Gendering Resistance: British Colonial Narratives of Wartime New Zealand

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In 1850s New Zealand, the British Crown forced the purchase of indigenous land at Taranaki, an event that hastened the brutal land wars of the 1860s. A group of British church and government officials and their wives voiced their opposition to land confiscation, participating in what became known as the ‘pamphlet wars’ in Taranaki. The authors compare the anti-colonial writings of a number of primarily male colonial men and women, drawing out the significance of both ideological and gendered differences and the discursive representations of place produced out of these. In addition to differences and similarities in genre, content, and audience, the pamphlets highlight the significance—and spatiality—of anti-colonial Maori testimony that appeared in one of the pivotal texts.

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Introduction

Unlike some other colonial settings where colonialism was a less-obvious process, the mid-nineteenth-century wars in New Zealand represent a crucial set of brutal colonial battles for land and sovereignty.[1] Great Britain had established its administration and sovereignty in the distant Pacific island of New Zealand in 1840. Decades before and during extensive trade, dubious land deals involving the New Zealand Company, and of other social and cultural encounters with settlers had been both welcomed and resisted by a heterogeneous and hitherto highly tribalized native Maori population. However, with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and subsequent repudiation of the terms of the treaty, a series of armed confrontations took place between anti-government Maori, settlers and British troops (with some Maori supporters), lasting from 1845 to 1872.[2] Among these, the conflict at Taranaki has received a great deal of attention, but it was at Waitangi that the government responded to the pressures of land-hungry settlers, surveying and then enforcing the purchase of land at Waita, in the Taranaki of the west-central North Island (see Figure 1). The Crown’s actions at Taranaki between 1855 to 1860 brought Maori into open confrontation with British settler leaders, Crown, and arguably began the land wars of the 1860s.[3] After the government backed the land purchase, fighting broke out between Taranaki Maori and British settlers in the early 1860.

The wars carried far-reaching and grievous consequences.[4] These consequences were partly the result of the many ‘battles’ over Taranaki that took place at a political, representational or symbolic level. For the most part, attitudes among settlers were hostile towards Maori after the outbreak of hostilities at Taranaki. In fact, many...
[52] In his testimony (March 12, 1946), Jamal Husseini also claimed: “Arab villages were destroyed; houses, mosques and cemeteries were erased from the map of the mandatory government and in their stead there appeared Hebrew names of Zionist settlements”. Cited in A. Karlebach (Ed), The Anglo-American Inquiry Commission for Palestine (Tel Aviv 1949), Vol I, 352–365. On the reaction of Moshe Sharet of the Jewish Agency, who later became Israel’s foreign minister and for a brief period also prime minister, see ibid., Vol. II, 532.
[55] Note from Nechenmia Argov (the military secretary of Ben-Gurion) to the chairman of the Governmental Names Commission, 25 June 1951, ISA C/3782/5550.
[57] Cohen and Kliot, Place names, p. 676.
[58] An example for a book that juxtaposes Hebrew and Arabic place names. A. Shuaft, Palestinian Sites between Two Periods and Two Maps (Shuafat 1992). An example for a map is The Temporary Borders of the Palestinian Authority (Amman 1993).
considered the Maori involved to be 'rebels' engaging in acts of treason. In spite of this hegemonic construction of Maori at Taranaki and the consequent opposition to Maori sovereignty and their rights under the Treaty of Waitangi, other white colonists...
supported Maori. The wars were therefore implicated in significant symbolic over representations of ‘race’, gender, nation, and history.

As Edward Said argues, representations cannot be isolated from the circumstances that make them possible and intelligible. Representations “are to some degree they are events, and, even when they appear to deny it, they are a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moment they are located and interpreted.” It is therefore important to understand the framework within which the New Zealand wars have come to have more representations of ‘race’, nation, and history are more than ‘mere’ symbolism with the authority to impose their specific identity norms on others may utilize them for their own ends. In this sense, the representation of Maori as ‘rebels’, the exercise of raw power; military force and other colonizing acts required legitimation that was cultivated by such symbolic representations. Texts above were thus implicated materially in the confiscation of Maori lands, the extermination of all forms of Maori resistance, and of course the resulting deaths of Maori and British soldiers.

Among the supporters of Maori at Taranaki were George Selwyn and others of British ‘philio-Maori’ missionaries, philanthropists, and others.[7] Selwyn’s connection to New Zealand was made when he accepted the offer to take up missionary work by becoming the first Anglican bishop there. [8] Selwyn then encouraged his Cambridge friend William Martin to apply for the position of chief justice in the new colony, to which Martin was appointed. Thus, George and Sarah Selwyn and Mary Martin all voyaged to the colony in 1841–1842. Almost a decade later, in 1850, Charles and Caroline Abraham joined them, also at the encouragement of Selwyn, in order that Charles might assist Selwyn in the establishment of the theological seminary, St John’s College, in Auckland. In the colony the two families lived in close proximity, used the same schools, and their children continued their close-knit Etonian-Cambridge circle by remaining close friends and confidants, and often neighbours.

George Selwyn, William Martin, and Charles Abraham all made public opposition to the Crown government’s confiscation of Taranaki land, three venues including Martin’s well-publicized volume, The Taranaki Question: men’s wives also participated in what became known as the ‘pamphlet war’ and events at Taranaki. Among other texts, Sarah Selwyn, Mary Ann Martin, and Abraham together published their protest letters in Extracts of Letters from New Zealand on the War Question (1861).[10]

The events and discourses precipitating and then surrounding the Taranaki themselves to an analysis of how relationships between British colonizers and Maori came to be made and then represented in colonial texts. In the discussion that follows, we examine the writings of these prominent British colonial men who had come to New Zealand to introduce Christianity and British law, and became leading spokespersons against what they saw as the blind greed of white settlers, and an inept and corrupt Crown government.[11] Among other things they demonstrated that the government’s position went against the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi: the proposed government actions were based on the British claim of individual ownership of land title rather than the communal system of tenure recognized in the Treaty.

The Martins, Selwyns, and Abrahams were among the most prominent people opposed to the government’s actions, but formal public statements were made on the side of the controversy by other British colonizers and prominent Maori. The tribal leaders, missionaries, government officials, landowners, and the press in New Zealand as well as back in England. For example, Octavius Hadfield.
Missionary Society cleric, Archdeacon of Kapiti and later Bishop of Wellington, was a well-known, outspoken supporter of Maori rights and strongly opposed the colonial actions at Taranaki. An analysis of Hadfield’s writings would also prove fruitful in understanding the complexities of the narrative wars and missionary colonialism in early New Zealand. However, we are interested in examining the gendered nature of colonial archive, and comparing the writings of married couples at the forefront of Taranaki debate seems a fruitful strategy for isolating the role of gender in producing historical narratives of place. With this in mind, our primary focus will be on the stories of the Selwyns, Martins, and Abrahams most closely associated with the ‘pamphlet wars’ over Taranaki—William Martin’s *The Taranaki Question* and *Extracts of Letters from New Zealand on the War Question*, the latter which contained letters written to the three wives as well as a pastoral letter by George Selwyn. Other texts about Taranaki and Maori written earlier by the Messrs. Selwyn, Martin, and Abraham provide a useful backdrop to our primary objects of analysis.

The writings of these men and women have been (re)presented to contemporary audiences primarily through biographies or anthologies of their texts, with limited scholarly analysis. Our research moves into new areas of colonial discourse analysis about them in a couple of aspects. First, in the following pages we begin a comparative analysis of these women’s and men’s writings about the tumultuous political and military scene at Taranaki. Feminist or postcolonial comparisons between colonial men’s and women’s narratives about the land wars in New Zealand are a relatively untouched arena within colonial discourse analysis. Secondly, we are especially interested in examining relationships among ideology, gender, and spatial relations within the context of British colonial conflict and war.

