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Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire

Colonial Relations, Humanitarian Discourses, and the Imperial Press

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Introduction

"Horrid Massacre in New Zealand"

– headline, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*,
14 April 1861

NEWS TRAVERSED THE British Empire slowly in the mid-nineteenth century, carried predominantly by horse, rail, sail, and steam transportation. Sometimes when communication occurred across great distance, rumour masqueraded as fact in an environment that lacked the context needed to understand the story/article. This occurred in Victoria, Vancouver Island, in May 1861, when the local newspaper, the *British Colonist,* reported fresh news of the Taranaki War in New Zealand dated to January and copied from a Hawaiian paper.[1] According to the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* extract, Maori insurgents had launched a surprise attack on a British settler community south of Auckland, New Zealand's capital. The details were chilling:

> The Natives came down from the mountains in great numbers and surprised one of the settlements near Auckland, murdering in the most inhuman manner about 850 inhabitants. The most horrid barbarities were practiced by them in the attack, defenceless farmers butchered, women with child were cut open, and small innocent children had their hands and feet cut off, and in that miserable position left to perish.[2]

This description of Maori atrocities was reminiscent of widely reported accounts of the 1857 Indian Rebellion. Then British audiences had been shocked by the rape and murder of European women and children by rebel Indian sepoys at Kanpur. News about the Taranaki War resonated in Victoria and inspired colonists to prepare to defend themselves against local First Nations.

However, the massacre described above never actually occurred, and the story's origins are murky. Rumours abounded in wartime New Zealand, and this narrative may have expressed the darkest fears of Auckland settlers who, throughout the Taranaki War, feared a surprise attack. The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*'s source, Captain F.H. Winslow of the whaling ship *Tamerlane*, had learned of the Maori attack second-hand while in port at the Chatham Islands located eight hundred kilometres east of New Zealand. Winslow was a veteran of the South Pacific, and as a news informant he represented one strand in a larger web of connections that facilitated the exchange of news across the Pacific. Indeed, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* had embellished Winslow's account by referring to an earlier report from the *Southern Cross*, an Auckland newspaper that, in late 1860, described the capability of Maori to overwhelm any settler community.[3]

Winslow's report seems to confirm this grim assessment. But the editor of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* misinterpreted the point of the *Southern Cross* – which was that the majority of Maori were not hostile and had no intention of taking advantage of their military strength. Ironically, Maori insurgents and colonial officials achieved a truce just as "Massacre in New Zealand" was reported across North America. Newspaper editors in New Zealand had tried to avoid this sort of hyperbole in order to prevent overseas comparisons between the Taranaki War and the Indian Rebellion, which was perceived as a war between races. As this example illustrates, though, interpreting news from afar was difficult. Journalists were challenged at both ends of a communications network (1) to craft narratives that could withstand the loss of context that occurred through transmission and (2) to report on news that was *new* but not necessarily *true*. This task was all the more difficult when writing about the fraught subject of racial violence.

Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire examines public characterizations of settler relations with Indigenous peoples in the press communities and print culture of New Zealand and Vancouver Island and the related effect of these colonies' different positions within networks of news production and transmission. Through a contextualized reading of print and politics,

I examine how colonists in both locations dealt with profound anxiety related to interracial violence in the 1850s and 1860s and how humanitarian discourses energized public debates over the rights of Indigenous peoples. By showing how news production and transmission operated, I am able to indicate how news about both local and international events reshaped the culture of colonialism across the Empire and mediated understandings of race in particular colonial locations according to the imagined audiences of newspaper editors. This comparative approach, which is centred on the connections between the press, settler anxiety, and humanitarian discourses, allows us to examine the consequences of the clusters of rebellions and Indigenous resistance that challenged British rule around 1860.

The Origins and Relevance of Humanitarian Discourses

Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire confirms recent work that argues that humanitarian discourses remained politically relevant across the nineteenth century.[4] But the story of the ongoing appeal of humanitarian philosophy in the press communities of New Zealand and Vancouver Island is controversial because it challenges a central tenet of the "new imperial history" of the British Empire. Prominent historians and historical geographers such as Ronald Hyam, Antoinette Burton, Catherine Hall, and Alan Lester argue that a long sequence of crises across the mid-nineteenth century – including the Matale Rebellion in Ceylon in 1848, the Xhosa cattle-killings of 1856–57, the Santhal insurrection of 1855–56, the Indian Rebellion of 1857–58, the New Zealand Wars of 1860–72, and the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 – facilitated the decline in the popularity of humanitarianism. These events are understood to have shaken the British Empire, hardening racial attitudes and encouraging the acceptance of scientific racial theories that stressed immutable racial difference.[5] This chronology associates the popularity of humanitarian discourses with events of the early nineteenth century, especially the campaign for the abolition of slavery. For these historians, the racial vitriol elicited during the colonial crises of the 1860s and the general failure to protect vulnerable Indigenous peoples in this era reveals that humanitarianism was a spent force.

