and 25 January 1893, ibid.

Polynesian Society, 28 (1919); Peter Buck [Te Rangi Hiroa], Vikings of the Sunrise, New York, 1938, p.35.


54 Hobson to Bourke, 8 August 1837, CO 209/2, folios 30–37, Public Record Office, London.


57 Ibid., p.314.

58 Ibid., p.315.

59 Ibid.


61 Khandallah’s thoroughfares are named after major Indian cities including Agra, Delhi, Karachi, Madras and Shimla. A similar pattern of street names are to be found at the southern tip of New Zealand in the town of Riverton, which developed in the mid-nineteenth century out of the Jacob’s River whaling station.


63 Beattie’s PhD research was recently published as James Beattie, Empire and Environmental Anxiety: Health, Science, Art and Conservation in South Asia and Australasia, 1800–1920, Basingstoke, 2011.


67 Taylor was very impressed by the huge cave temples of Maharashtra and his published work highlighted similarities between Māori art and ‘the rock temples of Salsette and Elephanta’. Richard Taylor, Our Race and its Origin, Auckland, 1867, p.24. An undated sketch on a small slip of paper in Taylor’s black notebook, which he filled with sketches and notes on his voyage back to England in 1867–71, depicts a top-knotted warrior figure with the caption ‘Taken from paintings in the Ajunta Caves 200 miles


71 For example, Te Karere Maori, 1 June 1855 and 30 June 1858; Te Korimako, 15 January 1885.

72 See the Catalogue of the Library of the Dunedin Athenaeum and Mechanics’ Institute, and the catalogues of the University of Otago Library, the Hocken Collections, Dunedin and the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.


74 Theosophy in New Zealand, 7 n.s. (1946), p.59.

75 Ibid., 1 n.s. (1940), p.17.

76 ‘It has also been said many times that all which stands the test of time is truth and I would point out to you that the Vedas, which was [sic] written as early as 4000 B.C. is still the religious book of Brahmism and having thus stood the test for [sic] time for three times as long as our Gospel narrative may fairly claim to contain some elements of truth.’ Lilian Edger, Religion and Theosophy. A Lecture Delivered in the City Hall, Auckland, New Zealand on Sunday Afternoon, March 26th, 1893, Auckland, 1893, p.7.

77 These arguments stimulated acrimonious debate within the colony. See, for example, James Neil, Spiritualism and Theosophy Twain Brothers of the Anti-Christ. (Founded on the First Lie, the belief of which brought Death to our Race.) The Origin, Development, and Destruction of These Systems, Dunedin, n.d., pp.54–55; Christian Outlook, 4 September 1894, p.373; Weekly Budget, 18 October, 1895.

78 These uncatalogued works are in the Polynesian Society’s closed stack collection at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

79 Peal accepted the offer of the position of corresponding member in a letter to Smith, 25 January 1893, Polynesian Society Collection, MS-Papers-1187-270, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

80 Although in print Newman advocated a more generalised vision of Māori origins, privately he supported Peal’s theory. In a letter to Smith, Peal concluded that the Nagas of Assam ‘were the mothers of our Maoris’. Newman to Smith, 5 March 1907, Polynesian Society Collection, MS-Papers-1187-268, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Newman had conducted research at the Polynesian Society Library (see his letter to Smith 13 August 1906 making arrangements for his visit), and in 1907 Smith sent Newman Nobin Chandra Das’s work. Smith to Newman 2 March 1907, ibid. On Best, Peal and phallic cults see Best to Peal undated, but in response to Peal’s letter dated 31 August 1895, Polynesian Society Collection, MS-80-115-02/02, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. Best also sent Peal a newspaper clipping describing a Māori ‘phallic cult’, Best to Peal May–June 1893, Polynesian Society Collection, MS-Copy-Micro-146, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

81 See chapter 12 for some recent and more critical reflections on the usefulness of representation as an analytical frame.

82 H. H. Risley, ‘The Study of Ethnology


CHAPTER 2

1 City Voice, 18 April 1996.

2 This coat-of-arms is a modified version of the original design by James McDonald that came into effect in 1911. McDonald’s design reflected the weight already attached to the relationship between Māori and Pākehā in early twentieth-century visions of the nation, hinting at some profound continuities in New Zealand visions of race and nation over the past 100 years. See New Zealand Gazette, 11 January 1912 and http://www.mch.govt.nz/coat-of-arms.htm (accessed January 2003).

3 As a counterpoint, it is important to note that the recent upswing in migration of white South Africans – both of Anglo-Celtic and Afrikaner descent – has not excited any anxiety about the transformation of the nation.


5 There is not space in this chapter to treat this complex and important issue. Of course, ‘Chineseness’ is a form of imagined community and while I recognise its historical contingency, it is deployed in this chapter simply as a heuristic device. We await a detailed treatment of the ways in which local, regional, ethnic and national identities (such as ‘Malay Chinese’) operate within the New Zealand context.

6 Nga Korero, March 1996; The Militant (60), 22 June 1996.

7 This is Hugh Kawharu’s translation of the Māori text into English: see http://www.govt.nz/en/aboutnz/?id=a32f7d70e71e9632aad1016cb343f900#E2 (accessed January 2003).


14 Walker, for example, attacked the easier access to New Zealand enjoyed by Asian travellers and migrants in the 1990s, suggesting that it increases New Zealand’s exposure to crime, fraud and prostitution. He suggests that this policy reflects New Zealand’s naïveté (presumably about what he sees as the true nature of Asian culture), suggesting that a better model might come from Europe where nations ‘are trying to insulate their borders against outsiders’. Ranginui Walker, ‘Immigration Policy and the Political Economy of New Zealand’, pp.289, 295–97, 300–01. Also see Ranginui Walker, Nga Pepa a Ranginui: the Walker Papers, Auckland, 1996, pp.189, 196, 200, 204–06.


16 Ann Curthoys has made a similar observation, suggesting that the ‘Australian legend’, which celebrates egalitarianism, matehship and sporting success, has had ‘negative consequences for race and ethnic relations’, including the ‘decrying of intellectual pursuits... and the dislike of social and cultural difference’. Ann Curthoys, ‘Chineseness and Australian Identity’, p.23.

17 New Zealand Herald, 18 November 2002.


19 This historiographical tradition has been criticised by Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse, who locate the hostile response to the Chinese within the articulation of state power and the emergence of a leftist colonial nationalism. Their argument sees agitation against Chinese emigrants in a broader complex of political reform and social repression directed at a variety of ‘marginal’ social groups from Jews to the mentally ill. See their “‘Drug-besotted, sin-begotten fiends of filth’: New Zealand and the Oriental Other”, New Zealand Journal of History, 33 (1999), pp.43–64.

20 On the desperate need for increased number of miners on the Otago fields see MacKay’s Otago Almanac, Dunedin, 1867, p.161.


24 Ibid., II, p.354.

25 New Zealand Times, 5 August 1895.

26 Reeves, State Experiments, II, p.325


28 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 92 (1896), p.382; Bonar observed that: ‘It is not a Bill against Asiatics, it is not a Bill against Chinamen, it is a Bill to keep up the rate of wages and makes us pay more for our vegetables and our fruit.’ New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 95 (1896), p.249. Also see New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 92 (1896), p.384 and New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, 92 (1896), pp.384–85. But this argument, as Ann Curthoys has pointed out, rested on the assumption that Chinese labourers would be actually competing for the same jobs with settlers. This was rarely the case, as Chinese migrants generally were either self-employed or worked for Chinese employers within a racially segmented colonial


30 See Miles Fairburn, The Ideal Society and its Enemies: the Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850–1900, Auckland, 1989, pp. 42–44. While this image was largely generated by politicians, middle-class travel writers and migration agents, Rollo Arnold’s examination of correspondence for rural labourers to family, union organisations and newspapers in Britain has suggested that this image was accepted across the lines of class. Rollo Arnold, The Farthest Promised Land: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s, Wellington, 1981.


32 Wakefield believed Chinese irrigation techniques could ‘within a century, convert this immense desert into a fruitful garden’, but he was concerned with ensuring a gender balance within the emigrating population. This was crucial if the migrants were to become ‘established’ in Australasia rather than returning to China. M. F. Lloyd Prichard (ed.), The Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Glasgow, 1968, pp. 176–77.

33 Reeves, State Experiments, II, p. 329.


36 The development of this Aryan myth and its cultural effects are examined in Tony Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire, Basingstoke, 2002.


42 Donna Awatere, Maori Sovereignty, Auckland, 1984.


44 This statement continues on to emphasise: ‘Te Papa speaks with the authority that arises from scholarship and matauranga Maori – All of Te Papa’s activities will be underpinned by scholarship and matauranga Maori [knowledge and understanding founded on tikanga Maori (Māori custom, culture and protocol)]’, http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/who_we_are/principles.html (accessed December 2000).


46 This description was drafted on the basis of a visit to Te Papa in 2004.


48 A special display within the exhibition focuses on ‘the astonishing contribution made by the Dutch community’, ibid.

49 Sudipta Kaviraj, ‘The Imaginary
Institution of India’, in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (eds), Subaltern Studies VII, Delhi, 1992, pp.1–39.


53 Moloughney and Stenhouse, “Drug-Besotted, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth”.


CHAPTER 3


3 The numbers of hits generated by a search of the papers digitised to date give a basic gauge of Asia’s prominence in the papers. Most importantly, these figures indicate the centrality of China and India relative to other parts of Asia and the world: where ‘Australia’ generates 251 hits, ‘China’ produces 117 and ‘Chinese’ 58; ‘India’ 205 and ‘Indian’ 75; ‘Japan’ 37 and ‘Japanese’ 21; while ‘Korea’ scores 125 (but almost all references stem from the 1870s on).