Our comparison of the men’s and women’s texts reveals differences and similarities in genre, content, and audience. In addition, anti-colonial Maori testimony appears in William Martin’s *The Taranaki Question*. To make sense of these findings we draw on the significance of both ideological and embodied gendered differences and the discursively constructed representations of place produced out of them. In so doing, we share interests with authors of two other recent geographical studies that compare men’s and women’s writings produced within colonial or imperial social relations. In situating the ideological context of these writings (which in this case is primarily bourgeois Anglican missionary), we argue that even men and women with similar class positions and professional capacities could be quite differently (re)positioned in colonial society, with access to different people, places, and discursive outlets. While we are careful to acknowledge that we cannot uncritically accept a naturalized (and essentialist) binary sexual division between colonial women and men when comparing their writings about the same political-military struggles, we also acknowledge that these men and women experienced quite different social and spatial constraints in the colony, especially during wartime.

Within this comparative framework, this research raises the possibility of reading the “gendered resistances” of British church and government figures from the colonial archive. In that sense our work can be situated as a postcolonial treatment of colonial archive in that we offer ways of reading it as a site of church and government resistance to one aspect of the British invasion of Aotearoa (New Zealand). Our research aligns then with questions currently being posed in postcolonial studies, specifically that of exploring ways in which individuals involved in the nitty-gritty of the colonizing process were both complicit with, and contested, colonialism.

Our objective is to present a deconstructive alternative to hegemonic readings of colonial New Zealand histories that rely on problematic binary oppositions. In lieu
Zealand there still exists a hegemonic binary discourse which constructs the Pakeha (white European) group dominating a unified Maori group. To be sure, binaries have been—and continue to be—important in developing specific anti-racist politics in New Zealand. Nonetheless, as in other geographically stable countries, the stability of these oppositional categories helps to reproduce the very perspectives (neo)colonial narratives they attempt to undermine.[16] Accordingly, our task is to destabilize binary readings of the historical record. This is an attempt to imagine the spaces of anti-racist and anti-sexist resistance in present-day New Zealand.

**Situating the colonial contact zone**

Polynesians had inhabited Aotearoa (New Zealand) for at least 500 years before European arrival.[17] The ‘official’ Europeanizing of the landscape began with the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by many, but by no means all, Maori leaders and representatives of the British Crown. There are significant differences between the English and Maori language versions of the Treaty. Scherf’s account of British thought the Treaty of Waitangi gave them sovereignty; while Maori claimed they preserved their rangatiratanga (chieftainship) and mana whenua (control of land). Whatever the ‘truth’ of the Treaty, it legitimated in many European eyes the annexation of the islands and opened the way for colonization. The Treaty provided, for a short time at least, the basis for a relationship between British and Maori that differed markedly from that found in other British Colonies (New Zealand and Australia). In fact, many Maori flourished in the early years of British settlement, using their communal farming practices, unaffected by rising labour costs, allowing them to compete well in the new capitalist economic order. By the late 1840s, Maori had fed most of the colonists in Taranaki and Auckland (and George Selwyn famously drew attention to this ‘industriousness’ in his arguments for protecting Maori pastoral land).[18]

This relationship was not to last, however, as a rapidly increasing settler population soon raised demands for land beyond the limits of tolerance of a number of Maori leaders. Settlers wanted land to satisfy individual living requirements, and leading settler capitalists also attempted to enforce laws that would allow for compulsory acquisition of communally controlled Maori ‘waste’ lands (those not cultivated or used in ways they considered appropriate). They hoped to convert these communal lands into speculative commodities or use them for capitalist agricultural production. This forced the alienation of Maori land by elite members of Pakeha society was to lead to legal interventions by the British government in a number of regions of New Zealand. One such case of hostilities occurred in 1843 when 22 settlers were killed after attempting to arrest a local chief who had in the previous month burned some disputed survey huts in the Wairau Valley in the northern South Island. These survey huts were part of preparations to purchase Maori land. Although their deaths were not directly related to events in Taranaki, “the clash of interests at Wairau, made the Maori see New Zealand in a new light, because the participants happened to be leading members of their communities, their actions lasting impression on both races.”[21]

It was a similar kind of refusal to recognize Maori title that led, in particular, to a new set of problems at Taranaki. Between 1844 and 1859, the governor claimed to have surveyed 75,370 acres in nine blocks extending out from New Plymouth, making up the largest most valuable land in Taranaki. While the background to these land surveys is complex[22]—with many different Maori groups fighting in brutal battles as they struggled to save themselves as they did against settlers—it is possible to sketch, in outline for now, the complex relationships between the European and Maori populations that followed.
the basic issues that led to the Taranaki War. It is important to begin by noting that the conflict at Taranaki differed from the other land wars, particularly in terms of duration. As the record of the Waitangi Tribunal (a standing commission of inquiry) shows:

Tension was evident from 1841, when the first settlers arrived. Though the fighting that resulted was mainly between Maori, the precipitate influx of settlers and their attempts to acquire land were still the cause. When war broke out in 1860, there had already been 19 years of preceding turmoil, attempts to constrain settlers, and fighting among Maori groups. This was all the result of a colonisation that had been programmed for Taranaki even before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. In the other war districts, systematic settlement did not begin until after the confiscations had been made.\[^{23}\]

Given these tensions, war at Taranaki was bound to break out for any number of reasons. The eventual catalyst, however, was Governor Browne’s decision to purchase a block of land at Waitara in contravention of a tapu (prohibition) of such sales. The land was offered by Teira, a local chief, despite the fact that Wiremu Kingi Te Rangitaere, senior chief of the Te Atiawa tribe, was living there at the time. As senior chief of the Te Atiawa tribe, Wiremu Kingi had the right to veto the land sale, and in accordance with the tapu on sales, he did so. The reasons for the ‘lesser’ chief Teira agreeing to sell land, despite the tapu on land sales, appear to have been rooted in local politics and custom.

The main cause, according to the Waitangi Tribunal, was that some members of tribe such as Teira, who were seen to have lost status after being captured during war with Waikato, sought to reinstate their status through sale of land: “selling land was thought to prove their competence to do so and thus affirmed their status.”\[^{24}\] Of evidence embedded in the colonial archive suggests that there were additional tensions among these Maori men that led to the land sales. Several archival sources, including a Native Department memoranda sent to the Army Department, for instance, report that personal tensions existed between Teira and Wiremu Kingi “over a woman.” The woman in question was apparently engaged to be married to Teira’s son, but changed her mind and instead married Wiremu Kingi’s nephew. Teira, unmollified by Kingi’s gifts of retribution, sought to injure Kingi by “getting him embroiled in a dispute with the governor.”\[^{25}\] “By offering land, he was following a recognized method of obtaining redress by an action designed to bring trouble on the whole tribe.”\[^{26}\] In the end, Governor Browne refused to acknowledge both the tapu and the veto and attempted to purchase the land at Waitara offered by Teira. As a result, fighting broke out between Te Atiawa Maori and British troops.\[^{27}\] It was the injustice of this action that triggered the ‘pamphlet war’ with the colonial government of New Zealand.

The narrative wars over Taranaki

Historian Peter Gibbons describes much of the colonial wartime literature of the 1860s and 1860s as narratives of conquest, which allowed British colonists to “narrate their aggressive history as the just defence of their persons and property against ‘rebels’ and ‘fanatics’.” Prior to the wars, British colonial writing about Maori was a “more or less sympathetic textual exploration of Maori manners and customs, and optimist rehearsals of bicultural society.” But the wartime changed that, according to Gibbons, with Maori now “reconstituted as enemies or friends, cowardly or brave, barbaric or chivalrous actors within the theatres of British and colonial power.”\[^{28}\]

Debates about the justice and legality of the Waitara land purchase and Taranaki
War can be assessed within the narrative structures outlined by Gibbons, we observe that the dichotomizing logic of them fails to capture the ambivalences inherent in the writings of many colonials such as the Selwyns, Martins, and others. The six shared a paternalistic, humanitarian vision for establishing the government and the Anglican Church in New Zealand; they shared in the ‘moral crusade’ of colonization that entailed assimilation, Christianization, ‘civilization’, and the uplift of Maori. As was the case in most colonial settings, colonists could only look down on the indigenous people in relation to themselves and the colonization processes that affected them. Nevertheless, these ‘philo-Maori’ men and women were sympathetic to what they considered the ‘true Maori’ point of view, and under the Crown’s colonial agenda at Taranaki. They were actively opposed to the government’s political and military actions at Taranaki, and their rhetoric collectively reflected the complexity of colonial discourses in settler societies.