Things played out differently on Vancouver Island and in New Zealand, though. Certainly the eighteen-month-long conflict that followed the British East India Company's rebellion in May 1857 was a global media event that heightened settler fears across the British Empire.[6] However, in New Zealand

and Vancouver Island, newspaper editors were cautious about highlighting the local relevance of the Indian Rebellion. The perceived racial savagery of this conflict was too dangerous. In these places, it continued to be politically strategic for settlers to employ humanitarian language to characterize their relations with Indigenous peoples. Humanitarianism was a flexible political language that could be harnessed for various ends: its ability to be adapted and appropriated energized a series of fierce debates, and these exchanges are at the heart of this book.

The origins of humanitarianism lie in both the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and Britain's evangelical revival. Humanitarianism's pre-occupation with social reform originated in the eighteenth century's "culture of sensibility," which drew upon the moral philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment and redefined physical pain as objectionable, characterizing sympathy and compassion for previously despised elements of society as the tenets of a virtuous character.[7] At the same time, Britain's eighteenth-century revival came out of a theological paradigm shift that emphasized "the message of justification by faith."[8] According to this Arminian doctrine, Christian believers could experience the assurance of their salvation and be justified by their faith in Christ. This theological shift emphasized that grace was available to all, and it empowered evangelical Christians to focus on the salvation of foreign unbelievers.[9] Central to both humanitarianism and Christian missions, then, was a belief in the vulnerability of Indigenous peoples and their potential to achieve a measure of "civilization" through Christian conversion and cultural reform.

The foundations of this worldview are both biblical and historical. Humanitarians held the monogenist belief that the book of Genesis revealed the descent of all human races from Adam and Eve.[10] Of course, the Bible has little to say about the origins of racial difference or human diversity. Here the Scottish Enlightenment's "four-stage theory" of cultural development proved both useful and popular.[11] According to this stadial theory of history, human societies across the world had developed unevenly over time and could be categorized according to their subsistence practices into four recognizable stages from the most primitive to the most advanced – hunting and gathering, pastoralism and nomadism, subsistence agriculture, and mercantile capitalism. Indeed, theorists like Adam Smith identified how the history of Great Britain exemplified the working out of this four-stage theory.

Drawing upon both Classical sources and the work of John Locke, this secular discourse of "civilization" associates gentlemanly farming with cultural sophistication and argues that land ownership is bound up with agricultural labour.[12] Those closest to "nature," like Indigenous peoples, were believed to lack rights to the territory they occupied if they did not improve it with their labour.[13] Humanitarians, however, believed that Indigenous peoples could fast-forward the epochal process of civilization by converting to Christianity and becoming integrated into the British liberal political economy. As I show, assessments of the civilized status of Indigenous peoples varied widely in New Zealand and Vancouver Island, depending upon whether the assessor accorded higher significance to secular or to religious measures of "civilization." The stakes of these seemingly esoteric debates were significant for Indigenous peoples: Were they to be accorded the full rights of British subjects or were they to be deemed legal minors worthy of protection?

The humanitarian movement came to prominence in Great Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through the campaign to end slavery across the British Empire. Middle-class evangelical Christians, from whom the abolition movement gained its strength, objected to how slavery contradicted "the liberty of moral choice and ethical behaviour."[14] In effect, slavery was a national sin. Humanitarians employed all the resources at their disposal, including modern print capitalism and the growth of the public sphere in Great Britain, to campaign for its legislative abolition, resulting in the end of the slave trade across the British Empire in 1807 and the abolition of slavery in 1833. What we must remember, though, is that Christian evangelicals would not have embraced the abolitionist movement had they not been thoroughly convinced that the Enlightenment principles of "benevolence, happiness, and liberty were the birth-right of all peoples."[15]

So with the success of the Abolitionist campaign, humanitarians like Thomas Fowell Buxton became interested in reforming the excesses of British colonialism in order to preserve the "atonement" that Great Britain had achieved. Most prominently, Buxton chaired the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes in 1835–36, which examined the injustices of British colonization around the world and suggested how settlement could occur with the least possible ill-effects on Indigenous peoples and at the lowest cost to Great Britain.[16] The committee's report emphasized that Christian missions and the idea of reforming Indigenous peoples by

"civilizing" them went hand in hand. This belief in Indigenous potential was grounded in the Christian tenet that the unity of Creation meant that, spiritually, all human races were equal.[17] The *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes* has been interpreted as the high point of humanitarianism's political influence in Great Britain. It had significant ramifications for subsequent British colonization, especially in New Zealand and Vancouver Island, as it established an obligation to treat Indigenous peoples justly. Humanitarian discourses garnered enduring power in the nineteenth century by characterizing British imperialism as a beneficial force in the world. They were attractive to the Colonial Office because protecting Indigenous peoples offered a means for London to justify maintaining control over the process of settlement.[18] The irony, of course, as historian Elizabeth Elbourne observes, is that, alongside the discourses of liberalism, abolitionism, and humanitarianism, British imperialism "was in fact dependent on violence, coercion and property theft to extend its control over ever-increasing tracts of land."[19]