10 Robert McNab, *Murihiku and the Southern Islands; a History of the West Coast Sounds, Foveaux Strait, Stewart Island, the Snares, Bounty, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell and Macquarie Islands from 1770 to 1829*, Invercargill, 1907, p.217; Bentley, *Pakeha-Maori*, p.127. Also see chapter 5 of this collection.
14 For example, *India Gazette* 4 September, 14 September, 28 September 1826; *Bengal Hurkaru* 5 September, 7 September, 26 September, 27 September, 13 October 1826.
16 Including Hinaki of Ngāti Pāoa and his unnamed fellow traveller who journeyed with Dillon on an earlier voyage to Peru and Chile in 1823. Davison, *Dillon of Vanikoro*, pp.80–82.
17 Thomas Kendall, *A Korao no New Zealand; or, the New Zealander’s First Book; being An Attempt to Compose Some Lessons for the Instruction of the Natives*, Sydney, 1815.
22 Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.216.
24 Native Affairs Department, 1A1, 1841/1627, but filed at 1842/1627, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.
25 Government agents, such as Donald McLean, did have a hand in *Te Waka Maori o Ahuriri* (published in Napier between 1863 and 1871).
27 Jenifer Curnow, ‘A Brief History of Maori-Language Newspapers’, in *Rere Atu* *Takau Manu*.
28 This is Jenifer Curnow’s translation. Ibid., p.34.
29 *The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori*, 30 June 1858, p.2.
30 Ibid., 15 July 1858, pp.3–5.
31 Ibid., p.6.
32 Ibid., 15 June 1859, p.6.
33 *Te Karere o Poneke*, 12 April 1858, pp.2–3.
34 *Te Wananga*, 25 May 1878, p.268.
35 Ibid., 19 October 1878, p.515.
38 Ibid.
39 For example, ibid., 5 January 1878, p.3.
40 Ibid., 2 November 1878, p.543. It sourced these through the Calcutta edition of The Times.
41 Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani, 22 June 1875, p.143. Subsequent research has cast doubt on this sensational narrative. It seems that oral narratives record that a few Chinese stayed on New Guinea as traders, while the majority fashioned rafts and attempted to sail north. See Clive Moore, New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History, Honolulu, 2003, p.161, p.222 n.22 and Eric Rolls, Sojourners: the Epic Story of China’s Centuries-Old Relationship with Australia, St Lucia, 1992, p.157. While Rolls suggests that there were 327 Chinese passengers, Moore suggests that there were in fact 324 Chinese castaways.
42 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 31 May 1856, p.16 and 27 November 1856, p.15; also see Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani 15 December 1874, p.318.
43 Te Manuhiri Tuarangi means ‘The Visitor from Afar’. Te Manuhiri Tuarangi and Maori Intelligencer, 1 March 1861, p.11.
44 Ibid., p.12.
45 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 1 September 1855, p.6.
46 Ibid., 1 September 1855, p.6.
47 Te Pipiwharauroa: He-Kupu Whakamarama, 1 April 1901, pp.8–9.
48 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 1 September 1855, pp.7–8.
49 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 30 June 1858, p.3.
50 Ibid., 1 September 1855, p.9.
51 Paterson, ‘Kiri Mā, Kiri Mangu’, pp.81–
52 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 1 September 1855, p.10.
53 Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani, 19 September 1878, p.232.
54 Ibid., 1 September 1878, p.20.
55 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 30 June 1858, p.4.
56 Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani, 21 March 1876, p.74.
57 The Maori Messenger: Te Karere Maori, 1 September 1855, p.8.
58 Ibid., 1 September 1855, p.9.
59 Ibid., 1 September 1855, p.16.
60 Ibid.
61 Te Karere Maori or Maori Messenger, 20 August 1862, p.23.
62 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 15 August 1861, p.25.
65 Ibid., 2 September 1861, p.9.
66 Te Pipiwharauroa: He-Kupu Whakamarama, 1 September 1900, p.3.
67 Ibid., April 1899, p.8.
68 Ibid., April 1901, p.8.
69 Te Korimako, 17 May 1886, p.5.
70 Ibid., 26 May 1888, p.3.
71 Te Pipiwharauroa, September 1905, p.6.
72 Ibid., November 1905, p.9.

CHAPTER 4
1 Most notably, Brian Moloughney and John Stenhouse, “‘Drug-Besotten, Sin-Begotten Fiends of Filth’: New Zealanders and the Oriental Other, 1850–1920’, New Zealand Journal of History, 33, 1 (1999), pp.43–64; Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar and Keren Smith (eds), East by South: China in the Australasian Imagination, Wellington, 2005; Henry Johnson and Brian Moloughney (eds), Asia in the Making of New Zealand, Auckland, 2006; Tony Ballantyne and

3. See chapters 1 and 3 in this collection.

4. My interpretation of these dynamics owes a great deal to recent examinations of the culture of Britain and its empire which have reflected on the ways in British overseas activity – from the evangelising projects of missionaries to the manoeuvrings of imperial proconsuls, from the work of British merchants to the campaigns of soldiers serving British interests abroad – brought the metropole and its colonies together in new and unexpected ways. A recent and important summation of this kind of work is: Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds), *At Home With the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World*, Cambridge, 2006.


14 This figure was based on the assertion that Māori consumed much smaller amounts of tea than Pākehā, with the assumption that Māori consumption averaged around a pound per capita per annum. The New Zealand Official Year-Book, 1896, Wellington, 1897, p.134. This comparison was based on the data from New Zealand from 1895 with the figures published in the Victoria Yearbook of 1893.

15 New Zealand Yearbook 1907, Wellington, 1908, pp.309–10. There was a strong correlation between tea and sugar consumption in the Australasian colonies, with most of the Australian colonies significantly outstripping New Zealand in per capita sugar consumption.

16 Progress, 5, 2 (1 December 1909), p.58.

17 Edgar Watson Howe, Travel Letters from New Zealand, Australia and Africa, Topeka, 1913, p.88.


21 Taranaki Herald, 28 November 1893, p.2; Evening Post, 8 August 1908, p.3.

22 Evening Post, 8 August 1908, p.3.


24 Hawera & Normanby Star, 13 July 1906, p.3.

25 Tuapeka Times, 29 January 1908, p.4.

26 Some companies, however, stressed that their ‘cheap tea’ was of a particular variety and regional origin. See, for example, Lennards of Wanganui marketed a ‘cheap tea’ that was ‘pure Ceylon Pekoe’. Wanganui Herald, 13 June 1908, p.6.

27 Progress, 5, 2 (1 December 1909), p.58.


29 This opposition was neatly expressed by Malcolm Ross: ‘No tea—even be it the finest Pekoe, enriched with the thickest of cream and sipped from the daintiest Dresden—tastes like “billy” tea.’ Malcolm Ross, A Climber in New Zealand, London, 1914, p.258. Also see Ernest Charles Buley, Australian Life in Town and Country, New York, 1905, pp.75–76.

30 Laurence James Kennaway, Crusts: A Settler’s Fare Due South, London, 1874, p.118.


The quote comes from a letter attacking tea consumption in *The London Magazine, Or, Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer*, January 1765, p.716.


*Tuapeka Times*, 7 March 1888, p.5; *North Otago Times*, 13 February 1888, p.4.

Wanganui Herald, 30 July 1904, p.5.

*Otago Witness*, 27 March 1907, p.68.


Wanganui Herald, 26 October 1899, p.3; Wanganui Herald, 24 April 1906, p.4; Taranaki Herald, 26 April 1906, p.2.

*New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 90, 1895, pp.242. Also see the earlier debates over these issues in *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 29, 1878, pp.34, 56, 115, 399, 587.


This was the argument of T. Thompson. Ibid., p.246.


Gildroy W. Griffin, *New Zealand: Her Commerce and Resources*, Wellington, 1884, p.39. The desire to improve New Zealand’s communications with India was long-standing; see, for example, *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, 18 October 1851, p.135.

‘Imports and Exports’, *Statistics New Zealand*, 1900, Wellington, 1901, p.247. My calculations are based on a total value of imports from South Asia of £381,885.

Raymond Schwab, *Oriental Renaissance: Europe’s Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (trans.), New York, 1984; Robert S. Ellwood, *Islands of the Dawn: The Story of Alternative Spirituality in New Zealand*, Honolulu, 1993; Roy Wallis, ‘Figuring out Cult Receptivity’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 25, 4 (1986), pp.494-503. Several factors contributed to the strength of these heterodox forms of faith and practice: the comparatively late settlement of the colony (after British society itself had been reshaped by far-reaching social and religious reform), its lack of an established church, its mixed British Protestant population (which meant that no single denomination was hegemonic and, unlike America, the links between religion and ethnic identity were not insoluble), its comparatively low rates of regular church attendance and high literacy rate.

These were individuals who were not regular churchgoers or active in congregational life, but retained an identification with Christianity and Church doctrine. Stenhouse, ‘God’s Own Silence’, p.4.


Ibid., 1 n.s. (1940), p.17.

Lilian Edger, *Religion and Theosophy. A Lecture Delivered in the City Hall, Auckland, New Zealand on Sunday Afternoon, March 26th, 1893*, Auckland, 1893, p.7. Valuable insight into Lilian Edger’s background can be gained from a collection of her father’s essays and sermons, which clearly reveal the influence of Swedenborg. Samuel Edger, *Autobiographical Notes and Lectures*, Kate and Lilian Edger (eds), London: W. Isbister, 1886.
54 See, for example, Rutherford Waddell’s November 1894 observation in Christian Outlook that “Have you been to see Mrs Besant?”’ was the ‘current [sic] question in Dunedin’. Christian Outlook, 3 November 1894, p.1. Also see New Zealand Tablet, 26 October 1894; Evening Post, 3 August 1908, p.3.

55 Weekly Budget, 19 October 1895.

56 Otago Daily Times, 24 June 1893.

57 One of the stated objects of the New Zealand Theosophical Society was to sponsor the study of comparative religion. Theosophical Society New Zealand Branch, The Theosophical Society: Information for Enquirers, Auckland, 1914, p.1.

58 Alexander Joyce, Re-incarnation. The Universal Religion of the Twentieth Century, Christchurch, 1910 [1900], p.2. C. W. Leadbetter, a leading New Zealand theosophist, established a formidable reputation as a theosophical visionary whose works were at the core of theosophical doctrine in the years of Annie Besant’s presidency of the society (1907–1933). In 1915 he published Australia and New Zealand: the Home of a New Sub-Race, Sydney, 1915. It argued that a new sub-race was emerging in the favourable conditions of Australasia. Progressive social legislation, together with the rebirth of the ‘glorious war dead’ at a high level would create a society characterised by ‘wonderful mental development’ and cultural sophistication, Ellwood, Islands of the Dawn, p.117.


60 Ibid.

61 See discussions of infanticide and Hinduism in the Otago Daily Times, 20 November 1899.


65 Evening Post, 16 September 1909, p.8.

66 For example, Otago Witness, 23 July 1891, p.35; 25 November 1903, p.62; 9 November 1904, p.41; June 1908, p.81. For the local fund-raising in support of Ramabai’s work see: Otago Witness, 20 January 1909, p.45.

67 Wanganui Herald, 1 July 1903, p.6. On Takte’s return home and the reasons for his furlough see: Evening Post, 15 September 1902, p.4.