While many government officials criticized George Selwyn and his church for inappropriately extending their religious sphere into politics, and government women’s public statements against the government’s actions might be seen as transgressive yet. If clergy were supposed to remain aloof from politics, chiefs were even more so. And if a chief justice was not to publicly challenge the governor, which appointed him, his wife even more. Yet these women were all published in the issues of their husbands’ careers, and despite their attempts to play down their own influence, the three became outspoken public critics of the government with their husbands.

The men’s voices

By 1860, tensions among imperial troops, settlers, and various Maori groups had spurred vociferous and proliferating narrative wars. The many books and newspapers reflected, among other things, the contradictions and tensions within Pakeha society concerning support for or against armed conflict. William Martin’s, George’s, and Charles Abraham’s legal documentation, pastoral letters, published journals, and other documents played a significant role in the public debate over the legality of the Waitara land purchase.

William Martin made a name for himself principally in his capacity as the first chief justice, a position he held until 1857. As chief justice he drafted and signed several key ordinances that established the colony’s first Supreme Court, its overall structure and procedure of the courts. Martin became famous for his judgment in the case of Maketutu, a minor Ngā Pohuta chief whom he sentenced to hang in 1842. This trial set the foundations for the future legal relationship between the crown and the British system of justice. Martin ruled that although Maketutu was unaware of British law, he was, nonetheless, “a subject of the Crown, warden of British law, and accordingly the court possessed jurisdiction to try him for an offence against English law now part of the fabric of New Zealand law.” Martin was a strong defender of Maori rights, he also promoted the legal principles embedded in the British imperial project.

Martin helped draft the 1871 amendments to the Native Lands Act of 1863 through the Taranaki confrontation, published numerous political and legal statements dissenting with the government’s position, including in The Taranaki Question. Later he answered an official government statement about it in his Notes Published for the NZ Government. Martin’s missionary work included...
interest in Maori education, and among many other activities he published a book about Maori legal rights. He was official inspector of native schools, and member of St John’s College. While not clergy himself, he held close ties to the mission and often wore semi-clerical dress.\[33\]

Martin opened The Taranaki Question with the following statements:

The Natives have a proverb “Women and land are destroyers of men;” meaning that quarrels in which men are slain arise either from women or land ... The present is a land quarrel. The points of it cannot fully be understood without some knowledge of the main points of the principles of the native tenure of land.\[34\]

In beginning his exposition of Maori land tenure and the relationship between the British Crown and Maori in this way, Martin positioned himself as an objective (therefore rationally masculine) observer of native life. At one level, he differentiated himself from native people as one of the lettered, male, and European observer of exotic native life.\[35\] At another level, however, he positions himself close to native men as a man who has been brought into the fold and one who is knowledgeable about their ways of life and customs.

The complex interrelationship of racialized and gendered discourses circulating in New Zealand at the time offered numerous contradictory positions for both Maori and his (ostensibly male) Maori subjects of discussion. As Vron Ware observes, there can exist simultaneously an almost endless number of hierarchically ordered binary distinctions in western thought and when combined with binary notions of gender, ‘race’ and class, they can articulate in contradictory ways.\[36\] Such alignments, however, are highly complex. While white male colonizers and native men often found themselves in bitter opposition to each other, “they also often collaborated when it came to domination of women.”\[37\] With this in mind, then, Martin’s adoption of the ‘native proverb’ can be seen as positioning him contradictorily both with and against native men; but also most certainly against native women.

Martin aimed The Taranaki Question directly at what he saw to be the injustice of the government’s policy in Taranaki, and presented in it a strong defence of Maori rights. At the time of writing, Martin had already resigned his post as chief justice and was working within the ecumenical more than the legal realm of society in New Zealand. While some of his writings were framed by his Christian morality, it was his legal ideology that affected his perception of the issues. He began with an exposition of traditional Maori land tenure systems, centering his thesis on the communal character of the system.\[38\] Martin relied heavily on the Treaty of Waitangi for his understanding of Native rights and responsibilities. He proceeded to set out the technicalities of the Treaty and the way that Maori tenure systems fit within it.

For the most part, Martin’s text is a rational investigation of the ‘facts’ surrounding the attempted purchase of land at Waitara, and the outbreak of hostilities between Maori and the Crown. He discusses the (inept) investigation of title,\[39\] the government’s resort to force,\[40\] and the dire consequences of the government’s actions.\[41\] However, in presenting a “defence” of Native communal land tenure systems,\[42\] Martin appeals to the then common notion of a Natural Order of ‘races’ or a Great Chain of Being (one that always posited British males at its apex). Martin conceptualized individual possession—the hallmark of the laissez-faire liberal capitalism of the time—as the pinnacle of social development.\[43\] Moreover, Englishmen naturally embraced it, while Maori did not. In defending Maori rights, then, Martin was enmeshed in long-standing discursive constructions of Native Otherness that were sympathetic to Maori land rights.
while simultaneously reinforcing their social and cultural inferiority. In his
work, Martin expressed his humanitarian ideals for the colonial project:

Here in New Zealand our nation has engaged in an enterprise most difficult, and
most noble and worthy of England. We have undertaken to acquire these
islands for the Crown and for our race, without violence and without fraud, and so that the
people, instead of being destroyed, should be protected and civilized. We have committed
with these peoples, and assured to the privileges of subjects of the Crown, and
undertaking the faith of the nation is pledged. By these means we secured a public
entrance for the Queen’s authority into the country, and in consequence gained a firm hold upon it. The compact is binding irrevocably. We cannot remove it so long as we retain the benefit which we obtained by it.[44]

Here, Martin’s legal ideology combines with his humanitarian Christian ideas
on notions not dissimilar to ‘the white man’s burden’ to defend Native
people while at the same time presenting Maori society as in need of (British) civilizing.

As Martin was former chief justice of the colony, his comments were difficult to dismiss out of hand.[45] Accordingly, the government responded with a publication of its own, which attacked Martin for confusing the issues of ‘title’ with ‘sovereignty’. [46] Former British resident to New Zealand, James Busby, added his voice to the fray, opposing Martin with a confused argument about the sources of land rights.[47] Finally, Martin responded with a rejoinder to his critics. This later refuted, on technical grounds, specific comments made in the government’s publication. Just as in his earlier work, while Martin defended Maori land tenure systems (land rights arising from them), he continued to place such systems on a par with British systems of individual ownership. Thus, after pointing out the major deprivations of Maori title, he stated:

It may be well to say that I have never intended to uphold the tribal or community
ing right as a good thing in itself. I assert it only as a fact which now exists and which has
existed from time immemorial.[48]

Martin closed his book with another allusion to the white man’s burden, this time
predicting that the elevation of Maori would be at the hands of the British
leaders. To Martin, Maori would eventually “regard the Sovereignty of the Crown
as a boon and privilege.”[50]

Despite Martin’s secular position in society, he closely identified with the efforts of the Anglican Church in the South Pacific.[51] His close associate, Anglican leader George Selwyn led the two men to co-author England and the New Zealanders (1847), in which they took a strong stand in opposition to the British policy with respect to Maori. This document, while preceding the Taranaki War, provided an extensive analysis of the process leading to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the doctrines underlying both Crown and Maori interpretation of it, and its larger significance. They concluded by stating that:

by solemn and repeated words and deeds, our national faith is pledged to the following rule: All lands in New Zealand which have any owners according to native custom, still belong to those owners; whilst all lands which have no owners, fall to the
use of the Crown, by virtue of the Cession of Sovereignty.[52]

Martin and Selwyn went on to argue that, even with the signing of the Treaty, British law would require the Crown to recognize Maori land title. Further, they critized what they saw to be the underlying foundation of British coloni
New Zealand—that Britain, “without any reference to the usages or customary rights of the people of the country,” could confiscate land based simply on its own definition of ‘right.’[53] Martin and Selwyn were highly critical of the implications of such a doctrine for colonization, arguing that a mistaken right of invasion or seizure “will occur over and over again” throughout Polynesia, subject only to “restraint which may be willing to impose on ourselves.”[54]