Humanitarian discourses are inclusive. Anyone could express sympathy for Indigenous peoples, and anyone could assess their progress towards civilization. Because of the widespread use of humanitarianism in colonial print culture, I distinguish between *rhetorical* and *evangelical* humanitarianism. *Rhetorical* humanitarianism refers to the strategic, and often cynical, use of humanitarian language to promote the interests of colonists while, at the same time, asserting the need to protect Indigenous peoples. *Evangelical* humanitarianism refers to a powerful strand of humanitarian thought that developed out of missionary work and that was driven by a commitment to protect all Indigenous peoples but especially those who embraced Christianity. Rhetorical humanitarians often appropriated the language of evangelical humanitarians because of concerns related to the metropolitan surveillance of colonial affairs and the understanding that colonial executives operated under a humanitarian mandate. This being the case, humanitarian language provided an idealized portrait of settler relations with Indigenous peoples. As I show, colonial editors hoped that the press environment in Great Britain, which lacked an adequate context for understanding news from the colonies, would enhance their credibility. At the same time, colonial editors sometimes supported humanitarian policy and advocated the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights in order to conceal their anxiety regarding the threat of Indigenous violence.

Arguing against narratives of the precipitous decline of humanitarianism after 1837, I identify connections between humanitarianism, colonial anxiety, and debates over the rights of Indigenous peoples. From a common position of cultural superiority, colonial executives, newspaper editors, and missionaries all publicly invoked humanitarian themes, albeit with nuances in tone, content, and purpose. However, this is not a simple story about how rhetorical humanitarians thwarted the efforts of evangelical humanitarians to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples by usurping the language of sympathy. By its very nature humanitarian philosophy reified inequality within a hierarchy of races/cultures. And, with the emphasis on Indigenous peoples *becoming* civilized, their rights belonged to the future, not the present. Ironies and contradictions abounded. Sometimes rhetorical humanitarians fought for the rights of Indigenous peoples – to buy and sell land freely, to purchase and drink alcohol – in order to exploit them. Sometimes evangelical humanitarians did the opposite in order to (supposedly) protect them. But humanitarians of all stripes spoke a dialect of imperialism in that they all defended the British Empire's providential role in the world.

New Zealand and Vancouver Island in Comparison

New Zealand and Vancouver Island are useful sites for comparison not only because of the parallels in their historical development but because of their divergent locations within imperial networks of communication. Straddling the Pacific Rim, both regions were similarly distant geographically from Great Britain but occupied very different locations within the metropolitan imaginary. Settlers in New Zealand believed their affairs were closely scrutinized by metropolitan Britons, while settlers on Vancouver Island did not. This key difference provides a framework for my examination of how humanitarian discourses resonated in these two locales.

Both New Zealand and Vancouver Island were incorporated into British imperial networks through Captain James Cook's voyages of discovery in the 1760s and 1770s. Subsequent to European exploration, both regions were identified as sources of strategic resources and were sites of imperial contestation when visited by a variety of merchant shipping enterprises. Populous Indigenous communities lived in these spaces, and their martial cultures and excellent trading skills commanded respect from European newcomers.[20] Thus, when subsequent European commentators classified New Zealand's Maori and the Northwest Coast's First Nations peoples as

Figure 1 New Zealand and Vancouver Island

racially superior, they did so in reference to the ability of these communities to offer open resistance. This threat deepened as merchant shipping sold Indigenous peoples firearms that were employed in conflicts in both regions.[21] Indeed, when New Zealand and Vancouver Island officially became British colonies, both Maori and First Nations peoples were well supplied with firearms.[22] This military capacity unsettled notions of Indigenous racial inferiority and undermined the British military's ability to compel Indigenous acquiescence. The apparent threat of Indigenous violence pervaded

the colonial societies of New Zealand and Vancouver Island, and this was heightened by rumour, anxiety, and cultural difference.

New Zealand officially entered the British Empire in 1840. In 1846, Great Britain confirmed its sovereign control over the fur trade territory of the Columbia District through the Oregon Treaty with the United States, which, in 1849, led to the creation of Vancouver Island as a formal British colony administered by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). A humanitarian ethos infused metropolitan debates over the establishment of both colonies.[23] For example, just prior to 1840, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which had been resident in New Zealand since 1814, expressed its disapproval of the New Zealand Company's (NZC) plans to establish a settler colony. The CMS reiterated the concerns of the Aborigines Report in its opposition to British expansion, arguing that the establishment of a settler society would hasten the demise of Maori. In opposition, advocates of the NZC argued that their purpose was to benefit Maori.[24] But the Colonial Office intervened before the NZC could act, convinced, as Tony Ballantyne argues, "that the annexation of New Zealand and its formal incorporation into the empire was the most effective means of 'protecting' Maori."[25] Captain William Hobson established British sovereignty by negotiating the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi with Maori *rangatira* (tribal leaders). The treaty's recognition of Maori title to the territory of New Zealand has been attributed to the influence of humanitarian discourses within the Colonial Office.[26] Historian James Heartfield writes that the treaty "was the most singular outcome of the House of Commons' 1835 Select Committee on Aborigines" and was framed in the context of the Indigenous extinction that threatened Australia.[27] Likewise, in 1849, debates over the HBC's proposed administration of Vancouver Island centred on the company's fitness to oversee local First Nations based upon its legacy in the North American fur trade.[28] In this period, both advocates and critics of colonization framed their arguments in terms of the welfare of Indigenous peoples.