68 This established a direct contrast with F. Max Müller who famously never went to India.

69 Wanganui Herald, 1 July 1903, p.6.

70 Taranaki Herald, 6 July 1903, p.7.


74 The Bombay Gazette, 6 March 1869.

75 Waimate Daily Advertiser, 16 August
1900, p.3.

Some examples include: Te Aroha News, 2 January 1889, p.5; Wanganui Herald, 13 November 1906, p.5; Wanganui Herald, 30 December 1908, p.5; Hawera & Normanby Star, 28 December 1907, p.5 and 29 December 1910, p.5; Evening Post, 28 December 1894, p.2; Evening Post, 30 December 1896, p.5; 28 December 1911, p.7; 31 December 1912, p.7; Otago Witness, 25 December 1907, p.25; 9 January 1907, p.25; West Coast Times, 30 December 1909, p.3 and 4 January 1897, p.4.

Evening Post, 16 September 1909, p.8.

Evening Post, 20 February 1907, p.6.

Ibid.

A classic example of this approach is Angela Ballara, Proud to be White? A Survey of Pakeha Prejudice in New Zealand, Auckland, 1986.


Adam McKeown, ‘Global Migrations, 1846–1940’, Journal of World History, 15, 2 (2004), pp.155–89. McKeown estimates that between 48 and 52 million people moved out of China and India in this period in comparison to the 55 to 58 million that moved from Europe. Another 46 to 51 million moved from Northeastern Russia and Japan to Manchuria, Siberia, central Asia and Japan. Ibid., p.156.


Tuapeka Times, 8 May 1895, p.6.

Reeves, State Experiments, II, p.325.

For example, Wanganui Herald, 20 November 1908, p.5; Hawera & Normanby Star, 16 November 1907, p.5. For a case that combined race and criminality (that of a Niuean man charged with murder) see Evening Post, 16 August 1913, p.5. For a brief discussion on the comparative restrictions on convicted criminals, the physically disabled and ‘Asiatics’ see West Coast Times, 11 July 1895, p.4.

For example, Wanganui Herald, 26 July 1895, p.3; 25 May 1897, p.2; 10 May 1904, p.5; 8 February 1906, p.5; Evening Post, 18 November 1897, p.5; West Coast Times, p.2.

Hawera & Normanby Star, 14 January 1895, p.2. There was widespread opposition to this financial provision: see the withering editorial of Evening Post, 12 February 1895, p.2.

Evening Post, 1 August 1914, p.9.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Several historians have begun this project, but as yet there are no monographs that offer sustained new models of analysis nor has any scholar offered a serious narrative framework to counter bicultural national histories. Examples of this active rethinking include: Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum (eds), Fragments: New Zealand Social & Cultural History, Auckland, 2000 and Ballantyne and Moloughney (eds), Disputed Histories.

CHAPTER 5

1 On homogeneity and national history

2 Initial reactions to the arrival of Europeans in the far north are recorded in ‘Nga Uri a Tapua me Kapene Kuki’, in John White, ‘The Ancient History of the Maori, His Mythology and Traditions. Nga-Puhi. Volume X (Maori), From MS Papers 75, B 19 & B 24’, printed as The Ancient History of The Maori: Volume 9, Hamilton, 2001, sections 71–72. See also Horeta Te Taniwha’s account of the Endeavour’s arrival at Whitianga, which is available in parallel English and Māori texts in Te Ao Hou, 52 (1965), pp.43–49.

3 The key text exploring Pākehā identity is Michael King, Being Pakeha: an Encounter with New Zealand and the Maori Renaissance, Auckland, 1985.


11 Ballantyne and Moloughney, ‘Asia in Murihiku’.


17 Shompa Lahiri, ‘Contested Relations: The East India Company and Lascars in London’, in H. V. Bowen, Margarete

18 *Sydney Gazette*, 7 August 1813, p.2.


20 *Sydney Gazette*, 2 December 1815, p.2.


22 See the report on the discovery of a pendant fashioned out of a mid-eighteenth-century Mughal coin near Bluff in *Mataura Ensign*, 20 February 1912, p.4 in *Gaining a Foothold*, p.66.

23 Creed, ‘Maori Life and Culture’, John White Papers, MS-Papers-1187-201, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; on the location of this site see *Gaining a Foothold*, p.65 n.23.

24 In his somewhat confused narrative Parata suggested that Te Anu was the sole lascar survivor.


26 Here I am synthesising both the Māori account of Creed’s informant and Kelly’s own later narrative; Creed, ‘Maori Life and Culture’, John White Papers, MS-Papers-1187-201, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; *The Courier*, 12 April 1858, p.3. Kelly recorded that at least 50 men also drowned when they jumped off the *Sophia* and ‘several’ more local men were killed during a subsequent raid. A detailed reconstruction of this sequence of events is available in Peter Entwistle, *Taka: a Vignette Life of William Tucker 1784–1817: Convict, Sealer, Trader in Human Heads, Otago Settler, New Zealand’s First Art Dealer*, Dunedin, 2005, pp.94–97.


28 Ibid.

29 Notebook entitled, ‘Gazetteer, Maori Names, South Island’, Sir Frederick Revans Chapman Papers, MS-0412, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


32 *Otago Daily Times*, 24 April 1931 p.2

33 Ibid.


37 ‘Anu’ means cold and ‘anuhea’ listless. Another possibility is that his name had a long initial a, ‘Ānu’, which means ‘to spit’ which might again be read as a comment on habits or practices that seemed unusual to Kāi Tahu, given that within Polynesian cultures considerable care was traditionally taken with the disposal of bodily fluids.


40 ‘Takata’ is the Kāi Tahu equivalent of ‘tangata’, person.
320 ENDNOTES


43 On ‘tangata maori’ see Thomas Kendall, A Korao no New Zealand; or, the New Zealander’s First Book: Being an Attempt to Compose Some Lessons for the Instruction of the Natives, Sydney, 1815, pp.22–23. For evidence of the adoption of ‘Māori’ in the place of ‘New Zealander’ or ‘native’ see Henry Williams Journal, 14 October 1833, in Lawrence M. Rogers (ed.), The Early Journals of Henry Williams: Senior Missionary in New Zealand of the Church Missionary Society 1826–40, Christchurch, 1961, pp.332–33; Edward Markham, New Zealand or Recollections of It, E. H. McCormick (ed.), Wellington, 1963 [1834], p.117; Log entry for 20 April 1836, F. A. Anson (ed.), The Piriaki Log (a Pirangi Ahau Koe); or Diary of Captain Hempleman, London, 1910, p.33. It seems that this shift towards using ‘Māori’ in the place of other terms began in letters and journal produced on the New Zealand frontier, rather than in published texts produced for British audiences.


45 See Ian Church, Opening the Manifest on Otago’s Infant Years: Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Otago Harbour and Coast 1770–1860, Dunedin, 2001.


50 Wanhalla, In/visible Sight, chapters 3 and 4.

51 Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole, Some Modern Maoris, Wellington, 1946, p.321. Angela Wanhalla kindly directed me to this quotation.

52 Hana O’Regan, Ko Tahu, Ko Au: Kai Tahu Tribal Identity, Christchurch, 2001.

53 Belich, Making Peoples, p.434.

54 Eva Wilson, Hakoro Ki Te Iwi: the Story of Captain Howell and His Family, Orepuki, 1976, p.45.

55 Wanhalla, In/visible Sight, p.63.


57 Otago Witness, 29 July 1908, p.34.

58 Otago Witness, 29 June 1893, p.18. The Māori arrived in Dunedin from London
in March 1852 and then returned to Dunedin from Wellington in 1853. Peters name was not recorded in the published shipping lists for either journey; *The Otago Witness*, 6 March 1852; *The Otago Witness*, 7 August 1853.

59 Reprinted in *Otago Witness*, 31 March 1898, p.28. Other sources suggested that he was simply from ‘Hindostan’, while others suggested that he may have been connected to Satara, Pune and Bombay and that he was a Maratha. *Otago Witness*, 2 May 1885, p.12 and 29 June 1893, p.18.


CHAPTER 6


2 Wakefield’s theory suggested that a stable and ordered colonial society would develop where ‘waste lands’ were sold at a ‘sufficient price’. If fixed correctly, that price would allow industrious colonial labourers to eventually accumulate enough capital to become proprietors. The careful management of the value of land would prevent colonial workers buying land immediately: Wakefield believed that this problem had plagued other colonies, creating labour shortages and retarding economic development.


5 David Haines, ‘In Search of the “Whaheen”: Ngai Tahu Women, Shore Whalers and the Meaning of Sex in early New Zealand’, in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (eds), *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*, Urbana, 2009, p.49. These approaches draw upon Richard White’s landmark study of cross-cultural engagement in the Great Lakes region of North America which suggested that such cross-cultural accommodations created a ‘middle ground’ where neither Native American or Europeans were dominant. For a sophisticated application of this reading see Jonathan West, ‘An Environmental History of the Otago Peninsula: Dialectics of Ecological and Cultural Change from First Settlement to 1900’, PhD dissertation, University of Otago, 2009, pp.205–65.


10 On the idea of New Zealand’s coasts as Australian frontiers see Keith Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, rev edn, Auckland, 1988, pp.34–35. The exploration of southern New Zealand’s resources had remained restricted and tentative because of the East India Company’s monopoly of trade in the ‘East’ until 1801.

11 Captain Raven to Lt Gov King, 2 November 1793, encl in Lt Gov. King to the Right Hon. Henry Dundas, 19 November 1793, in Robert McNab (ed.), Historical Records of New Zealand, 2 vols, Wellington, 1908, I, pp.177–79.

12 ‘Port Jackson Shipping Returns, 1 January 1806 –12 August 1806’, Ibid., I, p.278.


16 John Boulbee, ‘Journal of a Rambler with a Sketch of his Life from 1817 to 1834, Including a Narrative of 3 Years’ Residence in New Zealand’, qMS-0257, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

17 By this, Boulbee noted, they meant ‘a gentlemen’s son who had spent his fortune’: Boulbee, Journal of a Rambler, p.16.


19 For example, see the crew listed for the Brothers in the Sydney Gazette, 7 May 1809, p.1 and then for the demands presented see the commentary in Sydney Gazette, 21 May 1809, p.2.


21 ‘Sketch of a strait dividing the southern island of New Zealand with the harbours on the southern most island, discovered and examined by Mr O.F. Smith, an American, when searching for seals in 1804. Communicated by him to Capt. P G King, Govr. of N S Wales, March 1806’, MapColl 835aj/1806/Acc.92, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.