For British settlers accustomed to congratulating themselves on the humanitarian nature of British colonialism, these were harsh words. It is not surprising, then, that George Selwyn’s public, moral advocacy of Maori rights brought bitter reproaches and charges of disloyalty to the Crown from settlers. As a classically trained, well-placed cleric, George Selwyn had had high ambitions for exporting Christianity to the colony, and for instigating Maori participation in church governance.[55] Upon arrival, he set up his bishopric and theological college in Waimate, in the (northern) Bay of Islands, but later moved it to Auckland in 1846. Selwyn took many ‘visitation tours’ throughout the colony, often walking long distances and displaying his prodigious ‘muscular Christian’ boating skills.[56] He was highly influential in establishing the Church of England in New Zealand. In addition to teaching and preaching in both Maori and English, choosing church sites, establishing schools, and the like, Selwyn was also instrumental, through constitutional conferences, in establishing the Church structure and procedures.[57]

At Governor Browne’s suggestion, in 1855 Selwyn attempted to mediate an early dispute at Taranaki (that would affect the later conflict). After first publicly condemning one local Maori (Katatore) for the killing of another (Raini Waiaua) who had propositions for selling disputed land,[58] Selwyn preached to a settler congregation, rebuking them for their covetousness of Maori land. Selwyn’s sermon led to furious attacks in the local press and he was later “hooted” in the streets of New Plymouth.[59] Selwyn responded to the confrontation in a pastoral letter, printed in the *Extracts of Letters from New Zealand on the War Question*. Selwyn’s letter posed an array of rational economic, moral, and juridical arguments for settling the dispute. Among other attributes the letter emphasized that the extensive commercial contribution Maori had made to the emerging economy of the colony, especially in agricultural production and trade. It was as “unjust, as it is unimpcet,” Selwyn wrote, “to grudge to an industrious people the possession of the land which they have shewn [sic] themselves so able and willing to cultivate.”[60]

Furthermore, while advocating the sale of land that was “unoccupied” or uncultivated, Selwyn, the full force of his ecclesiastical position, accused settlers again of sinning against the tenth commandment. He wrote in capital letters, “THOU SHALT NOT COVET.” At the same time, Selwyn’s letter seemed to reassure settlers that, eventually, the land would be theirs. In questioning the efficacy of a military solution, Selwyn argued it was detribalization, in the end, that would free the land for British settlers:

Let the tribe be once assembled, in indisputable possession of its ancient territory, and let each freeholder’s claim be duly investigated, with a Crown title granted to each as an individual proprietor, with full power to dispose of his land by sale, lease, or bequest,—and then I believe it will be found that land would be obtained by new settlers on far easier terms, by purchase or lease from Natives, than from their own countrymen.[62]

Thus, along with William Martin, Selwyn’s ultimate resolution to conflict was the adoption of British civil law, bringing the ambivalence of his moral arguments into sharp relief. Adoption of the English land tenure system would both uplift Maori
at the same time, the ‘peaceful purchase’ of their land would in effect establish successful colonization.

Along with Selwyn and other missionaries, Charles Abraham was opposed to the government’s actions at Waitara. As George Selwyn’s ‘right hand man’ or publicity agent, Abraham became one of Selwyn’s chaplains and priests, and John’s College, archdeacon of Waitemata, and then Bishop of Wellington. After the instigation of the governor, he traveled with Selwyn to Taranaki in a sort of ‘peace-keeping’ mission. With Archdeacon Hadfield, Abraham wrote to the Governor of the colonies, arguing that the governor should be directed to act in accordance with the Treaty of Waitangi. In April 1861 he asked the Society for Propagation of the Gospel to pressure the Secretary of State to send a commission to inquire into the grievances of Taranaki Maori.

Abraham wrote of his and Selwyn’s Taranaki experiences in *Journal of the Bishop of New Zealand from Auckland to Taranaki in August 1855*.[65] He considered this document involved directly in the Taranaki pamphlet war proper, Abraham believing it was important for our purposes in its portrayal of these men and their characters at Taranaki. Most saliently, Abraham’s journal effuses admiration for Selwyn’s works to support his cause. At one point in the journey, for instance, Abraham wrote to a local Maori teacher who was “very indignant” at the Bishop being sued for charge for canoe passage by another Maori. In his description of the incident, Abraham declared that:

> This is a fair instance of the character of the people, perhaps. Many persons are so whole race as covetous, because they meet with such impostors as this Tiopora attempted to charge the fee; but they forget that two out of the three were Englishmen, that the leading men repudiate such conduct. An Englishman here said last night to the Bishop the other day, ‘I find your Lordship’s words in one of your journals last year, where you say that the Maories are the most covetous people you have to do with.’ To which the Bishop added, ‘But you have only quoted half my sentence.’ He said further, “except the English.”[66]

In general, the *Journal of a Walk* served to spatialize the practice of missionary work in a way that played up the adventurous character of it as exploration, while downplaying the exploitative nature of missionary colonization. Additionally, through his journey, Abraham constituted the Bishop as an extraordinary specimen of manliness and courage, recounting the arduous overland journey undertaken by the “muscular” Bishop from Auckland to New Plymouth, Abraham maintained that “the Bishop was the true captain and did the hard work, as usual.”[67] In documenting Selwyn’s capabilities to lead on the brooding and dangerous physical landscape, Abraham ensured readers that he possessed the requisite qualities for transforming the spiritual landscape of New Zealand. Not only that, but his manly portrayal of Selwyn in effect defended Selwyn’s authority to speak publicly on events at Taranaki, a subject to which we now turn.

### The women’s voices

As women born into educated, clerical families in England and as wives of influential men in the colonies, Sarah Selwyn, Mary Martin, and Caroline Abraham were important figures in colonial society. Sarah Selwyn and Caroline Abraham were cousins, and the three were known collectively as the “three graces” who accompanied their husbands’ company and council during their husbands’ long absences.[69] In this section, three women together punctuate the literature on New Zealand colonial women’s activism and resistance.
Figure 2. ‘The Three Graces,’ from left: Caroline Abraham, Mary Ann Martin, and Sarah Selwyn, c. 1865. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

Like the missionary work of George Selwyn, Charles Abraham, and William Martin, these women’s missionary zeal lay in the Christianization and education of Maori. The women’s missionary activity took several forms. Although both Sarah Selwyn and Mary Martin sometimes accompanied their husbands on their journeys throughout the colony (and Mary Martin’s book Our Maoris and Sarah Selwyn’s Reminiscences discuss these in some detail), they, as well as Caroline Abraham, focused much of their missionary work at home.\(^{[70]}\)

The discourses of Christian humanitarianism and anti-colonial opposition to the Crown’s actions at Taranaki are evident in the writings of the three couples, both husbands and wives. The women’s writings about the events at Taranaki chiefly reiterate their husband’s arguments, focusing on the illegality of the land sales, settler greed, and the need to avoid posing the controversy as a challenge to the Queen’s sovereignty. In addition, the women argued explicitly against home support for the war. While women’s arguments complemented and augmented their husbands’, importantly, the narrative genres through which the women expressed their views differed considerably from the men’s. While the men published legal documentation, pastoral letters, and journals detailing their pastoral duties, the women primarily wrote (and published) letters, among themselves and to relatives and associates in London.
in England. With limited access to formal education, public careers, and professional organizations, even well placed Victorian women had limited access to the ‘authoritative’ venues of writing and publishing. The epistolary (letter-writing) thus became a significant genre of women’s self expression in the nineteenth century. It served an important function in documenting women’s views and experiences in places of the past.

As already noted, the principal venue for the women’s participation in the war over Taranaki was the Extracts of Letters from New Zealand on the War (1861). The letters collected in this document were written to family members in England (such as Mary Ann and Louisa Palmer, Caroline’s sisters), or between families in Auckland and Caroline in Wellington. The writers intended that and “knowledge of information would be made available to influential people in England.”[74] In newspaper correspondence and pastoral letters, the Extracts contain five letters by Sarah Selwyn, four by Mary Martin, and two by Caroline Abraham.[72] Further elaboration of the women’s views on Taranaki are provided in Sarah Selwyn’s miniscences, letters and reprints of letters from archival sources, and Mary’s Our Maoris.[73] Not surprisingly, perhaps, the women wrote considerably less about events at Taranaki than did their husbands (which accounts for the lopsided aspect that I give to each in this paper).