However, British colonization on Vancouver Island did not feature a founding treaty or the formal recognition of First Nations rights to the territory of Vancouver Island. Here we see the effects of debates over Indigenous title in Great Britain during the 1840s as well as of the absence of prominent evangelical humanitarians to help shape HBC policy. Both New Zealand and Vancouver Island featured systematic colonization schemes implemented by the NZC and the HBC. Systematic colonization was the brainchild of the political economist Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who sought

to regulate fledgling colonial societies by setting a high price on land. In this way, colonists would be compelled to participate in the local labour market and monied capitalists would be guaranteed labour to work their estates. Wakefield and his supporters sought to correct what they perceived as an excess of free land in British North America.[29] As Damon Salesa shows, the NZC's prospectus included an important role for Maori as it sought to maintain the stratified class structure of Great Britain while integrating Maori and colonists through a process of racial amalgamation.[30]

Systematic colonization failed in both New Zealand and Vancouver Island but for divergent reasons. In New Zealand, both the Treaty of Waitangi and the opposition of CMS missionaries kept the NZC from controlling the terms of colonization. Indeed, the NZC experienced considerable financial difficulty in 1843 because its business model had been based upon appropriating Maori territory and then reselling this land to colonists at a profit.[31] As I show, much subsequent conflict originated in the NZC's failure to purchase land from Maori. In contrast, the HBC's scheme for systematic colonization did not attract many emigrants even though it consolidated the power of local HBC elites. Vancouver Island remained a colonial backwater for non-Indigenous settlement until the Fraser River gold rush in 1858.

In any case, while the Colonial Office expected the HBC to extinguish Aboriginal title generally, the HBC only wanted to recognize First Nations sites of occupation and cultivation.[32] Here the HBC echoed the findings of the 1844 House of Commons Select Committee on New Zealand, which had concluded that Indigenous peoples had "but a qualified dominion ... a right of occupancy only," which meant title to only their cultivated fields and villages.[33] This decision reflected a Lockean view of property rights, which associated land ownership primarily with occupation and cultivation. The view that the vast majority of territory on Vancouver Island had not been "improved" and therefore lay in waste ignored how Aboriginal peoples shaped the ecologies in which they lived and how they utilized a diversity of resources across their customary territories. In effect, the HBC's limited recognition of Aboriginal territorial rights implemented the policy that the NZC had originally envisioned for New Zealand but that the Colonial Office had rejected.[34] This back and forth over the nature of Indigenous land rights across the 1840s is revealing. Despite a long history of British settlement in both North America and the Pacific, the Colonial Office approached the issue of Indigenous land tenure with flexibility and, sometimes, disinterest. What occurred in situ depended very much upon local

conditions, the beliefs of the agents enacting policy, and the degree of metropolitan surveillance.

Similarities in actual practice occurred on the ground, though. Between 1849 and 1854, Governor James Douglas effectively recognized Aboriginal title on Vancouver Island through fourteen territorial purchases.[35] In New Zealand in 1846, Governor George Grey resisted instructions from the colonial secretary, Lord Henry George Grey, to renege on the Treaty of Waitangi by limiting Maori title to their village sites and cultivations.[36] We see the consequences of Indigenous power in this pragmatic recognition of land title on the part of colonial executives. Simply confiscating Indigenous territory was too dangerous as both New Zealand and Vancouver Island lacked substantial military garrisons to back up settler bluster. Yet extinguishing Indigenous title both cheaply and quickly remained a significant challenge in both New Zealand and Vancouver Island. Indigenous land rights are at the heart of the story of settler colonialism as "the primary aim of the settlers was to get possession of the land."[37] I seek to understand how colonial journalists and governors utilized humanitarian language to advocate for land-hungry settlers in the face of both the threat of Indigenous resistance and a lack of money.

I stress the roles of both real resistance and settler anxieties about the possibilities of Indigenous violence in shaping editorial discourses and political policy. Settler anxiety was a constant in both Vancouver Island and New Zealand but it was (and is) also a controversial subject. The study of settler anxiety is intrinsically linked to the mutually constitutive categories of gender, race, and class. Anxiety was a subversive emotion: it contradicted Victorian scripts of manliness, racial superiority, and upper/middle-class prowess.[38] As public exemplars, editors trod very carefully when they wrote about their fears and the strengths of Indigenous peoples. Yet, in spite of these taboos, newspapers offer the best evidence of settler fears. Writing in real time, editors often reported on, and committed transgressive acts in the midst of, frightening circumstances. Their dedication to narrating breaking news compelled them to grapple with the challenges of assessing, diffusing, and channelling settler fears. Ultimately, this study reveals much more about the psyche of settlers than it does about the capacity of Indigenous peoples for violence. At the same time, acts of settler violence, coercion, and dispossession directed against Indigenous peoples were intrinsic to the colonial project, and they bred fear.[39] I engage with a rich New Zealand historiography – one that examines how the Crown's pursuit of Maori

territory precipitated a decade of violence in the 1860s known as the New Zealand Wars. Lesser known is the extent to which the perceived threat of First Nations resistance guided debates over racial segregation in Victoria and, for a limited time, led to support for the recognition of Aboriginal title on Vancouver Island and in British Columbia.