29 Ibid., 25 August 1810, p.2.


31 Grono’s Slate, 83.1125, Southland Museum and Art Gallery.


37 Petition dated 29 June 1810 enclosed in Charles Hook, ‘Instructions to Thos Holford master of the Schooner Boyd’, in Ian Church (ed.), *Gaining a Foothold: Historical Records of Otago’s Eastern Coast, 1770–1839*, Dunedin, 2008, 44. Only two of the six petitioners were able to sign their own name. For court cases see, for example, John Robinson v. Charles Hook, agent of Robert Campbell [1810], Court of Civil Jurisdiction Proceedings, 1788–1814, State Records N.S.W., 5/1104, pp.36–41.

38 For example, *Sydney Gazette*, 16 April 1809.

39 The success of John Howell’s station at Aparima, for example, was only possible after he gained the patronage and protection of the rakatira Honekai.

40 See, for example, ‘Register of Marriages for Ruapuke Island 1850–1882’, MS-0967/004, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

41 Early modern British sailors had relatively high literacy rates; not as high as merchants and retailers, but substantially higher than land-based labourers: Barry Reay, *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, London, 1985, p.62. This is based on data from Bristol.

42 Morton, *Whale’s Wake*, p.64.

43 Ibid., p.71. This tradition reflected the literacy rates of 90 per cent aboard New England whalers by the 1790s: Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives*, Chapel Hill, 2008, pp.29, 203 n.35.


45 Haines, ‘In Search of the “Whaheen”’, p.59.


48 George Weller to Colonial Secretary, 21 August 1834; to the Collector of Customs, 21 August 1834 (two letters); to the Board for the Assignment of Convicts, 7 August 1833 in ‘Transcript of Weller Brothers’ correspondence’,
MS-0440/005, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


50 For example, Edward Weller to George Weller, 2 September 1835, 15 January 1835, 16 March 1836, and 23 April 1836.

51 For example, George Weller to Edward Weller 9 May 1835, 23 May 1835, 7 December 1835, 16 March 1836, and 23 April 1836.


55 Hanson Turton, Maori Deeds of Old Private Land Purchases in New Zealand from the Year 1815 to 1840, with Pre-emptive and Other Claims, (Copyied from the Originals), Together with a List of the Old Land Claims, and the Report of Mr. Commissioner F. Dillon Bell, Wellington, 1882, p.418.


57 Eva Wilson, Hakoro Te Iwi; the Story of Captain Howell and his Family, Orepuki, 1976.


60 Compare G. J. Griffiths (ed.), The Advance Guard: Prize-Winning and Other Leading Essays from the Historical Biography Competition Conducted by the Otago Daily times to Mark the 125th Anniversary of the Otago Settlement, 3 vols, Dunedin, 1973–4.

CHAPTER 7


3 This point is well made in K. R. Howe, ‘Two Worlds?’, New Zealand Journal of History, 37, 1 (2003), pp.50–61.

7 Jonathan Edwards, An Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr David Brainerd: Minister of the Gospel, Edinburgh, 1765.
17 For example, Kuni E. H. Jenkins, ‘Te Ihi, te Mana, te Wehi o te ao Tuhi: Maori Print Literacy from 1814–1855:


23 Dening, ‘Rewriting the Beach’, p.170.

24 R. D. Altick, Victorian People and Ideas, London, 1974, p.191. More recently David Bebbington has identified ‘biblicism’ as one of the four fundamental traits of evangelical faith (along with activism, conversionism and crucicentrism). Bebbington, Evangelicalism, pp.5–17, especially pp.12–14.


28 R. P. Heitzenrater, The Elusive Mr. Wesley. Volume I: John Wesley – His Own Biographer, Nashville, 1984, p.149; Bebbington, Evangelicalism, p.68.

29 Ibid.

30 Vincent, Literacy and Popular Culture, p.175.

31 See, for example, the discussion of religious tracts and popular culture in Niall Ó Ciosáin, Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750–1850, Basingstoke, 1997, pp.132–53.


33 Periodicals aimed at the juvenile market proliferated in the 1840s: examples include Juvenile Missionary Magazine, London Missionary Society, 1844–1894, Children’s Missionary Monthly Newsletter, inter-denominational 1843–1861, and the Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor, Church Missionary Society 1844–1890. Journals targeted specifically at women enjoyed greater popularity in the second half of the nineteenth century, reflecting the rising involvement of women in the mission field: titles such as The Indian Female Evangelist, inter-denominational 1872–1893; India’s Women, Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, 1881–1895 and Quarterly News of Woman’s Work, London Missionary Society, 1887–1895: circulation c. 10,000: these were largely aimed at a female readership.

34 Church Missionary Society Proceedings (1811), p.201.


36 Buchanan, Colonial Ecclesiastical
Establishment, p.112.


40 Ibid.


42 Ibid., pp.50–87. The Qur’an itself denotes Arabic (and the very text) as i’jaz ‘inimitable eloquence’. See, for example, Qur’an 10:38–9; 11:1–2; 28:49.


48 Marsden to Pratt, 28 August 1809, ibid., pp.22–23.

49 Thomas Kendall, A Korao no New Zealand; or, the New Zealander’s First Book; Being An Attempt to Compose Some Lessons for the Instruction of the Natives, Sydney, 1815, pp.22–23.


51 Missionary Register, (1819), p.466; Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race, pp.87–94.

52 Kendall, A Korao no New Zealand, pp.32–33, 34–35.


57 Missionary Register, (1840), p.512 and (1841), p.510; Wright, New Zealand, 1769–1840, p.53. D. F. McKenzie has questioned the value of these statistics, noting that measurement in sheets is the standard form used by printers and bibliographers. Using this measurement he calculates the output of the mission press at 145,775 completed sheets. He further notes that these sheets only represented 16 distinct works. But McKenzie’s figures need to be contextualised against the size of Māori society: a total population of about 70,000 in 1840 and the 25,000 or so Māori in the missionary’s sphere of influence. In the 1835–1840 period the Paihia press produced approximately 5,400 copies of the New Testament (122,500 of the 145,775 completed
sheets) which is a significant output in relation to this small population.

58 Robert Maunsell to C.M.S., 8 June 1840, C.N. 064, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


66 Ibid., pp.456–57.


68 Ibid., p.284.

69 E. J. Wakefield, Adventure in New Zealand, Christchurch, 1908 [1845], p.194.


71 Lineham, Bible & Society, p.21.


73 McKenzie, Oral Culture, Literacy & Print in Early New Zealand, p.30.

74 Ibid.

75 This literacy test is borrowed from David Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order: Writing and Reading in Tudor England, Cambridge, 1980, p.53.

76 Some chiefs, however, did send their children to missionary schools. See Patricia Bawden, ‘The Mechanic Missionaries: How Effective Were They?’, Mission and Moko, p.41.


84 Lindsay Cox notes that a Māori Bible was prominent in the ritual of coronation and this same Bible has
been used in the coronation of the five subsequent monarchs. Lindsay Cox, Kotahitanga: the Maori Search for Political Unity, Auckland, 1993, p.52.

85 The New Zealander, 3 July 1858.


89 Māori in the north of North Island were suspicious of the French, who they called ‘wi-wis’ or ‘oui-ouis’, in the wake of reprisals following the death of the explorer Marion du Fresne. Hugh Carleton, The Life of Henry Williams, Wellington, 1948, pp.254–55. British missionaries also feared that the French might pre-empt the annexation of New Zealand, and in the wake of annexation French influence was suspected to lie behind Māori resistance to the Treaty of Waitangi and the northern war of 1845–6. William Colenso, The Authentic and Genuine History of the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, Wellington, 1890, p.34; James Stack to C.M.S., 4 April 1840, C N/O 78, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

90 William Colenso, He Pukapuka Waki; He Wakakite Atu i nga Henga o te Hahi o Roma [A Book of Errors, revealing the errors of the Church of Rome], Paihia, 1840; Ko te Tuaraa o nga Pukapuka Waki [The Second Book of Errors], Paihia, 1840.

91 Jean Baptiste Francois Pompallier, Early history of the Catholic Church in Oceania, Auckland, 1888, p.44.


95 Cited in Elsmore, Like Them That Dream, pp.72–73.

96 Paul Clark, “Hauhau”: the Pai Marire Search for Maori Identity, Auckland, 1975, p.17.


100 Ibid., p.348.

101 Ross, Te Kooti, p.31


103 For example one 1847 C.M.S. text described Europeans as the descendants of ‘Hapeta’ (Japheth): C.M.S., He Whakapapa, Ara Nga Mahi Menga Aha Noa a te Atua Raunao Tana Hahi, Auckland, 1847.


CHAPTER 8

1 These warnings were partially the result of a rumour circulating in Völknér’s absence that he had played a role in the exiling of the Catholic missionary Joseph Marie Garavel to Australia. Gugdeon, Reminiscences of the War in New Zealand, London, 1879, pp.42–43. In fact, this was much more likely the result of Garavel’s conflict with Bishop Pompallier. E. R. Simmons, ‘Garavel,

2 William Williams noted that Tamihana Te Rauparaha had encouraged Te Whakatōhea to assert themselves against the government at least a year earlier, an impulse that was checked by a loyalist force of Te Arawa at Matata. William Williams, Christianity Among the New Zealanders, London, 1867, p.370.


4 This group included both Hauhau and local Te Whakatōhea. There is evidence to suggest that some Te Whakatōhea had decided to kill Völkner before the Hauhau party arrived: see Richard Taylor, The Past and Present of New Zealand: With its Prospects for the Future, London, 1868, pp.159–60.

5 Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives, 1865, E5/7, Enclosure 1. Binney discusses the operation of this rūnanga (committee) and assesses possible evidence that there may have been some Tūhoe involved in its actions. Binney, Encircled Lands, pp.77–80.

6 New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian, 12 April 1865, p.7.


8 For slightly different renderings of this see: M. S. Grace, A Sketch of the New Zealand War, London, 1899; Taylor, The Past and Present of New Zealand, pp.158–59; Daily Southern Cross, 29 December 1871, p.6, deposition of Wiremu Paki.

9 Grace, A Pioneer Missionary Among the Maoris, p.143.


11 Wellington Independent, 10 February 1866.

12 C. S. Völknner to Governor, 13 and 15 January, 4, 8, 16, 26 February 1864, G/13/3/89, Archives New Zealand, Wellington; Bishop of Waipato to the Colonial Secretary, 15 April 1864, in H. Hanson Turton, An Epitome of Official Documents Relatives to Native Affairs and Land Purchases in the North Island of New Zealand, Wellington, 1883, p.88.

13 For rumours see, for example, Taranaki Herald, 6 May 1865, p.7; Timaru Herald, 25 May 1866, p.3; Taranaki Herald, 25 November 1865, p.3.