Among the ‘three graces,’ Mary Martin became the most active missionary due, right, perhaps both because she received a formal education and she and William were childless. With the help of servants she kept an ‘open house’ for clergy and their families at her home in Judge’s Bay (Tauranga), near St John’s College, but her commitment lay in the hospital she opened for Maori.[74] Prior to the outbreak, the hospital thrived. Lady Martin combined use of the Maori language and a regime of simple remedies—“good food, rest, herbal poultices, fresh air, and prayer”—with her healing techniques. Much of the actual medical work was accomplished by her associates, while Martin advised, raised funds, and provided spiritual comfort. She attributed her hospital’s success among the Maori, “above all [to] the fact that I was a Maori.”[75] She also supported the clergy in establishing educational training schools for young Maori men and women, including training and education of young girls at Stephen’s School for Native Girls and in her own home.[76]

Contrary to her stated hopes that she was not ‘writing politics,’ in an Extract in 1860 Martin wrote that, “One cannot but be stirred up when we hear such malign expression by settlers. Many speak quite easily about a possible war of extermination if a necessity and doom even drove to this result, instead of the self passions that In a later letter she described what she saw as the deeply moral issues at stake (which would complement the position of the clergy). She regretted that the situation... enough to sadden every thoughtful heart. That beautiful country laid waste, her bounty ruined, women and children sent off by order of the Commander-in-Chief to live policy not very popular. But as you may well believe there are much deeper and unsparing desire on the part of many of the settlers to see the natives exterminated, suspicion in the native mind, mistrust of the British government, not to speak of the unsettled of the people from their ordinary quiet avocations. The worst of it all, whole story grows worse and worse the more one sees into it.”[78]

Sarah Selwyn’s and Caroline Abraham’s colonial experiences helped them reach conclusions about events at Taranaki. Like many colonial women who wrote about strongly racialized and hierarchical patterns of relationship with indigenous peoples, the women’s voices are frequently silenced or ignored in written histories of Taranaki. However, their contributions to our understanding of the Taranaki conflict and its aftermath have been significantly understated.
women, Sarah Selwyn was known by local Maori as ‘Mother Bishop’ or Mata Pih. With the help of domestic servants and other faculty, she kept the bishopric running during George’s absences, sometimes for months at a time, and gave birth to two sons. Supervised and trained young married Maori couples and their children at St John’s, and supervised a primary school for children of local working people. With Mary Martin compiled reading books for the schools, and proof-read translations of the Bible and Maori grammar books. Caroline Abraham likewise assisted at St John’s College as assistant to her husband when he took up his own bishopric in Wellington in 1842. However, she is remembered primarily for her watercolour paintings of colonial landscape and Missionary landscapes; one biographer regards her as a watercolourist of “considerable and talent.”

In Sarah Selwyn’s *Extracts* letter of May 1860 she asserted that the war was being needlessly, and “begun in wrong on our parts.” In a later letter she complained that the Crown government had rushed

... into a bloody quarrel without trying all other methods of settling the dispute first, assuming that the natives are rebels before they have done one single thing to prove themselves to be so, and denying them the ordinary privileges of British subjects, which the Treaty of Waitangi declares them to be... Oh! we are sinking so low in the eyes of the Maories. Where is our good faith? Where our assurances that the Queen would never drive them wrong?... it goes to our hearts to see a noble race of people stigmatized as rebels and driven to desperation, by the misuse of those who are at the same time lowering their own people in their eyes.

For her part, Caroline Abraham similarly denounced the British actions at Taranaki to her readers back in England. “So short-sighted,” she asserted,

... is the policy of the grasping and covetous Settlers, who would not rest without the addition of Waitara to their settlement: of course in this case the innocent suffer *with* it, not for the guilty, and the many with the few, yet the language held by the press, without any remark or remonstrance on the part of the English, quite appals [sic] one, showing as it does the spirit of the English towards other races.

The views expressed in these passages sit in direct opposition to the Crown’s goals in the colony. Like their husbands, these women spoke passionately against one aspect of British colonization, even if they were obviously agents of it in other ways. Their Christian mission, and especially their dedication to educating Maori after an English model, could be seen as just another form of colonial control. Yet in their letters, they asserted the actions of the governor, his troops, and other white settlers at Taranaki were morally repugnant, driven by greed, and in fact illegal according to Britain’s own imported law. In these and other public statements, Mary Ann Martin, Sarah Selwyn, and Caroline Abraham tended to state much the same arguments as their husbands, and in fact often quoted their husbands at length in their letters. An entire letter of Caroline’s in her *Extracts*, for instance, quotes a letter written by Judge Martin to her husband Charles, instead of containing Caroline’s “own comments on the matter.” Caroline attempted to summarize the actions of the governor from the point of view of the three wives and their husbands.

Within the seemingly private genre of letter writing, the women attempted to reach an audience of readers in England who would potentially have much influence in directing the war effort. The women’s arguments, if not ultimately convincing to politicians in England (just as their husbands’ were not), nevertheless likely added weight to the forces opposing confiscation of Maori land. In the next section of the paper, we turn to a comparison of the anti-colonial positions articulated by these women and men. We suggest...
ideological similarities and differences that played a part in how they participated in public life and produced these colonial texts, as well as differences in gendered spatial relations that shaped their narratives.

In addition to elaborating on contrasting features of these texts with respect to their content, and audience (to which we have already alluded), we highlight the significant anti-colonial Maori testimony that appeared in William Martin’s *The Taranaki*. More than demonstrating Martin’s uniquely masculine “sympathy” towards European settlers, we suggest a link between such characteristic features of the colonial and nationalist narratives and gendered spatial relations of the Taranaki scene.

### ‘Gendered resistances’... and their ideological context

With the power structures of both the Anglican Church and English law being reinforced, Sarah Selwyn, Mary Martin, and Caroline Abraham were able to reconfigure the roles and spatial boundaries beyond the private domestic sphere of other bound women, both in Britain and in the colony. Their class and marital connections gave them opportunities to participate in public colonial life beyond “home”, and not just symbolically. Colonial missionary communities in New Zealand maintained traditional sexual divisions between the public and private spheres for women than those practiced at home. Sarah Selwyn and Mary Martin in particular travelled with their husbands throughout the colony and beyond in their missionary capacities (and even if that situation changed during wartime, as we discuss below).[^83] While their mission duties included familial and domestic responsibilities, the women also held powerful positions within their episcopal residences, including running them during the mission. (and Mary Martin ran her own hospital). Sarah Selwyn noted, for instance, that the governor referred to her for advice on church matters when George was away. In this way, the women’s professional connections and travels allowed them access to a discursive space that included but also extended beyond the domestic sphere. Their work and writings can be viewed as a key means by which elite (and aspiring) women contributed to both British empire building in the colonies as well as to their own personal advancement.[^91]

Historian Jenny Coleman makes the case that these colonial women may have subtly altered public debates such as that surrounding Taranaki primarily in defence of their husbands’ reputations, as ‘good wives’ fulfilling their roles as acceptable femininity, defending their husbands.[^92] In at least one of her letters, to take one example, Sarah Selwyn wrote to her husband was misunderstood: “...the warm cooperation and ready sympathy at hand are so great a support to my dear Husband who has for the most part been misunderstood and less supported.”[^93] In addition to numerous personal and political letters already mentioned, the results of the men’s efforts included Governor Browne (by imputation) of William Martin for meddling in politics. At the time, turbulence had also arisen in London over the Waitara land purchase and funding of the governor’s reports and opinions, and the opposing viewpoints of George and William Martin, were heard in Parliament and published in the British press. Browne, Selwyn and Selwyn eventually received censure in England, in *The London Times*, the Commons, and House of Lords (and resulting from a movement led by, among others, Lord Lyttelton, who himself had invested in the New Zealand [land] Company).