I pay attention to the repercussions of New Zealand's and Vancouver Island's embedded positions within the British Empire. Rather than occupying proto-national environments, colonists in both spaces believed that Great Britain controlled local affairs in spite of its great distance and the Colonial Office's inefficiency. For New Zealand, this involves the study of colonial print culture during the New Zealand Wars and, especially, during the Taranaki War in 1860–61. The New Zealand Wars were a series of conflicts between Maori and the Crown, and they were fought over the control of land, the implementation of British sovereignty, and a defence of Maori *mana* (i.e., prestige, authority, and/or spiritual power). However, rather than interpreting the New Zealand Wars as conflicts between colonists and Maori, I bring into fierce relief the way in which they divided colonial society and the way in which perceptions of metropolitan surveillance and priorities shaped the debates surrounding them. Humanitarian philosophy flourished in this environment, as colonial executives and editors attempted to convince both metropolitan Britons and Maori of their good intentions. Indeed, the breadth of humanitarian discourses articulated by both opponents and supporters of the Taranaki War left metropolitan Britons confused. How could metropolitan readers discern the truth of competing narratives in a press environment that lacked an adequate context for doing so?

The argument that settler anxiety pertaining to the threat of Maori violence had significant repercussions is not controversial. More revolutionary is my premise that press discourses connected to the threat of First Nations violence on Vancouver Island were far more prevalent and significant than has been previously acknowledged. For this reason, I explore the origins and repercussions of editors' anxiety on Vancouver Island in detail. Indeed, I focus particularly on the period between 1853 and 1862, when thousands of First Nations people from all along the Northwest Coast travelled to Victoria to work and trade. I examine how Governor James Douglas's assessments of First Nations were influenced by anxiety and informed his use of what Cole Harris terms "the politics of terror."[40] In addition, I draw on records of reported First Nations violence involving fatalities to reveal how

local editors emphasized the hostility of First Nations peoples. In this way, I build on pioneering scholarship by Adele Perry and Jean Barman that illustrates how First Nations, especially Aboriginal women, in Victoria were castigated by settlers as the sources of the community's vice and social disorder as well as work by Robin Fisher, Elizabeth Vibert, Carol J. Williams, and Paige Raibmon on the significance of colonial representations of First Nations peoples.[41] I show that the anxiety of editors had real effects, especially when local First Nations experienced a smallpox epidemic in 1862. Both the degree of reported violence in Vancouver Island and the character of the local press's coverage stand in stark relief when compared with New Zealand, a colony renowned for racial warfare but with no comparable reportage of Maori violence.

Through a study of colonial press discourses of Aboriginal violence, I offer a new understanding of why editors' support for the recognition of Aboriginal title had evaporated by the time Vancouver Island merged with the colony of British Columbia in 1866. This is a new perspective on what has been a central question – namely, why did colonial executives like Governor James Douglas and Governor Arthur Kennedy quit the treaty making practised in the 1850s to adopt the non-recognition of Aboriginal title in the 1860s?[42] Generally, Douglas is portrayed sympathetically by contemporary historians, who ignore Chris Arnett's research, which indicates that Douglas reneged on one last attempt at treaty making on Vancouver Island in 1862.[43] These narratives structure British Columbia's colonial history into pre- and post-Douglas eras, the former marked by mutual respect for First Nations and the latter by the decline of Aboriginal rights.[44] What is downplayed within such framings is the extent to which Douglas utilized violence and the threat of coercion to manage relations with local First Nations and how, in turn, the threat of Aboriginal violence itself influenced local editors' support for the recognition of First Nations title.

In this way, *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire* responds to Cole Harris's article "How Did Colonialism Dispossess?"[45] Here Harris criticizes the practice of discourse analysis prevalent in postcolonial literature, which emphasizes hegemonic strategies of representation rather than revealing the tangible processes that led to the dispossession of Indigenous territory. Harris's point is that "the cultural discourse of colonialism should begin to be contextualized." I accomplish this goal by writing about settler print culture on the imperial periphery, thereby illustrating not only how settlers

secured Indigenous territory but also the fractured, contested, and changeable views about First Nations peoples that were voiced in the colonial press. Worth recognizing, too, is that these discursive strategies were grounded in local circumstances and did have power. They did spur on the eviction of First Nations from Victoria and they do detail changing and changeable attitudes towards the recognition of Aboriginal title over time.

Both Maori and First Nations participated vigorously in the settler economies of New Zealand and Vancouver Island, respectively, providing significant trade goods, agricultural production, and labour. Managing relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples was important in both colonies, especially when the writ of law was more imaginary than real across most of the hinterland. Both New Zealand and Vancouver Island featured the lived reality of legal pluralism during this period – the simultaneous existence of both British settler law and Indigenous customary law. The lack of effective jurisdictional control over Indigenous peoples challenged what Lisa Ford terms "perfect settler sovereignty," which rests on the conflation of sovereignty, territory, and jurisdiction.[46] As we will see, public debates over Indigenous land sales and social disorder were part of a broader campaign to achieve actual settler sovereignty. British contemporaries of the mid-nineteenth century believed that their knowledge and expertise were applicable to the administration of disparate Indigenous peoples across the Empire. Yet the differences between the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand and Vancouver Island also influenced the ways in which editors articulated humanitarian discourses in each locale. As I show, the racial language employed by editors changed when they conceptualized Indigenous peoples as interested readers.

