

Editors' Introduction

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This collection of essays has its genesis in the conference 'Interracial Intimacies: New Zealand Histories' held at the University of Otago in 2009. The conference brought together New Zealand and Australian scholars to reflect upon the 'affective turn' in the fields of colonial and imperial history, and to elaborate new ideas and approaches to histories of colonialism in New Zealand by focusing particularly upon the intersection between race and intimacy. We are grateful to the Royal Society of New Zealand Marsden Fund and the University of Otago for funding the event.

One of the key themes that emerged from the conference was the need to recognize the wide-ranging modes of intimacy that existed in the past. Reverend Rugby Pratt's post-war critique of New Zealand writing on colonial history is apposite. In 1945 Pratt noted that intimacy 'is a fine word of friendship but its value has been debased in some circles. It has come to be applied to sexual intercourse'.¹ Tony Ballantyne's essay, which opens this collection, draws attention to the transformation in the meanings of intimacy in colonial societies, particularly when attached to race. Echoing Pratt, Ballantyne argues that emphasis on the sexualized meanings of 'intimate' have framed much recent work on the cultural history of cross-cultural encounters. In his essay, Ballantyne moves beyond the equation of intimacy with sex to consider how 'strategic intimacies' between elite indigenous men and state officials underpinned colonial knowledge production, using southern New Zealand as a case study.

The essays that follow take up Ballantyne's challenge to take a broader view of intimacy when interpreting colonial history. Lachy Paterson discusses a set of encounters involving Indigenous peoples in Australia and New Zealand that were precipitated by the celebrations to mark the creation of the Australian Commonwealth in January 1901. Like Ballantyne's essay, the 'intimacy' examined by Paterson is concerned with modes of familiarity, fraternity and notions of close connection, that were often understood to underpin and foster the creation of imperial unity. Paterson asks how far these 'imperial intimacies' included Indigenous peoples, through a close examination of Indigenous perspectives and understandings of imperial fraternity in action.

Rani Kerin explores the relationship between Australian anthropologist Judy Inglis and her female Aboriginal informants. She makes use of an archive (field notes and raw survey data) that was considered too sensitive to place with the rest of Inglis' papers at the time of her death, and which helps to establish an important connection between research, cross-racial friendship and activism. Kerin draws attention both to the history of friendship as an important new site of research and to how these bonds of affection can be utilized by historians to unravel the complexities of cross-cultural encounter in the twentieth century. Kate Hunter also examines a newly emergent site of research in cross-cultural history: the strip tent. Like Kerin, Hunter draws upon new archival material, taking fragmented evidence from the histories of burlesque and the display of the Indigenous body, to argue that the strip tent was a complicated – and animated – space of interracial sexual desire, glamour, theatricality and deception, a space that operated in seeming contradiction to the larger picture of racial politics of the early twentieth century. Bronwyn Labrum likewise draws attention to

new sources. She gives a central place to visual and material sources in her examination of interracial proximity in the context of post-war Māori urbanization. Labrum asks how ‘practices of looking’ were implicated in and constitutive of (often-troubled) interracial intimacies in urban spaces – in houses, gardens, interiors and adjoining streets.

The remaining essays examine the legacies of interracial intimacy for families, focusing on personal histories, affect, sentiment, desire, and ambition. Kate Stevens interrogates the impact of formal colonization on the mixed race families and communities formed out of the whaling economy in southern New Zealand. The increasing pace of European settlement disrupted the economy and culture of southern whaling communities, a period of rapid change which some mixed race families were able to navigate more successfully than others. Stevens examines how this transition was managed, and why it was necessary, highlighting social respectability, cultural capital, and religion as crucial to gaining status within polite colonial society from the 1850s onwards. Importantly, Stevens demonstrates the significance of the historical moment to interpreting the reach and effects of colonial practices of statecraft upon families and communities. The complicated relationship between the state, race and intimacy is further examined by Angela Wanhalla and Erica Buxton who trace the experiences of 40 indigenous and mixed race women from the South Pacific who married American servicemen during World War II and attempted to enter the United States. Wanhalla and Buxton delineate the complicated legal situations caused by interracial marriage in foreign territories involving US forces, and point to the destructive effects of US military regulations and citizenship law upon the women and children left behind.

Staying with mixed race families, Michael Stevens draws attention to an unknown aspect in the history of interracial marriage in New Zealand: relationships between European women and Māori men. But this is more than a story tracing the contours of a non-conventional interracial marriage, rather, Stevens details the importance of a European woman to the maintenance of cultural knowledge and practices related to traditional food gathering (*mahika kai*) practices, notably ‘muttonbirding’ (*te hopu tītī ki Rakiura*) – the exclusive right to seasonally harvest juvenile sooty shearwaters from islands adjacent to Stewart Island held by genealogically entitled *Kāi Tahu*. In this instance, interracial marriage, which is often interpreted as playing a part in the process of colonizing culture and language, brought a woman into a *Kāi Tahu* family who played an integral role fostering and retaining cultural practices and traditions. Jane McCabe also draws upon her family history, using her grandmother’s experience as an entry point for thinking about the complicated relationship between a British tea planter and his mixed race children. Drawing on personal archives, letters, photographs and family memory, McCabe reconstructs their relationship as it played out in Assam and in New Zealand. Priority is given to everyday expressions of intimacy which, entirely determined by the colonial experience, were to have a lasting impact on the remembering of the Peters’ family history.

Memory and history are the focus of Annabel Cooper’s essay, which closes the collection. Cooper offers an examination of the connection between colonial war and interracial intimacy as expressed in fiction and film. Dealing in the territory of emotion, intimacy and feeling, and concentrating on the personal and the affective, the producers of these cultural artifacts raised questions about interracial relationships

that historians are only recently beginning to ask: are we shaped more powerfully by conflict, or by intimacy and intermarriage? Cooper addresses these themes in an exploration of the intimacies that appear repeatedly in stories about the New Zealand Wars. She demonstrates that these narratives of interracial harmony, friendship and romance during a time of conflict have played a central role in Pākehā public-history-making that stresses conciliation.

Taken together, these essays represent a body of new scholarship that interrogates new sources or rethinks well-known archival material in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific in an effort to attend to the diverse meanings and practice of race and intimacy in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹ M.A. Rugby Pratt to Dr. Laws, 18 February 1945, Folder 27, MS286, Reverend M A Rugby Pratt Papers, Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives (MCA), Christchurch.