If the women were primarily writing in defence of their husbands, we may see their work as primarily reflecting and reinforcing contemporary ideologies in specific ways in which middle or upper class Victorian women might take on different roles. That is, as ‘public mothers’, duty-bound caretakers of husbands and children, and women bound together by ties of friendship or family, they were as integral as their husbands to the imperial project.
extended outward. Devoted missionary, ‘mother educator,’ and medical worker were among the acceptable, new, ‘public’ careers open to European colonial women in the nineteenth century, fitting ideologically well, as they did, within Victorian bourgeois men’s influence in the domestic sphere. In addition, while the women supported their husbands’ arguments in their letters, they primarily did so by couching them as moral issues. The narratorial authority that the women claimed on Taranaki, then, can be further linked to morality, one of the key topics on which the proper Victorian woman was believed to claim superior insight (along with the family, domesticity, manners, fashion, home, and religious pieté). [95]

Conversely, William Martin’s position within hegemonic discourses of masculinity, as former chief justice of the colony and as a member of the colony’s emerging elite criminal court, allowed him to occupy public space and engage in public debates with a great deal of authority and in a manner that masked his own partiality. Martin was a very religious man and his purposes for speaking out in favour of the ‘Maori cause’ were as much religious reasons as they were for legal ones. He gradually shifted his career away from the legal system and political controversy towards Maori education and affairs of the church. Yet, his legal ideology and position as former judge affected his perceptions of and articulation of the issues. Ultimately his words held a different kind of power within the contested colonial landscape than those of George Selwyn and Charles Abraham. Martin was able to draw on discourses of technical rationality to present his arguments as singular truths—about communal Maori land tenure systems and their necessary advancement toward individual possession, for instance. Martin accomplished this in a way his fellow missionaries could not, marked out as they were as icons for religious discourse.

While the women’s texts fundamentally opposed the Taranaki confiscation on moral grounds, clerical men also principally framed the issue as a moral one (while reinforcing their arguments with religious dogmatism, such as Selwyn’s reference to the Ten Commandments). In order to avoid their potential feminization within the hegemonic discourses of Victorian manliness, such that moral arguments might provoke, however, Christian missionaries often adopted a form of ‘muscular Christianity’ to enhance their authority to speak on complex legal and political issues as well. [96] As noted above, in his pastoral writings Selwyn did not shrink from juridical, commercial, and other secular arguments in opposition to the Crown. George Selwyn’s personal life and writing, supported by Charles Abraham’s recounting of his muscular Christianity on the western Taranaki, served in this way to counter-act the potential marginalization of Selwyn within the Taranaki debate.

Nonetheless, as members of the Anglican mission, all three men were strongly opposed to what they saw as the greed and covetousness of secular colonialism. They saw the mission’s purpose as providing a humanitarian face to empire, and they sought, through recourse to legal texts, rational argument, and moral narratives, to protect all of God’s children by His name. In so doing, they often found themselves at odds with the brutal exigencies of colonialism on the ground, as well as with the settlers whose souls they were also entrusted with.

‘Gendered resistances’ . . . and their spatial context

Thus far our comparison of the Selwyns’, Abrahams’, and Martins’ texts has required primarily on situating their voices within the larger ideological context of bourgeois (Anglican) colonial society. Such ideological arguments help contextualize women’s men’s gendered social (and spatial) relations and their participation in the Taranaki debates. At the same time, though, they raise other questions about how these colonists。“
individually encountered the war at Taranaki and thus came to write about it in such ways. With a concern to acknowledge that colonial discourses are produced within social-spatial relations within colonial contact zones as much as they are the products, we turn now to the larger picture of the relationship between missionaries and Maori during the Taranaki conflict, in order to bring these ‘resistances’ of these writers into fuller relief.

As our discussion has shown, colonial discourses were not unified and clear, but were subject to significant rupture and dislocation from various directions. The ‘three graces’ and their husbands, in their commitment to a humanitarian mission, would have been primarily interested in the conversion of souls and the establishment of fixed hierarchical relationships” necessary for legitimating conquest. At the same time, however, Christian discourse appealed to hierarchical thought that positioned heathen Natives below their more privileged Christian brethren. In their belief that heathens could be transformed into Anglican missionary rhetorics, as Christoffers suggests in another context, “coexisted uneasily, even duplicitously, with the strict racial hierarchies of colonialism.” While not a subject we intend to investigate in detail here, Selwyns, and Abrahams all constituted Maori as potential members of their fold, whose (temporary) difference could be transformed through baptism.

While missionaries may have been preoccupied with establishing ‘same’ hierarchies, relations of racial difference, one might question the types of relationship Maori with missionaries. Claudia Orange argues that in the early colonial years, Maori missionaries played significant roles in traders—“they were useful for their goods and services in enhancing the mana (prestige) of their patron chief.” By 1840, and Orange, thousands of Maori were “going mihanare (conforming at least to the conventions of Christianity),” and by 1845 at least half the Maori overall, and were nominally Christian. (Figure 3 depicts a missionary—with a striking resemblance to George Selwyn—distributing Bibles to Taranaki Maori.) Among the plan for Maori adopting Christianity (cultural dislocation, intrinsic appeal of the religion, trading opportunities), Orange argues that it was the language associated with literacy that most attracted Maori. As missionaries were themselves responsible for importing the English language into the colony—they taught and wrote in English and also produced a written version of the Maori language—Maori was through association with them that Maori could attain ‘literacy.’ The Martins, and Abrahams were all deeply embedded in this system, through the schools and hospital, and assistance in translations across languages. This role of missionaries positioned them as useful Maori allies in many acts of resistance to British colonization. With their skills in reading and writing, Maori were actively opposed the colonial propaganda organs of the state and settler instance by publishing their own newspaper in the Waikato. Prominent Maori was also able to articulate their position at Taranaki to a large Pakeha audience using the colonizers’ language to mobilize resistance against them.

These colonial missionary relations are relevant here to the extent that they provide a frame for discussing one of the most interesting features of the ‘pamphlet war’ under discussion. That is, William Martin’s The Taranaki Question, in which providing Martin’s own point of view, contains numerous and lengthy Maori testimony about the Waitara Block purchase and opposition to it of Wiremu Kingi, chief of the Atiawa, to both governor Brown and Archibald Hadfield, are published verbatim in Martin’s text. These letters lay out Kingi’s reasons for opposition to the land sale. Lengthy correspondence to and from
Riwi Te Ahu, a Maori Anglican missionary and friend of Martin, are also included.

One of the letters published in Martin’s text is Wiremu Kingi’s April 1859 letter to Governor Browne, in which he attempted to undermine the narrations of land-hungry settlers:

I will not agree to our bedroom being sold (I mean Waitara here), for this bed belongs to all of us; and do not you be in haste to give the money. Do you hearken to my word. If you give the money secretly, you will get no land for it. You may insist, but I will never agree to it... All I have to say to you, O Governor, is that none of this land will be given to you, never, never, not till I die. I have heard it is said that I am to be imprisoned because of this land. I am very sad because of this word. Why is it? You should remember that the Maories and Pakehas are living quietly upon their pieces of land, and therefore do not you disturb them.\[105\]

Another letter of Kingi’s, to Archdeacon Hadfield, was also included in Martin’s book. The letter (as the other, written in English) was an appeal to join resistance forces in Taranaki.\[106\] Not only were Kingi’s letters and statements quoted by such prominent colonists as Martin and Governor Browne, but they were also published in Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives.\[107\]

It seems important to note here that colonial men such as William Martin helped augment the spaces of resistance occupied by Maori. Their texts provided opportunities for Maori to speak in their own voices (if not their own language), opposing the government’s land policy and settler greed. While some have argued that the Pakeha
‘narrative wars’ managed to silence the vantage of Maori far more intensely. British military victories might,[108] we see rather an on going struggle due to Maori were relatively silenced at certain times, while at other times their voices came to the fore in the writing of local histories and geographies. One might think that colonial men incorporating Maori voices in their texts was simply appropriation used to bolster the authority of their own arguments. (And this was true, such as Martin quoted Maori to strengthen their authority, the women or husbands to strengthen theirs, as discussed above.) For whatever motivations they might have had for including Kingi’s letters in his book, his own personal “love” was doing so seem negligible. In fact, including Kingi’s texts might have actually added to the weight of Martin’s arguments, given the hegemonic representations of those ‘savage’ natives.