Studying the Press

All men, now-a-days, who read at all, read Newspapers. Go where you will, you see the broad sheet that tells the Passing History of the World We Live In, and that reflects the real life – the feelings, the actions, the aspirations and the prejudices – the glory and the shame of the Men of To-Day. It shows us the world we can see, and walk over, and move amongst; the only world we can test by our personal experience and our outward senses. What wonder, then, that Newspapers have grown upon us until they have become a positive necessity of civilized existence – a portion, indeed, of modern civilization.[47]

In this passage the journalist and author F. Knight Hunt bears witness to the significance of the press in British society in 1850. I explore the power of the press by offering a close reading of communities of newspapers both on Vancouver Island and in New Zealand. I argue that the press occupied an iconic status in British society and that newspapers in both colonies captured cross-class support and functioned as vital forums for the exchange of ideas and information. People in the nineteenth century believed that the coming of cheap printed news had transformed the way in which their social world was represented and power was exercised.[48] Certainly in this period enormous volumes of newspapers, sometimes exceeding the number of letters, were transmitted across the British Empire via the mail. When regular communications links were present, such as those that tied New Zealand with Great Britain, editors understood that their manifestos might be reproduced verbatim overseas and that their opinions accrued representational power by virtue of their presence in type.

The role of the press, or the "Fourth Estate," in the nineteenth century was to reflect public opinion and to mediate relations between the ruling and ruled classes.[49] The press had slowly garnered this significant responsibility alongside the emergence of the public sphere in the eighteenth century.[50] But public opinion in this period was not simply an aggregate of individual opinions but, rather, as historian Jeffrey L. McNairn emphasizes, "the outcome of prolonged public deliberation among diverse individuals listening to and participating in the free, open, and reasoned exchange of information and argument."[51] The press itself played an active rather than a passive role in this process and was believed to be a quintessentially English institution, the enemy of tyranny, and an agent of the moral, social, and political transformation of the world.[52] This folk knowledge about the idealism and representational quality of the press co-existed with the understanding that newspapers actually reflected the specific interests of their owners and editors.[53] Colonial newspapers were first and foremost commercial enterprises that often also operated to advance the political careers of their owners. These hybrid institutions were consumed with party politics but were also oriented to a popular audience, resembling neither the purely political journals of decades earlier nor the more fully commercialized press of the late nineteenth century.[54] Newspapers did not articulate public opinion in a straightforward manner. Editors worked hard to balance financial pressures and political aspirations; they sought to shape public opinion while being alive to the currents of popular sentiment. This was a

subtle and difficult enterprise, and it challenges the contemporary historian who seeks the boundaries between editorial agendas and public opinion. In isolation, a historic newspaper reveals a particular editor's vision of the world. A press community, however, reveals the breadth of discourse in a given place and much about the multiple audiences that competing editors addressed in common.

New Zealand and Vancouver Island were both geographically distant from Great Britain, but they occupied quite different locations in imperial communications networks. The press of New Zealand had more established connections with Great Britain than did its counterpart on Vancouver Island.[55] Not only were papers from New Zealand transmitted to Great Britain in large numbers but local editorial perspectives appeared frequently in Australian papers, which were also forwarded to Great Britain. Here we see evidence of Alan Lester's argument that London was the "meeting point of multidirectional, trans-imperial trajectories."[56] This conception of imperial communications networks critiques the core-periphery model of Empire and, instead, emphasizes how news travelled between imperial sites and to and fro from the metropole. Due to the strength of these ties, journalists in New Zealand tailored their characterizations of settler relations with Maori for a metropolitan audience, but a similar phenomenon is not discernable in the press of Vancouver Island. Indeed, I show how guidebook writers provided metropolitan Britons with a far different portrait of the First Nations peoples of Vancouver Island than did local editors in Victoria.

Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire draws upon the communications scholarship of Harold Innis and James W. Carey. In his landmark *Empire and Communications*, Innis illustrates how communications technologies have been central to the organization of empires throughout history.[57] He emphasizes that "peculiarities of the medium" matter.[58] Communication technologies, from clay tablets, papyrus, parchment, to paper, have each had specific cultural effects and biases towards transmission through space or time. Looking at the antecedents of print culture in the nineteenth-century British Empire, Innis perceives that the growth in popularity of paper in early modern Europe had facilitated the growing authority of vernacular languages and the rise of nationalism and that it had led to the preservation of aspects of oral tradition. At the same time, Innis argues that paper, with its bias towards communication across space, facilitated imperialism by allowing information to be transmitted quickly and economically across great distance. Innis's greatest contribution as a cultural theorist is

his "insistence on the crucial role of communication and transportation technologies in forming such spatial configurations of power."[59] Innis reminds us that the transmission of news in newspapers reinforced British imperialism and that a history of the press must include the study of newspapers as objects, printing technologies, communications infrastructure, and ideas.