14 For example, New Zealand Spectator and Cook’s Strait Guardian, 12 April 1865, p.2; Daily Southern Cross, 25 May 1865, p.5; Taranaki Herald, 17 June 1865, p.3.

15 Steven Oliver, ‘Te Rau, Kereopa’, from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, v.1, Wellington, 1990, pp.503–04. The evidence at the trial was contradictory and there was no consensus about Kereopa’s role in the hanging of Völknner, but there was considerable evidence that pointed to his role in Völknner’s imprisonment and the defiling of Völknner’s body post-mortem.


17 A variation of this argument was developed in the New Zealand context by James Belich, The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict, Auckland, 1986 while T. R. Metcalf’s Ideologies of the Raj, Cambridge, 1995 offered a very productive elaboration of a similar argument. More broadly, this argument has been developed in its most sophisticated form by Catherine Hall, who suggests that this shift was anticipated and foreshadowed by Carlyle in the late 1840s: Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867, Chicago, 2002, especially pp.378–79.


20 These powers resulted from the Company assuming the mantle of being diwan, a position that entailed responsibility for revenue collection and the administration of the law.


27 Dalrymple suggests that up to one-third of the forces assembled at Delhi were made up of ‘jihadis’, William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: the Fall of a Dynasty: Delhi, 1857*, London, 2006.


32 For a detailed contemporary assessment of the changing terrain of Māori politics signalled by Kingitanga see *Daily Southern Cross*, 5 June 1857, p.3.

33 Browne to Newcastle, 27 April and 1 November 1860, *Great Britain Parliamentary Papers*, 1861 (2798) XLI, pp.33 and 160.

34 Browne to Newcastle, 22 March 1860, ibid., p.17.

35 *Daily Southern Cross*, 5 June 1857, p.3.

36 John Stenhouse, ‘Church and State in


40 Te Ua was, for a time, an exception: he was often in contact with the government officials and missionaries during the first half of 1864.


42 For example, Daily Southern Cross, 9 September 1869, p.5.

43 Quoted in Wanganui Herald, 1 March 1883, p.2.


45 See F. W. Buckler, ‘The Political Theory of the Indian Mutiny’, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, series 4, 5 (1932), pp.71–100. In this view, it was actually the British who were rebels.

46 Dalrymple, The Last Mughal.


50 Anderson, ibid., chapter 5, especially p.129; Satadru Sen, Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands, Delhi, 2000.


52 Belich, New Zealand Wars, p.138.


55 For example, Cowan, The New Zealand Wars: Volume I: 1845–1864, p.455.

56 Judith Binney, Redemption Songs, p.84.

57 The complexities and consequences of this system are explored in: Richard Boast and Richard S. Hill (eds), Raupatu: the Confiscation of Maori Land, Wellington, 2009.


59 See Stafford to McLean, 3 November 1865, MS-Papers-0032-0584, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

60 See, for example, the letter from ‘Utilitarian’ to the Wellington Independent, 20 August 1863, p.3. The London Spectator also noted the Irish precedent but suggested that developed estates were alienated in Ireland, but in New Zealand the land taken by the state was ‘wilderness’ and as such raupatu would actually provide Māori advancement, providing ‘law and order, the essential conditions of civilisation’.

61 In fact there were only a total of 83 executions in New Zealand between 1842 and 1957. There was certainly an increase during the 1860s. 1866 alone saw 10 executions; while there were 21 executions in the decade as a whole
(at least 10 of whom were Māori), http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/culture/the-death-penalty/notable-executions (accessed May 2009).


63 Sir John Lawrence reflected: ‘I am lost in astonishment that any of us are alive. But for the mercy of God we must have been ruined. Had the Sikhs joined against us, nothing, humanly speaking could have saved us.’ Lahore Chronicle, 17 November 1858; for ‘points of recognition’ see Ballantyne, Between Colonialism and Diaspora, pp.26–28, 33–35.


66 Section 6 of Maori Representation Act, 1867, New Zealand Statutes.

67 Belich, Making Peoples, pp.244, 265.


77 This is a similar reading to what Mandler offers: ‘The Problem With Cultural History’, pp.98–99, 101–02.


79 While my arguments in Orientalism and Race broadly supported Trautmann’s emphasis on this shift, it placed much greater stress on the persistent significance of language persisted and how ideas about religion encrusted racial thought as well.


83 Colin Kidd’s work has traced, for example, the various ways in which racial thought and Biblical models were woven together, creating traditions of cultural explanation that were deeply preoccupied with difference without being reducible to either race or religion. Colin Kidd, The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, Cambridge, 2006.

84 On ‘information panics’ see Bayly, Empire and Information, pp.149, 316.

85 On the persistence of state concerns – before, during and after British rule – about sadhus see William R. Pinch,

CHAPTER NINE
1 See, for example, Robert Manne, (ed.), Whitewash: on Keith Windschuttle’s Fabrication of Aboriginal history, Melbourne, 2003.
2 Carolyn Hamilton et al. (eds), Refiguring the Archive, Cape Town, 2002.
4 G. R. Elton, The Practice of History, London, 1969, p.87. Elton did hint that such evidence may not be total: ‘the physical survivals from the events to be studied.’
6 Nicholas B. Dirks, ‘Foreword’ to Bernard S. Cohn, Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India, Princeton, 1996, p.ix
8 Cohn identifies the five chief modalities as: historiographical, investigative, the survey, enumerative and the museological: Cohn, Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge.
15 Ibid., pp.266, 270.
18 Tony Ballantyne, Orientalism and
20 Ibid., p.vii.
22 Curnow argues that Grey’s copious commentaries on Te Rangikaheke’s manuscripts and Te Rangikaheke’s corrections of Grey’s work reveal a very close collaborative relationship. Ibid., pp.102–03.
28 Bayly adapts the phrase ‘information order’ from the sociologist Manuel Castells: Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p.3. While Bayly is aware on the distinction between ‘information’ and the more culturally encoded form ‘knowledge’, I think in the context of colonial New Zealand, the radical nature of cultural difference between Europeans and tangata whenua means that ‘knowledge order’ is more applicable as an overarching analytical framework. Ibid., p.3 n.9.
29 See, for example, Richard Eaton’s valorisation of ‘local knowledge’, found in ‘district archives, local libraries, private collections, zamindari records’; Richard M. Eaton, ‘(Re)imag(in)ing Otherness: A Postmortem of the Postmodern in India’, *Journal of World History*, 11 (2000), p.72.
30 These arguments are developed in a fuller form in Ballantyne, ‘Rethinking the Archive, Opening up the Nation State in South Asia (and Beyond)’, Antoinette Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn:*

CHAPTER 10

1 Tony Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race; Aryanism in the British Empire, Basingstoke, 2002.

2 Calcutta Englishman, 12 August 1897.


4 These include Peal’s Keelback snake (Amphiesma pealii) and Peal’s palmfly (Elymnias pealii.)

5 A good indication of Peal’s status as an ethnographic collector are the illustrations and discussions in Gertrude M. Godden, ‘Naga and Other Frontier Tribes of North-East India (continued)’, The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 27 (1898), pp.2–51. Also see Verrier Elwin, The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, 1969, pp.40, 379.


7 The circular is held in the archives of the Polynesian Society, Wellington: MS-Papers-1187-125, Polynesian Society Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

8 Peal accepted the offer of the position of corresponding member in a letter to Smith, 25 January 1893, MS-Papers-1187-270, Polynesian Society Collection.

9 S. Percy Smith to J. Macdonald, undated, 80-115-03/13, Polynesian Society Collection.

10 The ‘Polynesian Society Collection’ is Ms-Group-0677 at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, while the ‘Further Records’ is the 80–115 series, 80-115-11/09 and 80-115-11/10, Polynesian Society Collection.

11 S. Percy Smith (e.g. MS-Papers-3527, qMS-1833, qMS-1837 and MS-1962-2011), Edward Tregear (e.g. MS-Papers-055, MS-Papers-1264, and MS-Papers-1187-185), and Elsdon Best (e.g. MS-Papers-0072, MS-Group-0312, and MS-0173-0176). All of these are held in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

12 This material was originally classified as part of the Polynesian Society Collection’s ‘Series 10: Ethnological Manuscripts Collection’ but during the recent reorganisation of the Polynesian Society Collection it was redesignated MS-Papers-1187-113.


14 These were recently reclassified from 80-115-11/1A and 80-115-11/1B.

15 The correspondence and manuscripts for publication are held at MS-Papers-1187-270; the Society’s correspondence files that contain Peal-related material are 80-115-02/03 and 80-115-02/05, and his work runs through Dr. A. K. Newman’s papers MS-Papers-1187-269.

16 This figure is calculated on the basis of my research in the Society’s library and an inventory of titles I assembled from the now defunct card catalogue of the Society’s library. Some eighty-five volumes in the library were published
in or before 1897, but, of course, some of these volumes may have been purchased or donated after 1897, making this a conservative estimate of the significance of the Peal bequest.

17. S. E. Peal to Percy Smith, 17 January 1892, MS-Papers-1187-270, Polynesian Society Collection.

18. Peal to Smith, undated but marked received 16 April 1892, ibid.

19. S. E. Peal, ‘The Ancestors of the Maori’, Journal of the Polynesian Society, 6, 24 (1897), pp. 174–76. Most of these terms were originally linguistic designations, but Peal was sceptical of the significance of philology and preferred to read them as racial terms.

20. See Orientalism and Race, throughout. The consensus of recent linguistic and anthropological research is that Polynesians are part of the larger Austronesian language family. The Austronesian language family is normally divided in four: Atayalic (North Taiwan); Tsouic (central Taiwan); Paiwanic (North, Central and eastern Taiwan); and finally the larger Malayo-Polynesian family. Linguistic evidence suggests that the Polynesians migrated into the southern Pacific via Melanesia from their ancient and distant homeland in south China/Taiwan, but many of the distinctive Māori linguistic and cultural forms took shape in the Pacific itself. See Douglas G. Sutton (ed.), The Origins of the First New Zealanders, Auckland, 1994.


23. Best to Peal undated, but in response to Peal’s letter dated 31 August 1895, MS 80-115-02/02, Polynesian Society Collection. Peal’s letter to Best has not survived, but the phrasing of Best’s letter suggests that he was replying to specific questions raised by Peal. Best also sent Peal a newspaper clipping describing a Māori ‘phallic cult’, Best to Peal May–June 1893, MS-Papers-1187-113, Polynesian Society Collection.