However, what also seems important to observe is that Kingi himself played an important, constitutive role in the rhetorics surrounding Taranaki, especially in his letters and speeches were made public by prominent government and church officials. While Kingi’s ‘coming to speech’ in this situation is not without complications, the anti-colonial position on land sales effectively made its way to the administration of empire (in places like the British Parliament) via numerous colonial textbooks, his close association with missionaries, and his complicity with the British government’s mission that centered on Christianity and literacy in the English language, two of the most oppressive forces working against Maori self-determination at the time—that made his statements possible.[110]

Rather than debate the relative profundity or efficacy of Kingi’s letters, or how his own words came to appear in Martin’s texts at all, it is perhaps more interesting to consider how his letters might be read—gendered social and spatial relations inherent in this wartime example can demonstrate men or women’s greater or lesser desire to ‘defend’ Maori, attention here does raise the issue of accessibility and mobility in the production of colonial texts. That is, as our remaining discussion shows, Anglican missionary communities operating during wartime Taranaki offer a particularly useful example of the ways in which gendered spatial differences may well have played a part in creating textual spaces through which Maori may have gained access to the colonial archive in order to engage with their resistance.

We would first of all point out that the dichotomous logic of public and private does not hold for colonial New Zealand missionary activity in general, as men and women often occupied the same spaces and sometimes the same work. But when it comes to wartime Taranaki the women’s and men’s movements and spaces diverged considerably. While it might be an exaggeration to portray the women’s lives as ‘confined’ during wartime—these women’s episcopal residences were, after all, in the colonial capitals of Auckland and Wellington—they in fact did experience the war quite differently than the men. They experienced the exigencies of war at a number of scales, including many that were otherwise less relevant to their day-to-day lives. Charles Abraham and Bishop Selwyn traveled to Taranaki in attempts to resolve an 1855 dispute; William Martin and Selwyn met with local Maori in these years and the two were also involved in negotiations at a number of government buildings and other sites, including discussing strategies at the home of the governor. Such opportunities for colonial men to meet ‘man to man’ with Maori leaders in such a situation likely exposed the patriarchal similarities of the men’s cultures and led them to consider himself close to Native men (as discussed above).[112] Such encounters likely provided the context through which Martin’s and Kingi’s shared experiences as men and leaders played a role in the way his letter was remembered and interpreted.
the Taranaki conflict ‘materialized’, and opened the way for later interaction and correspondence about it.

In comparison to their husbands, the women had less direct access to the events that were eventually to write about in their letters and correspondences. While the women accompanied their husbands on some of their journeys, they did not travel around the colony during wartime, but instead spent many weeks and months at home, serving as “adjunct” missionaries during the men’s absence. (Sarah Selwyn did, however, visit her sons in England during this period.) In Our Maoris, Mary Martin reflected on the women’s space of the mission during the war period:

In 1860, to our great sorrow, the war began at Taranaki. It was spoken of at first as a local disturbance soon to be quelled, but it was destined like a bush fire to run on, now burning fiercely, now sullenly smouldering over the face of the colony ... However, at that time things were all quiet and prosperous in our neighborhood ... It was a happy time, though day by day we were occupied with the homely details of Mission work ... Often there were anxious times of nursing. It was pleasant to gather together in the large hall for evening prayers, and to know that, while the war was raging in the South, between the two races, this faithful band was being trained to go forth and to help and teach their people.\[13\]

At St John’s College, the hospital, and in their own homes, the women interacted with one another, other staff, as well as with Maori who had come to the mission and adopted the Christian model, and who were in fact studying for the priesthood. Physically removed from the war zone, the women received information about it clandestinely from their husbands, and from other ‘messengers’. Mary Martin wrote of hearing about the status of the war on her way to church, from Governor Browne’s wife.\[14\] She noted that the governor visited the Martin’s home seeking her husband’s advice, of him being “in constant communication with my husband.”\[15\] “Charles tells me ‘it is rumoured that,’” and other similar statements attest to the networks of information into which the women were tied and thus the manner in which the war entered their lives—and even if such statements, also, perhaps strategically, obscured their sources of information.

Both the women’s relative detachment from Taranaki and their sources of information about it helped to explain why much of the content of their letters echoed their husband’s views. And yet, the women also provided their own information about the war, clearly about its effects on the Auckland mission. While Mary Martin portrayed herself as contented to be removed from the war (above), in other (later) statements she appalled to despondent over the closing of her hospital due to its effects.\[16\] Sarah Selwyn wrote of her house becoming a refuge for “panic stricken [white] people, whenever an rumour of invading Maories (wholly unfounded) arose.”\[17\] The spaces of the war and its effects, then, were clearly not confined to the areas of fighting or deal-making. By the end, the women’s limited physical access to Taranaki became textualized and repetitive of their husbands’ views, yet it also provided them a context within which to discuss the effects of war at home.

Our reading of the colonial archive surrounding the Taranaki dispute helps to textualize feminist and postcolonial arguments about whether and to what extent colonial men versus women were ‘open’ to hearing and documenting indigenous voices and/or were sympathetic to their causes. Many scholars have been concerned with the identity politics of colonial societies, which often placed white colonial women within the domestic sphere, primarily with the job of articulating with and maintaining peace in British households in the colonies.\[18\] A great deal of work has addressed stereotyped expectations and representations of women’s roles and their roles as women, and how they were perceived within these contexts.
representations of colonial settler women, and European women more generally, as more ‘racist’ than men in this capacity. Particular focus has centered on the case of British colonial India who served as scapegoats for racist practices. The stereotyped colonial men are portrayed as working against the damage done to women’s presence.\textsuperscript{[119]}

Our purpose has not been to determine how discourses of colonialism oriented towards women versus men as more or less desirous of defending Taranaki Maori. We have been concerned to draw out the significance of embodied gendered difference in producing these characteristic features of the colonial archive. Kingi’s testimony on the Taranaki Question, more than demonstrating William Martin’s masculine stance in relation to the Maori cause, can be linked to the gendered spatial terrain of the Taranaki landscape. To be sure, Martin was sympathetic to the Maori cause, as was his wife and children. However, it is important to keep in mind also that it was the gendered spatial terrain of wartime Taranaki that lent itself particularly well to the discursive connections that existed between Kingi and Martin.

Conclusion

As this essay has shown, the operation of ‘resistance’ in the actions of the group of ‘Maori’ writers needs to be contextualized along gendered ideological and spatial lines of power. The Martins, Selwyns, and Abrahams, all ultimately operating within a discourse of Anglican missionizing, acted in ways that were, at times at least, resistant to more secular forms of colonization as manifested in government policies on Maori. Yet, in contesting the actions of the secular authorities, these writers also had to question the role that the church played in the often brutal process of land dispossession and building.

Our analysis of these men’s and women’s texts about the conflict at Taranaki suggests that resistance necessarily was mobilized through a range of both material and discursive practices. As one set of sites of resistance among many, the works of the Abrahams, Martins, and Selwyns offer few clues to a single oppositional voice arrayed against the colonial imperative. Rather, the three women and their husband wrote from specifically gendered, classed, racialized, and spatialized discursive positions, with differential access to various colonial spaces and places. Their attempts to write and give voice to Maori land rights as laid out in the Crown government’s Land Act instrument was a worthwhile endeavour. At least they tried. But the complex web of representation operating at the time, overlaid with their own ‘civilizing’ visions, leaves the long lasting liberatory impact of their efforts negligible at best.

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Notes


[2] While 1840 is in “some respects an artificial watershed” for British colonization of New Zealand because important processes took place before that date, it remains the “official date of colonization.” J. Belich, Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders; Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century (Auckland 1996) 115–116.

[3] Until relatively recently, the New Zealand Wars were termed “the Maori Wars.” Many Pakeha (white European) New Zealanders. The battles include the Northern Expedition (1845–1846), The Taranaki War (1860–1861), the Waikato Wars (1863–1864), and the series of smaller engagements involving Te Kooti (1868–1872) and Titokawaru (1868–1869). J. Belich, The New Zealand Wars (Auckland 1986). The Waitangi Tribunal (a state commission of inquiry created in 1975 to examine Maori Treaty grievances) suggests that the Taranaki War lasted until 1869, with further skirmishes occurring right up until the 1880s. This makes it the most prolonged of the wars of colonization in New Zealand. Waitangi Tribunal, The Taranaki Report—Kaupapa Tuatahi (Wellington 1996, available online at: http://www.knowledge-basket.co.nz/topic4/waitr_b/text/wai143/toc.html).