On an interpersonal level, newspaper owners, editors, and correspondents were imbricated in far-reaching networks of commerce and politics. Newspapers from New Zealand and Vancouver Island travelled across multiple regional and international trajectories, resonating particularly in the press communities of the Australian colonies and the west coast of the United States. Here Tony Ballantyne's conceptualization of the British Empire as a web-like structure is helpful in visualizing how the colonial press traversed asymmetrical threads between colonies as well as between colonies and the metropole.[60] The propagation of colonial news was also shaped by editors' practice of cutting and pasting entire articles pertaining to foreign news into their own columns – something that led to the reproduction of ideas and arguments across the British Empire. When opposing perspectives of a particular news event were not transmitted across the world, this passive form of news acquisition could lead to interpretive monopolies. Indeed, Peter Putnis illustrates this effect when he argues that, across the globe, editorial responses to the Indian Rebellion were very much shaped by the way in which Anglo-Indian papers came together to portray the conflict as "civilization vs barbarism."[61] My central premise is that New Zealand's and Vancouver Island's divergent locations within networks of imperial information transmission mediated the metropolitan interpretation of news from each region.

The social meaning of the press extended beyond its delivery of facts; rather, news functioned as a medium for community building. James W. Carey, in *Communication as Culture*, shows how an analysis of the press must take into account both the *transmission* and the *ritual* views of communication.[62] According to Carey, communication is most commonly understood as "a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people."[63] Against this transmission model, Carey suggests that the study of communication as ritual emphasizes how information, such as the news offered by the press, functions as a form of drama, which provides "a presentation of reality that gives life an overall form, order, and tone."[64]

Ideally, colonial editors presented readers with information through the provision of local/metropolitan news, commercial information, and editorial commentary, thereby connecting colonists to multiple communities through access to shared knowledge. It seems to me that Gordon M. Winder's argument that the internationalization of news "generated transnational geographic imaginaries of citizenship" holds true for this era.[65] By crafting manifestos that reflected shared British values, colonial editors affirmed the collective identity of colonists and metropolitan Britons. The use of humanitarian language was central to this quest to elicit sympathy for the settler project. The integration of newspapers into imperial networks occurred on multiple levels, too. Newspapers had institutional characters that mediated readers' perceptions of their editorial manifestos – the London *Times* spoke for a nation in a way that the *New Westminster Times* in British Columbia did not. The reputations of colonial papers did not always resonate in Great Britain to the same degree as did those of metropolitan papers in British colonies. The transmission of newspapers across great distance strained editors' ability to interpret news, and serving the needs of disparate audiences was immensely challenging.

News, then as now, was time-centric: it accrued or lost value in proportion to its freshness. Colonial editors exploited new communication technologies and competed to publish metropolitan news ahead of their peers. Here we must recognize that the mid-nineteenth century was a transitional period in communications technology. In the late 1850s and 1860s, sail power was displaced by steamships and railways in connecting the periphery of the British Empire to Great Britain.[66] Though the introduction of regular steamship packets to carry mail and newspapers occurred during this period, implementation proved problematic. Because of the high cost of fuel and their limited passenger capacity, steamships were ill suited to extended sea voyages.[67] While the first half of the nineteenth century featured diminishing travel times, communication between Vancouver Island/New Zealand and Great Britain still took several months in each direction. Actual telegraph connections did not eventuate until 1866 for Vancouver Island (via the United States) and 1876 for New Zealand (via the Australian colonies). While the telegraph played an influential role in expediting news of the Indian Rebellion to Great Britain and aided its suppression on the ground in India, it still only connected a small portion of the British Empire. And even where telegraph networks were available, because of their prohibitive cost they transmitted only a fraction of the total news.[68] Networks of information

transmission in 1860s New Zealand and Vancouver Island were informal and relatively unstructured. This is in contrast to the press "systems" that Simon Potter argues took shape in the latter half of the nineteenth century as the development of new communications infrastructure (telegraph and undersea cables) facilitated the creation of press monopolies.[69]

My analysis is influenced by Kirsten McKenzie's suggestion that "colonial identity cannot be understood in isolation – it was connected under the constantly imagined gaze of the metropole."[70] The colonial press attempted to ameliorate anxiety by representing colonists to metropolitan Britons in a positive light. In this manner, the press constituted one element of what Peter Gibbons terms "the literature of invasion," which legitimized colonialism through its advocacy of "civilizing" (which was equated with "improving") and its symbolic importance as an embodiment of British liberty.[71] Implicitly related to this point is Carey's insistence that both the colonial project and the idea of communication were deeply inscribed with Christian symbolism and the extension of "God's kingdom on earth."[72] As I illustrate, colonial newspapers employed humanitarian language against their critics in order to defend colonialism's providential mission. Newspapers were the right medium for evangelizing this particular dialect of imperialism.