25. Smith died in 1922; Best and Tregear both died in 1931.


27. Sorrenson, Manifest Duty pp. 75–78; Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race, pp. 80, 82, 149.


32. Verne Harris, ‘A Shaft of Darkness: Derrida in the Archive’, Refiguring the Archive, p. 65. Derrida made this point with regards to Yoshef Yerushalmi’s positioning himself as ‘exterior to his object’ in his Freud’s Moses. Derrida,
With sustained contact with Europeans developing in the 1770s, formal annexation in the 1840s, and sustained armed struggle against the British in the 1840s.

During these travels, I became painfully aware of how large my personal colonial archive was, as I heaved my overstuffed bags on and off trains, tuk-tuks, and rickshaws. Eventually, the power of paper won over modern fabric, as my pack split and archival integrity was only restored when I purchased a massive canvas gear bag from a merchant who sold surplus from the Indian army, an ironic repository given the army’s role in ‘disciplining’ Punjab in the wake of Indira Gandhi’s assassination.


In this regard, the National Library stands in stark contrast to the India Office Library on Blackfriars Road where I did a great deal of my research (or its current home in the new British Library at St. Pancras), which continues to be dominated by portraits of East India Company officials and an ambiance of imperial authority.

The National Library in 1990, the sesquicentennial of the Treaty, commissioned this work.


Chapter 2 of this volume.

Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language A.M Sheridan Smith (trans.), New York, 1972, pp.129, 130

Alexander Turnbull Library, September 2003, 1.


The relationship between the Alexander Turnbull Library and the National Library were fiercely debated during the 1960s: see ‘Some Comments on the Proposed National Library’, undated mss, MS-Papers-0006-35, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.


G. Thomas Tanselle has observed that ‘[w]hen historians speak of ‘archives’, they usually mean collections of documents that accumulated as the by-products of the operation of organisations (often governments) and business firms.’ G. Thomas Tanselle, ‘The World as Archive’, Common Knowledge, 8, 2 (2002), p.402.

The key locus for this is Derrida’s discussion of the Greek derivation of ‘archive’ in Archive Fever.


7 Richard Saumarez Smith, Rule by Records: Land Registration and Village Custom in Early British Panjab, Delhi, 1996.


14 Penny Van Toorn, Writing Never Arrives Naked: Early Aboriginal Cultures of Writing in Australia, Melbourne, 2006.


18 Important entry points into this literature include: Judith Simon and Linda Tuhiwi Smith, A Civilising Mission? Perceptions and Representations of the Native Schools System, Auckland, 2001; and Linda Tuhiwi Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, Dunedin, 1999.


20 For example, Kuni E. H. Jenkins, Becoming Literate, Becoming English, Auckland, 1993.


26 Prior to contact with Europeans, Ngāi Tahu Whānui’s population was relatively small and quite mobile. The population was dispersed within a large takiwā (tribal domain), which encompassed the vast majority of the South Island and the islands of the Fouveaux Strait, and individuals and communities moved to exploit seasonably available foods and resources (mahika kai).


32 Best’s description remains the standard summation: ‘Another form of mnemonics is seen in what the Maori calls rākau whakapapa. These were pieces of wood about thirty inches to three feet in length. They were carefully fashioned so as to present on one side a series of prominent knobs with slots between; one before me has twenty-six such knobs. These staves were employed as aids to memory in reciting genealogies, but were by no means numerous; a few have been preserved in our museums. The better finished specimens are adorned with carved designs.’ Elsdon Best, *The Maori as He Was: A Brief Account of Maori Life as It Was in Pre-European Days*, 2 vols, Wellington, 1924, II, pp.201–02.

33 There is only one known case in which a written whakapapa ‘matches’ its rākau whakapapa: The Auckland Museum holds a rākau whakapapa that belonged to Pango Ngawene, a tohunga of Ngāti Whakaue, and the accompanying whakapapa written by his son Hamuera Pango. See Roger Neich, *Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngati Tarawhai Woodcarving*, Auckland, 2001), pp.46–47. As an aside here, we should note that Ngāi Tahu did not develop the elaborate and expansive carving traditions that fl ourished in the central and northern parts of the North Island during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, largely as a result of the iwi’s smaller, more mobile and more diffuse population. Ngāi Tahu traditions of carving are briefly assessed within an assessment of tribal style in: D. R. Simmons, *Whakairo: Maori Tribal Art*, Auckland, 1985), pp.170–71.


35 Raymond Firth, *Economics of the New Zealand Maori*, Wellington, 1959, 279–

36 This interface between material object and embodied knowledge echoes the ties between wampum belts and the performance of Iroquoian orators: see Michael K. Foster, *Another Look at the Function of Wampum in Iroquois-White Councils*, in Francis Jennings, (ed.), *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy*, Syracuse, 1985, p.105.


42 Ibid., p.139.

43 This can be clearly inferred from F. A. Anson, (ed.), *The Piraki Log (e Pirangi ahau koe); or Diary of Captain Hempleman*, London, 1910; and also from the marginal literacy of many of those seafaring Europeans recorded in German missionary Johannes Wohlens's Ruaupuke registers, MS-0967, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


45 See, for example, the references to reading, newspapers, and the distribution of Bibles in Bishop Selwyn's narrative: George Augustus Selwyn, *New Zealand: Part I: Letters from the Bishop to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*, London 1847, pp.18–20.


50 The rates listed below are calculated after discounting proxy signatures and blank spaces next to names of signers (which cannot be interpreted as marking someone as either literate or non-literate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deed Year</th>
<th>Percentage of signatures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kemp's Deed 1848</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemp's Receipt 1849</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantell's Final Receipt 1849</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murihiku: Otago Receipt 1853</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murihiku: Awarua Receipt 1854</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murihiku: Final Receipts 1854</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rakiura Deed 1864</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Kemp’s Ngaitahu Deed, Te Wai Pounamu – Canterbury and Otago’, WS279-f37-CAN 1, Archives New
Zealand, Wellington. This file also includes the signed receipts; 'Murihiku-Southland, 1853', W5279-f40-OTG 1; and the signed receipts; 'Stewart Island-Southland, 1864', W5279-f46-OTG 5.


52 It is also important to note that those Kāi Tahu living on Ruapuke who worked to attain English did not access it as a freestanding language of commerce in the fashion that most colonists hoped. Instead they accessed it through *te reo* and through the Bible: Wohlers noted that most of his congregation worked on their English by reading an English version of the New Testament alongside the vernacular version. J. F. H. Wohlers, *Memories of the life of J. F. H. Wohlers missionary at Ruapuke, New Zealand: an autobiography*, John Houghton (trans.), Dunedin, 1895.


55 For example, William Hirst of Sydney, who claimed to have purchased 20,000 acres of land north of Moeraki, from Tuhawaiki, was awarded just 263 acres in 1843. Deed-No. 443 – Turton, *Maori Deeds*, p.429.

56 It is important to understand that a context for this sale was the agreements signed between Ngāi Tahu’s Ngāti Toa and Te Āti Awa rivals and the New Zealand Company in late 1839, which sold a large portion of central New Zealand, including the northern portion of the South Island. In signing the Wentworth-Jones deed, these Kāi Tahu chiefs hoped to gain financially from the transaction as well as asserting their traditional rights and paramountcy over their own land. These deeds were also rendered invalid, since Captain Hobson had issued a proclamation on 30 January 1840, on the authority of Governor Gipps, which stated that all future private land sales would have no legal standing. Alexander Mackay, *A Compendium of Official Documents Relative to Native Affairs in the South Island*, 2 vols, Wellington 1872–1873, I, 23, pp.64–66; Harry Evison, *The Ngai Tahu Deeds: A Window on New Zealand History*, Christchurch, 2006, pp.40–45.

57 This extends and refines Skaria’s observation about the presumed fixity and greater legal weight attached to written contracts rather than oral agreements in colonial spaces. Skaria, ‘Writing, Orality and Power’, pp.25, 27.


59 Horomona, Huruhuru, and Paitu to Mantell, 6 Dec. 1848, ibid.


61 Mantell’s census of Ngāi Tahu has also been pivotal in defining the basic parameters of tribal membership: see *Ngaitahu Kaumatua Alive in 1848 as Established by the Maori Land Court in 1925 and the Ngai Tahu Census Committee in 1929*, Wellington, 1967.


63 Matthias Tira to Walter Mantell, 20 Nov. 1848, ibid.

64 After winning the seat for Wallace, Mantell entered Parliament in 1861. His growing commitment to supporting Ngāi Tahu claims underpinned a checkered parliamentary career, which saw Mantell twice serving as ‘Native
Minister’ and twice resigning from the position when the government reneged on its commitments to address Ngāi Tahu claims.


67 Haami, Pūtea Whakairo, ch. 6. ‘Muttonbirding’ refers to the annual harvest of juvenile sooty shearwaters (Puffinus griseus) from islands in Foveaux Strait by members of Ngāi Tahu.

68 Of course, this is not to suggest that written whakapapa were necessarily less selective in their recording of ancestors than the oral recitation of genealogies with the aid of rākau whakapapa: there is no doubt that written genealogies retained the political and potentially combative sensibility inherent within all whakapapa.

69 This characterisation is based upon: ‘Book containing waiata and whakapapa by Hoani Matiu’, Beattie Papers, MS-582/F/19; ‘Whakapapa book’, Beattie Papers, MS-582/E/7; ‘Notebook of John Kahu’, accessed through Beattie Papers, MS-582/F/1; ‘Whakapapa’, Beattie Papers, MS-582/E/40, all in the Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

70 For example, see the use of John Kahu’s notebook: ‘H21 – Hoani Te Kaahu, “He korero mo Kati Tuhaitara,” in ‘Ngāi Tahu Maori Trust Board: Papers relating to Ngāi Tahu claim brought before the Waitangi Tribunal’ (Wai-27), AG-653/190, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

71 Te Maire Tau has stressed the cultural importance of these books and the benefits that have flowed from them to Ngāi Tahu. He notes that other iwi have become increasingly dependent on colonial legal records, especially Land Court minutes, for the reconstruction of whakapapa, a problematic legacy given the nature of those legal forums and the strikingly partial and adversarial forms of knowledge produced within them. Tau, Oral Traditions, p.34.

72 Tau, ‘Death of Knowledge’.

73 See Lachy Paterson, Colonial Discourses; and Curnow, Hopa and McRae, (eds), Rere Atu.

74 The leading stationer H. Wise & Co. served as the agent for the newspaper Te Wananga: Te Wananga, 25 September 1875, p.237.