[7] Belich, New Zealand Wars, 328, uses this term to refer to missionaries and other advocates of Maori rights.

[8] This was after his elder brother had declined the position. Selwyn, it must be noted, was not the first Christian minister in New Zealand. The Church Missionary Society had been operating there since 1823 and Samuel Marsden had established a mission station further north as early as 1814. See G. S. Parsonson, Samual Marsden, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol. 1, 1769–1869 (Wellington 1990) 271.


[17] J. M. Davidson, The Polynesian foundation, in G. W. Rice (Ed), The Oxford New Zealand (Auckland 1992) 3–27. Before the arrival of the Europeans, whena (“people of the land”) had developed a social structure based upon spirituality, and mana (or status). Mana, based as it was upon lineage system, both men and women equally: retaining their own identity and whakapapa was important and children could identify with the kinship group of either or both. Spirituality and mana were (and to many Maori, remain today) closely connected. According to B. James and K. Saville-Smith, Gender, Culture and Power in New Zealand’s Gendered Culture (Auckland 1989) 17, the land was more than just the base: “land, kinship, and individual identity were united for the Maori.” For discussions of traditional land tenure, see I. H. Kawharu, Maori Land Tenure: a Changing Institution (Oxford 1977) and G. Asher and D. Naulu, Maori Land Tenure (1987).

[18] B. Biggs, Humpty Dumpty and the Treaty of Waitangi, in I. H. Kawharu (Ed), Maori and Pakeha Perspectives of the Treaty of Waitangi (Auckland 1989) Orange, The Treaty of Waitangi (Wellington 1987) 39–44. The Waitangi Tribunal, by its enabling legislation to have regard for both versions of the Treaty, possible, to reconcile them. However, the wider common law doctrine of aboriginal title suggests that in cases where indigenous peoples have signed treaties with the indigens’ reading of such treaties should be viewed as the definitive interpretation. Slattery, Understanding Aboriginal Rights, Canadian Bar Review 66 (1987) 741–762.


[22] See W. Martin, op. cit.; Waitangi Tribunal, op. cit., especially Chapter 2. Zealand Wars, portrays the background to the war not as a land issue but as an issue. The Waitangi Tribunal, op. cit., Chapter 1, section 1.1, also suggests that issue is the relationship between Maori and the Government.” This may be a distinction to make, however, because for Maori, control of land (mana whenua) integral to notions of tribal (iwi) and family (hapu) identity upon which sovereignty (tino rangatiratanga) depended. Questions of land and of sovereignty, thus inextricably linked.

[23] Waitangi Tribunal, op. cit., Chapter 1. The Tribunal initially was empowered to examine claims dating from 1975, but the Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act 1987 allows it to adjudicate claims dating from 1840.


[27] W. Martin, op. cit.; Belich, New Zealand Wars; Orange, op. cit.


[31] Sarah Selwyn wrote that she “[d]id not intend a pamphlet, leaving that to my betters.” *Extracts of Letters on the War Question*, 21. Mary Martin stated that, “I trust I am not writing politics or speaking evil of the powers that be,” *Extracts of Letters on the War Question*, 7. Also see S. Selwyn, *ibid.*, 56; M. Martin, *Our Maoris* (London 1884). Perhaps the women presented themselves as such “proper” feminine subjects, ostensibly out of their depth in the public practice of politics, precisely to make their movements in that arena seem less transgressive to their readers.


[35] M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London 1992), has outlined the key role that such totalizing and objectivist ways of knowing played in the colonial project.


[42] According to Martin, “Each Native has a right in common with the whole tribe over the disposal of the land of the tribe, and has an individual right to such portions as he, his parents, may have regularly used for cultivations, for dwellings, for gathering edible berries for snaring birds and rats, or as pig-runs.” He adds that “[g]enerally, there is no such thing as an individual claim, clear and independent of the tribal right.” *Ibid.*, 5–6.


[46] F. D. Bell, F. Whitaker, and T. Gore Browne, *Notes on Sir William Martin’s Pamphlet Entitled The Taranaki Question* (Published for the New Zealand Government, 1861, Hocken Library Facsimile no. 8, 1968). The government argued that the Waitara purchase was a simple question of ownership of land, and did not involve questions of sovereignty. The Royal analysis ignored the fact that Maori land title arose from their sovereignty under customary common law of aboriginal rights. According to Orange, *op. cit.*, 286, note 73, the authors did not acknowledge authorship of the pamphlet, and it was attributed to Martin and Richmond. The pamphlet first appeared in 1860 and was revised for later publication in 1861; Orange, *op. cit.*; Barton, *op. cit.*


[56] Limbrick, *op. cit.*, 388; S. Selwyn, *Reminiscences*.

Augustus Selwyn, 2 vols (London 1879). Also see G. A. Selwyn, *Journal of a Visitation Tour from July 1842 to January 1843, Extracted from Letters to A Friend in England, the Church in the Colonies, 1847* (London 1847) and *Annals of the District of New Zealand* (London 1847).


[60] Pastoral Letter, *Extracts of Letters*, 82–98, quote is from 86.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 91. The system of individualization that Selwyn advocates came to fruition with the Native Land Courts Act implemented in 1865. Thanks to the land courts, almost all Maori lands were alienated over a 50-year period. See Orange, *op. cit.*, 1887.


[64] Hadfield’s public opposition to the government’s armed conflict at Taranaki was hostile to him “for some time the most unpopular man in the colony.” J. Starke, October 1861, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, *op. cit.*, 169.


[66] Ibid., 106.


[70] Starke, Sarah Selwyn, 597.


schools. Martin also published books on scripture history and a recipe book of reme foods, and beverages.

[77] M. Martin, Extracts of Letters, 7.
[78] Ibid., 18–19.

[80] S. Selwyn, Reminiscences; Starke, I must write a pamphlet, and Starke, Sarah Selwyn, 595–599.

[81] Starke, I must write a pamphlet; Starke, Sarah Selwyn; Brown-Wilkinson, op. cit. 51.

[82] S. Selwyn, Extracts of Letters, 8.


[84] Caroline Abraham, Extracts of Letters, 2.

[85] Laing and Coleman, op. cit., 11.


[88] S. Selwyn, Reminiscences; M. Martin, Our Maories.

[89] S. Selwyn, ibid.

[90] A. Burton, op. cit.; V. Ware, op. cit.; For discussion of missionary women in particular, see B. N. Ramusack, op. cit. and J. Rowbotham, op. cit.


[98] See for example, Selwyn, Journal of a Bishop’s Visitations Tour; M. Martin, Our Maories. Selwyn, Reminiscences.


[100] Ibid., 32.

[101] Ibid., 32–34.


[105] In addition, Governor Browne, in one of his despatches to the imperial government, quoted the speech that Wiremu Kingi made during the purchase agreement meeting in which included this plea: “Listen Governor! Notwithstanding Teira’s offer I will not part the sale of Waitara to the Pakeha . . . I will not give it up. Ekore, Ekore, Ekore. I will not, I will not, I have spoken.” Cited in A. Saunders, op. cit., 380–381.

[109] C. Barnett, “Sing along with the common people”: politics, postcolonialism, and figures, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 15 (1997) 137–154, argues for the privileging of speech or voice as empowerment, and its corollary “silence” with regard to disempowerment, more than anything indicates an ethnocentric prejudice towards agency, power, and self expression, while marking silence as absence, power, and exclusion.

[110] “Silence” within that context might well have indicated a more profound or foundational problem in those colonizing practices. As Barnett, ibid., 140, reiterates, there is an important distinction between “silencing” and “being silent.”

[112] See again, Loomba, op. cit.
[115] Ibid.
[119] See, for instance, Chaudhuri and Strobel, ibid.; Ware, op. cit.; J. Sharpe, The British Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text (Minneapolis 1993).