Methodology and Organization

My study of the connections between the colonial press, settler anxiety, and humanitarianism highlights the significance of mobility in the mid-nineteenth century and prompts us to consider how Britons perceived Vancouver Island and New Zealand in terms of their prior experiences. It is grounded in the new imperial history of the British Empire, which re-imagines the interconnections between class, race, and gender, showing how British imperialism moulded metropolitan social development. Originating in 1970s debates over British identity, this scholarship critiques arguments that the British Empire never mattered to Britons at "Home."[73] As Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton argue, "One of the chief results of the new imperial history has been to reshape spatial understandings of empire and its geographies of power."[74] Scholars like Catherine Hall, Alan Lester, Zoë Laidlaw, and Julie Evans track the careers of British officers, missionaries, and colonial executives across the British Empire, illustrating how the movement of British persons connected disparate localities within an imagined British sphere.[75] *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire* is also caught

up in a new wave of comparative work that seeks to broaden our under-standing of British imperialism by escaping the national parameters of colonial historiography.[76]

This book is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief sketch of early European newcomer-Indigenous history in Aotearoa (Maori for "land of the long white cloud") New Zealand and the Northwest Coast of North America up until the mid-nineteenth century. The subsequent four chapters alternate their focus between Vancouver Island and New Zealand. Chapters 2 and 4 examine public discourses in Vancouver Island's Victoria press regarding the threat of Aboriginal violence and editors' sup-port for both the racial segregation of Victoria and the recognition of Aboriginal title. Chapters 3 and 5 detail press responses to the Taranaki War in the significant press communities of New Plymouth and Auckland, in-cluding an examination of *Te Karere Maori,* the bilingual paper published for Maori by the Native Department. Chapters 6 and 7 feature comparative analyses of Vancouver Island and New Zealand. Chapter 6 draws upon the personal and published papers of colonial humanitarians to examine the forces that drew together colonial executives and evangelical humanitarians. Chapter 7 considers the effects of New Zealand's and Vancouver Island's locations within networks of information transmission; their exchange of print culture, including guidebooks, with Great Britain; and the repercus-sions of the nearby press in the Australian colonies and California.

Through an analysis of the colonial press, I reconstruct the public debates that featured in New Zealand and Vancouver Island in the mid-nineteenth century. Explicitly, my interest in the colonial press reflects one of the legacies of colonialism – the privileging of settler voices over Indigenous voices, and of textual sources over oral sources. Moreover, colonial newspapers were predominantly operated by middle- to upper-class men. The voices of women and working-class colonists are not frequently articulated in these narratives, though editors did conceptualize working-class colonists in their imagined audiences. As Tony Ballantyne states regarding the "problematic" nature of archives, "historians need to rise to the challenge and recognize that our archives are important microcosms of the colonial processes that have moulded the development of modern New Zealand."[77] Newspapers provide a very particular representation of the colonial past – one that elides many voices.

Newspapers from the mid-nineteenth century are a challenging archival source because they do not usually reveal the context within which they

were created and consumed. This intangibility is exacerbated when the researcher encounters the newspaper text only on microfilm or via a digital image. It is also often difficult not only to ascertain who wrote for particular papers during an era of anonymous journalism but also whether newspapers were profitable, or even popular, as almost no business records remain regarding them. Judging the social influence of a newspaper is a difficult and controversial task. For instance, even when we know a given newspaper was popular, we cannot take it for granted that its subscribers agreed with its particular editorial manifesto – perhaps they merely appreciated its commercial content. At the same time, I think that the colonial press has significant value for its preservation of "embalmed evidence."[78] Read against the grain, colonial newspapers offer insights not only into Indigenous perspectives but also into settler relations with Indigenous peoples. Reading through the rhetoric, we encounter the insecurities of editors. As the opening vignette, "Massacre in New Zealand," illustrates, journalists wrote articles in real time, and their misinterpretations are often very revealing. An analysis of the press, rather than showing editors transparently representing public opinion, shows them grappling with the issues of the day. Again, returning to the question of how editors conceptualized their imagined audiences, I indicate how they attempted to appeal to and speak for a broad segment of colonial societies rather than just local elites. To recognize this broad appeal is not to accept that editorial manifestos captured or reflected public sentiment. In New Zealand and Vancouver Island, editors' characterizations of Indigenous peoples were central to the colonial project, and they were defined by both real and imagined interactions between colonists and Indigenous peoples.

Terminology

It is important to recognize the significance of naming practices, both historical and contemporary, and their inscribed meanings within texts. Throughout *Settler Anxiety at the Outposts of Empire*, I utilize the term "Indigenous" when referring to both Maori people of Aotearoa New Zealand and First Nations people of the Northwest Coast of North America. Whenever possible I employ the contemporary names of Indigenous groups in both New Zealand and British Columbia alongside their customary designations within historic texts. I also alternate between the contemporary terms "Aboriginal" and "First Nations" in the context of British Columbia.

I utilize a variety of naming strategies when referring to the newcomer populations of New Zealand and Vancouver Island, depending on the context, including: "whites," "Euro-Americans," and "settlers/colonists." Each term has strengths and weaknesses. The term "white" is monolithic and does not capture the range of cultures and ethnicities that comprised settler societies. The term "Euro-American" is useful with reference to British Columbia, where a large portion of the newcomer population was not of Anglo-Saxon descent and also included a significant community of black settlers formerly from the United States. While the terms "settler" and "colonist" are useful for New Zealand, they are not always applicable to British Columbia, where so many Euro-American newcomers were gold seekers rather than settlers. Finally, when appropriate, I employ the terms "Métis" and "mixed-race" hesitantly, with the knowledge that their tendency to essentialize cultural identities is problematic.