75 Subscribers to the newspaper Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani in the mid-1870s included Te Wehi (Otago Heads), Mere Kikeri Hape, James Apes, Joseph Anaha, Tame Parata, Haereroa, Te Rangihuta, Matthew Kapene (Waikouaiti), Ihaia Waitiri and Teone Topi (Ruapuke), Raniera Erihana, Hori and Tini Kerei Taiaroa (Otakou), Hone Mira (Purakanui), Kereopa Maiatu and Matiha Tiramorehu (Moeraki). See Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani, 22 May 1872, p.7; 22 January 1873, p.7; 11 August 1874, p.193; 1 December 1874, p.293; 8 June 1875, p.117; 2 November 1875, p.250; 30 May 1876, p.120; 19 December 1876, p.292; 22 May 1877, pp.27–28.

76 See chapter 3 of this volume.

77 On shops and machinery: Te Waka Maori o Niu Tirani, 22 February 1876, p.38; whakapapa and rights: Te Wananga, 9 November 1878, p.563; meetings: Te Wananga, 18 May 1878, p.257–58; on the claim: Te Wananga, 26 April 1875, p.73.

78 See, for example, the report of the Te Aute graduate Tutere Wi Repa (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungungu, and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) of Kāi Tahu communities at Puketeraki, Waikouaiti, and Otakou, in the newspaper Pipiwhararoa: He Kupu Whakamarama, April 1900, pp.9–10, which noted the ways in which Kāi Tahu work was connected with the colonial economy, the extent to which English was spoken by Kāi Tahu communities, and the iwi’s engagement with European culture while nevertheless affirming Kāi Tahu’s fundamental Māoriness. I would like to
thank Lachy Paterson for pointing me to this account.

79 The Wairau purchase handed to Ngāti Toa, Ngāi Tahu’s enemies, the lands that they had captured in north Canterbury after their sacking of Kaiapoi pa in 1832. Tiramorehu’s letter stressed that Ngāti Toa had been driven back by a series of Ngāi Tahu raids in the mid-1830s, and therefore they had reasserted their mana over those lands once more.

80 New Zealand Spectator and Cook Strait’s Guardian, 17 February 1849, p.3.


83 ‘Transcript of Petition by Matiaha Tiramorehu and others...’, MS-0439/069, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


86 Of course, Parliament was in many ways an institution that privileged orality, yet we must recognise that many speeches were written and were also profoundly intertextual since they referred to a wide range of documents and texts. Most importantly, the population at large accessed Parliament through written texts, especially in the form of reprinted speeches and in newspaper accounts of parliamentary debates.


90 Innis, Empire and Communication; Harold A. Innis, The Bias of Communication, Toronto, 1951.

CHAPTER 12


3 The Robinson and Gallagher thesis suggested that events at the edge of the empire – ‘local crises’ – prompted British ‘expansion’ in order to protect existing British interests. They suggested, therefore, that ‘imperial expansion’ was not the outcome of any aggressive ideology, but instead was essentially an improvised process born out of a sequence of on-the-spot decisions and ad hoc arrangements. Most importantly, this suggested that
indigenous economic development and local politics were central to any understanding of empire-building.

4 For an important discussion of this project of building a national history in Australia see Ann Curthoys, ‘We’ve Just Started Making National Histories and You Want Us to Stop?’, in Antoinette Burton (ed.), After the Imperial Turn: Thinking With and Through the Nation, Durham, NC, 2003, pp.70–89.

5 These were the four primary concerns identified by David Feildhouse in his landmark appraisal of imperial history, ‘Can Humpty-Dumpty be Put Together Again? Imperial history in the 1980s’, Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, 12 (1984), pp.9–23.


11 See, for example, the programmatic essay: Ranajit Guha, ‘On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India’, in Ranaji Guha (ed.), Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society, New Delhi, 1981, pp.1–8.


14 The landmark works here are: Catherine Hall, White, Male, and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History, New York, 1992; Antoinette Burton, Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915, Chapel Hill, 1994; Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: the ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Eff eminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century, Manchester, 1995.

16 Gibbons, ‘Cultural Colonization and National Identity’, p.6. This enlarged understanding of colonisation was already hinted at by Tony Simpson, James Belich, Angela Ballara, and Judith Binney.


18 Ibid., pp.27–68.


20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p.13.

22 Ibid., p.15. In a similar vein, Gibbons elsewhere notes that there were ‘many important contestatory elements within this discourse [of colonial writing]’. He identifies influential corrective traditions, including one that stressed ‘the legitimacy, vitality, and persistence of the indigenous peoples; another is writing by women that seeks to revalue those experiences eliminated, denigrated, or misrepresented by male writers’. Gibbons, ‘Non-Fiction’, pp.28–29. The place of writing by Māori, in either English or te reo, that engaged with European ideas or that exhibited an angular perspective on European culture is not clear within this formulation.


28 Ibid.


30 This shift was reinforced by the concomitant turn to questions of empire in literary studies and the strong interest
of post-colonial critics in non-literary forms of textual production.


38 See Anthony N. Penna, Nature’s Bounty: Historical and Modern Environmental Perspectives, Armonk, p.7.


43 Some of these dynamics are explored in Tony Ballantyne, Talking, Listening, Writing, Reading: Communication and Colonisation: the 2009 Allan Martin Lecture, Canberra, 2009.

44 Hilliard, ‘Colonial Culture and the Province of Cultural History’.


46 Poovey, A History of the Modern Fact, p.66.


48 Manu Goswami, Producing India: from Colonial Economy to National Space, Chicago, 2004, chapters 1 and 2. This is also suggested at several points in Lydia Wevers, Country of Writing: Travel
Writing and New Zealand, 1809–1900, Auckland, 2002.


CHAPTER 13

1 One attempt to foreground the connections between locality, the region and transnational networks is Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney, ‘Asia in Murihiku: Towards a Transnational History of Colonial Culture’, in Brian Moloughney and Tony Ballantyne (eds), Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand’s Pasts, Dunedin, 2006, pp.65–92.


3 Two key works that forward the notion of ‘placing’ intellectual history are Michael O’Brien, Placing the South, Jackson, 2007; Charles W. J. Withers, Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically About the Age of Reason, Chicago, 2007.


11 Stone’s Otago and Southland Directory, 1891, 125.


14 Otago Witness, 2 April 1902, p.32; for other instances of this usage see: Otago Witness, 5 February 1891, p.6 and 20 July
1893, p.32.


18 ‘Gore’, *Cyclopedia*, p.762.

19 For example, Herries Beattie, 12 April 1895, ‘A Boy’s Diary [IV]’, MS-582/L/4, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


26 *Census*, April 1891, table xvi, 18 and tables xxxixi and xxxviii, appendix, xl–xli. Although the census data was not broken down to give accurate figures for each specific locale, we can infer a high rate of church attendance for Gore; in 1891, the national rate of regular attendance averaged 28.25 per cent but the census points to a substantially higher rate across Southland’s counties, averaging 45 per cent.


29 Ibid., p.54; McArthur, *Kirk on the Hill*, p.25.

30 Keen, ‘Feeding the Lambs’, p.52.

31 Rosemarie Smith, *The Ladies Are At It Again!: Gore Debates the Women’s Franchise*, Wellington, 1993, p.84.

32 Clarke, ‘“Tinged with Christian Sentiment”’, p.107.


35 *Proceedings of the Synod of Otago and Southland, 1891*, appendix, pp.61–62; Ibid., 1892, appendix, p.59. Pukerau was the only Presbyterian Sunday school in the Gore region that did not have a library by 1892.

36 Ibid., 1892, appendix, p.8; Southern Standard, 24 January 1893, p.3.

37 *Proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland 1893*, appendix, p.67.
38 Mataura Ensign, 2 June 1893, p.7.
39 Beattie, Gore, p.49.
40 Ibid., pp.87–89.
41 Mataura Ensign, 15 June 1883, p.2; 24 August 1883, p.5; 2 June 1893, p.7; 30 May 1893, p.5.
42 Otago Witness, 1 October 1881, p.13 and 22 October 1881, p.12.
43 Mataura Ensign, 15 June 1883, p.2.
45 Catalogue of Books in the Gore Athenaeum, Gore, 1889.
46 Beattie, 4 January 1894, ‘A Boy’s Diary [III]’, MS-582/L/3, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.
47 Ibid.
49 Mataura Ensign, 2 June 1893, p.7
50 Southern Standard, 20 June 1893, p.3 and 23 June 1893, p.3.
51 Southern Standard, 13 June 1893, p.3 and 8 September 1893, p.2.
53 Mataura Ensign, 1 June 1888, p.2.
54 ‘Gore’, Cyclopedia, p.764; also see the prospectus in Southern Standard, 19 August 1887. In 1906, the Southern Standard converted into a morning daily, The Gore Standard struggled against the Southland Times and Otago Daily Times, before being absorbed by the Mataura Ensign in 1908 and finally folding in 1910.
55 Post and Telegraph Links Have Served Ensign Well’, ibid., p.21.
56 Arnold, New Zealand’s Burning, pp.220–34.
57 These are at the heart of Smith, The Ladies Are At It.
58 Southern Standard, 2 June 1893, p.2. Also see the ethnographic article ‘Where the Women Propose’, with its implicit links to suffrage debates in Mataura Ensign, 9 June 1893, p.2; this story was sourced from The Million.
60 This pattern – mixing local preoccupations with an intense interest in the development of the nearest city – can be discerned in most small town newspapers throughout New Zealand.
61 For example, Mataura Ensign 1 June 1888, p.4 and 7 September 1888, p.4.
62 Mataura Ensign, 24 August 1883, p.5.
63 Arnold, New Zealand’s Burning, p.299.
64 Beattie 7 July 1893, ‘A Boy’s Diary 2’, MS-582/L/2 and 11 July 1893, ‘A Boy’s Diary [III]’, MS-582/L/3, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.
65 25 July 1893, ‘A Boy’s Diary [III]’.
67 Ibid., 12 April 1895, ‘A Boy’s Diary [IV]’.
68 These were given to her by her day and Sabbath schools and included gifts from friends and family, and a volume from a ‘devoted admirer’. ‘Notes on the Beattie, Thomson and Herries Families’, MS-582/L/31, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.
69 For example, Beattie, 12 July 1894 and 1 October 1894, ‘A Boy’s Diary [III]’, MS-582/L/3, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.
70 Mary Cranstoun Diary, 13 August 1906, 92-062, Hocken Collections, Dunedin; Nina Andrew to Miss Elliot, 23 February 1904, ‘Scrapbook, Mostly Containing Papers of Matilda Jane Quertier’, MS-3001/066, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.
72 Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand, Taken for the Night of the 3rd
of April, 1881, p.136; Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand Taken for the Night of the 31st March, 1901, p.280. Illiteracy was largely confined to a diminishing group of older settlers, those who had not finished primary schooling, and a very small group of illiterate adults of working age.


74 Early colonists were not enthusiastic users of the post: in 1853, the post office handled just 2.3 letters per person per annum. But by 1875, colonists in southern New Zealand received 11.96 letters per capita per annum and sent 14.43, by 1880 there had been a substantial increase in correspondence with southern colonists on average each receiving 22.03 letters and sending 23.18. By 1885, there was further growth with 33.52 letters received per capita per annum and 27.75 sent. The Cyclopedia of New Zealand: Wellington Provincial District, Wellington, 1897, p.156; Statistics New Zealand: 1875, pp.15, 177; 1880, pp.17, 167; 1890, pp.19, 235; 1895, p.394.

75 Rose, Intellectual History, p.66.

76 Beattie, 7 June 1893, ‘A Boy’s Diary’.

77 Southern Standard, 23 June 1893, p.3.

78 ‘Rules’, Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Society, Session 1899; this liberalisation of the rules passed in 1898: Minutes of Annual Meeting, 15 February 1888, Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Roll and Minute Book, Go 78/1858, IA, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.


80 Gore Literary & Debating Society, Reminder Card [undated], Beattie Scrapbook 1, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

81 ‘Syllabus’, Course of Lectures, Gore Young Men’s Society, 78/158, Series 5, Inwards Syllabus, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore. Caroline Freeman was the first female graduate of Otago University in 1885.

82 Secy, GYM to J.W. Poynton, 3 March 1899, GO 78/158, Series 3: Correspondence: Inwards and Outwards, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

83 Course of Lectures, Gore Young Men’s Society, 78/158, Series 5, Inwards Syllabus, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

84 ‘The Journal’, 30 April 1895, Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, GO 78/58, Series 2A, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

85 For example, ‘Syllabus, Session 1899’, Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Session 1899.


87 Southern Standard, 12 July 1895, p.6.

88 Southern Standard, 16 June 1893, p.2; 23 June 1893, p.3; 1 September 1893, p.3.

89 Gore Girls’ Literary Club, Syllabi 1904 and 1909, Beattie Scrapbook 1, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

90 Southern Standard, 16 June 1893, p.2.


92 Fairburn, Ideal Society, p.250.

93 Ibid., pp.187, 253.


96 Southern Standard, 14 March 1899, p.2.


98 Roll of Attendance, Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Roll and Minute Book, Go 78/1858, IA, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

100 ‘Rules’, Gore Literary and Debating Society, Beattie Scrapbook 1, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

101 Mataura Ensign, 2 June 1893, p.4.


104 Minutes of Annual Meeting, 15 March 1900, Gore Young Men’s Temperance Mutual Improvement Society, Roll and Minute Book, Go 78/1858, 1A, Hokonui Heritage Centre, Gore.

105 Minutes of Meeting, 29 March 1900, ibid.

106 Minutes of Meeting, 9 May 1900, ibid.


108 Reid has noted that colonial papers were deeply invested in controversy. Francis Reid, ‘Newspapers as Objects of Natural History?’, ENNZ: Environment and Nature in New Zealand, 1, 3 (2006), p.11.


111 Arnold, New Zealand’s Burning, p.119.


CHAPTER 14


4 Donna Awatere, Maori Sovereignty, Auckland, 1984, especially pp.8–10, 45.


9 This move makes the Tribunal more palatable to the broader public. In framing the state’s violations of the Treaty as acts of the ‘Crown’ the impetus for colonisation is relocated to Britain and less attention is drawn to the direct involvement and benefit of colonists in the process of colonisation.
10 Janine Hayward's important discussion of the emergence of these principles reconstructs their development but does not explore the analytical consequences of this feedback loop. Janine Hayward, 'Appendix: The Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi', in The Rangahau Whanui National Overview, pp.475–94.

11 See, for example, Dorothy V. Jones, License for Empire: Colonialism by Treaty in Early America, Chicago, 1982; A Collection of Treaties And Engagements With the Native Princes And States of Asia Concluded, On Behalf of the East India Company, by the British Governments In India, London, 1812; Michael H. Fisher, (ed.), The Politics of the British Annexation of India, 1757–1857, Delhi, 1993.

12 For a lengthier assessment of this work which reads it in a comparative international context see chapter 12.


16 Of course, class has been central in work on nineteenth-century Pākehā social history.


20 Damon Salesa, ‘New Zealand’s Pacific’,


26 Winder and Lewis note that regional traditions of research in geography have been eclipsed by the preoccupation with identity and the nation. Gordon Winder and Nick Lewis, ‘Performing a New Regional Geography’, *New Zealand Geographer*, 66, 2 (2010), pp.97–104.


30 I have regularised the punctuation in this quotation: *New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette*, 19 June 1840, p.1.

31 Some of these are usefully reconstructed in John Curnin, *Index to the Laws of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1904, pp.1–6.


36 These dynamics, together with the role of railways in shaping social difference, are at the heart of Manu Goswami’s arguments in Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space, Chicago, 2004, especially chapter 3.


39 See, for example, Southland Times, 6 February 1890, p.3; Otago Witness, 28 January 1892, p.21 and 8 October 1902, p.11.


47 Ballantyne, ‘Thinking Local’.


50 Massey, Space, Place, and Gender, p.28.


53 This fits broadly with the findings of Keith Pickens, R. R. Hall and Paul Husbands who found that small group of persisters were able to construct institutional infrastructure despite the high rates of transience that shaped colonial life: Keith Pickens, ‘Canterbury 1851–1881: Demography and Mobility: A Comparative Study’, PhD thesis, Washington University, St Louis, 1976; R. R. Hall, ‘Te Kohurua: Continuity and Change in a New Zealand Rural District’, PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, 1987; Paul Husbands, ‘The People of Freemans Bay’ 1880–1914’, MA thesis,
University of Auckland, 1992.

54 Three notable exceptions to this are James Belich, Raewyn Dalziel and Rollo Arnold who were alive to the deep economic and cultural significance of the railways. Rollo Arnold, New Zealand's Burning: The Settler's World In the Mid 1880s, Wellington, 1994, specifically chapter 14; Belich, Making Peoples, pp.352–53; Raewyn Dalziel, 'Railways and Relief Centres (1870–1890)', in Keith Sinclair (ed.), The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand, Auckland, 1990, pp.99–124.


57 Massey, 'Some Times of Space', p.108.


59 Mataura Ensign, 2 November 1883, p.3; 31 October 1884, p.2; 6 September 1889, p.5; 28 April 1893, p.5; 7 December 1894, p.2; 8 June 1899, p.5; 17 May 1898, p.3; 9 December 1887, p.3; 30 May 1884, p.1.

60 Mataura Ensign, 1 July 1887, p.5; 14 November 1890, p.5; 28 December 1897, p.4; 13 June 1884, p.3; 15 March 1892, p.4; 28 October 1897, p.5.

61 Mataura Ensign, 27 June 1890, p.9; 24 November 1898, p.3.

62 Mataura Ensign, 7 March 1890, p.4; 11 April 1893, p.2; 13 November 1894, p.5; 31 October 1884, p.2; 1 March 1892, p.6.

63 Herries Beattie Diaries, MS-582/L/1-3; Mary Cranston Diaries, 1905-January 1908, 92-062, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.


65 For a recent reflection on these processes see Te Maire Tau and Atholl Anderson, Ngai Tahu: A Migration History: The Carrington Text, Wellington, 2008.


68 Gibbons, ‘The Far Side of the Search for Identity’


74 This echoes Neil Lazarus’s observation that cultural approaches to colonialism that don’t take capitalism seriously render the history of the ‘global system either arbitrary or unintelligible’. Neil Lazarus, ‘The Fetish of the West’, in Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (eds), Marxism, Modernity and

75 For one rereading of this period see chapter 2 of this volume.


CONCLUSION

1 Chapter 10, ‘Mr Peal’s Archive’, reveals the centrality of archival work in generating the key analytical model in my own work.

2 Two key starting points for thinking about the archive’s place in research and writing are Carolyn Steedman, Dust: the Archive and Cultural History, New Brunswick, 2002 and Antoinette Burton (ed.), Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History, Durham, NC, 2005.


8 Nepia Mahuika, ‘“Closing the Gaps”: from Postcolonialism to Kaupapa Māori and Beyond’, New Zealand Journal of History, 45, 1 (2011), pp.15–32.


sense if we recognise that by ‘empire’ he is essentially designating what might be best thought of as ‘colonial sovereignty’.


18 Ibid., pp.517–18.

19 The preference for co-management regimes rather than fully returning places and resources to iwi has been a telling demonstration of this impulse to ensure that state power was reinvented instead of attenuated through the settlement process.


23 Johnson notes that claimants themselves are aware of the importance of biculturalism and this shapes oral evidence. Johnson, ‘Burdens of Belonging’.


26 Michael J. Stevens, ‘Muttonbirds and modernity in Murihiku: Continuity and Change in Kāi Tahu Knowledge’, PhD
30 Compare *New Zealand Herald*, 26 August 2000 with Binney’s reading of the controversy.
31 He suggests that ‘in the research undertaken for the Waitangi Tribunal, particularly in papers described as social and economic impact reports, very few historians have been able to show a direct link between Crown activity prior to the Second World War and Maori disadvantage in the post-war urbanised welfare state’. Michael Belgrave, ‘Looking Forward: Historians and the Waitangi Tribunal’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 40, 2 (2006), p.236.
32 Ibid., p.234.
34 On anti-Puritanism see John Stenhouse’s forthcoming essay in *Journal of New Zealand Literature*.
36 Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Malden, MA, 2004. While these uniformities were themselves influenced by empire-building, they were never simply the consequence of empire.
37 Jacob Pollock has been critical of historians not being willing to develop Gibbons’s argument for the post-WWII period, arguing that as a ‘discursive practice’ cultural colonisation has been perpetuated by historians such as Michael King and James Belich. Pollock’s reading of these works offers some significant insights, but extending the rubric of cultural colonisation into the 1990s is deeply problematic. Jacob Pollock, ‘Cultural Colonization and Textual Biculturalism’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 41, 2 (2007), p.183.
42 Ibid., p.73.
43 Mahuika, “Closing the Gaps””, p.16.


48 Fairburn, The Ideal Society and its Enemies.


51 On the emergence of ‘domains’ see Mary Poovey, Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830–1864, Chicago, 1995.

52 Sinclair, A Destiny Apart.
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