Empire, Humanitarianism and Violence in the Colonies

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There is now a burgeoning scholarship at the intersection of new imperialism and the history of humanitarianism. Scholars have not only pointed to the continuing need to historicise humanitarian developments, but, importantly, argued for more consideration of humanitarian developments outside of Europe and the "Third World."[1] As Alan Lester and Fae Dussart have recently argued, we must reassess entrenched understandings of the development of humanitarianism as originating from an "anti-slavery mother" and "European battlefield father," especially in the "light of trans-imperial governmental experiments in violently colonised settler colonial spaces."[2] The diverse forms of imperial humanitarian history, and their entanglements with violence in colonised regions such as Australia, New Zealand, North America, India and the Pacific, demand attention.

This special collection takes up this challenge to consider the diverse and contested relationship between humanitarianism and violence in the Anglophone colonies, and the experiences and impact of humanitarians from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries who sought to ameliorate various forms of colonial violence, advocate for non-violence and/or engage in anticolonial and humanitarian activities. We are particularly interested in exploring the various conceptualisations of colonial conflict by humanitarians: their written accounts "on the ground" and assessments of both epistemological and physical violence; their appeals, strategies and interventions to arrest violence and protect suffering subjects; the local and transnational protests against violence; the politics of witnessing; and the economies of affect and sentiment, and narratives of humanitarianism and violence that circulated with personnel and though text within imperial networks. Interrogated here too are the ways that humanitarians, protectors and others could simultaneously be implicated in or oversee various forms of violence; indeed, the refutation

of outright conflict or brutality could sometimes lead to other forms of harm and organised coercion of colonised, unfree and convicted peoples alike. Early cross-cultural contact resulted in explicit and undeniable physical conflict and indeed acts of colonial terror, associated with the classic frontier of European invasion, but a consequence of colonial state formation and the extension of European-style laws and other "civilising" regimes was that while violent interpersonal conflict may have subsided (or have been more easily hidden), methods for identifying, representing and managing Indigenous and unfree populations rose with the development of colonial state infrastructure. Over time, such tensions only increased in many colonial cultures. These forms of social management, which may be described as infrastructural or bureaucratic violence, could have highly destructive effects upon Indigenous communities, even if the everyday practices of protection and surveillance were apparently benevolent in intention.[3]

"The history of humanitarianism importantly is also the history of those who suffer," writes Michelle Tusan. Crucially important, therefore, are the experiences of humanitarianism's recipients—Indigenous peoples, enslaved and convicted peoples, and other unfree labourers—and their political engagement with or refutations of colonial humanitarian endeavours. Scholarship which posits humanitarianism as a unilinear, beneficent alleviation of the suffering of its putative objects can also be delimited. As Tusan remarks, comprehending the humanitarian response to violence, atrocity and genocide "necessarily requires considering the relationships of power that inevitably shadow any thinking about intervention on behalf of persecuted populations."[4] In analysing these complex imperial and multidirectional power relations, we seek to foreground subversions of power on the ground and also the ways that the precepts and rhetoric of liberal humanitarianism might be received and actively reworked by colonised peoples. Further, as Sean Scalmer's essay in this collection shows, such discourses could be effectively harnessed to anticolonial struggle, despite the implicit limits and disjuctures of an imperial humanitarian discourse of nonviolence.[5]

For well over three decades, a growing body of scholarship on the Australian and New Zealand colonies and humanitarianism in general has studied the varied forms of humanitarian history and their multivalent entanglements with violence in colonised regions.[6] Work on humanitarianism and missionaries across settler colonies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is particularly notable.[7] Nevertheless, "humanitarianism" as an area of scholarly engagement has often tended to gloss over historical, political and spiritual specificities. Until recently, the particular entanglements of humanitarianism and colonial governance and the question of violence and

nonviolence have been overlooked. A new imperial religious history has emerged that views religion as central to British imperial endeavour in its creation of "moral empire" and seeks to examine, as Hilary Carey notes, "the nuanced interpretation of the complex ways in which religion was, and to some extent still is, entangled with other imperial networks and relationships."[8] This shift, in accordance with the dynamic convergence of new imperialism with transnational approaches, and a reconsideration of a more globally interconnected and networked empire, has enabled a new scholarship of humanitarianism, protection, governance, and colonial violence to emerge. Such new work has the potential to take close account of the distinctive and formative experiences of local settler/coloniser environments and to appreciate its networked, imperial nature, where humanitarians observed, witnessed, and sought to ameliorate—or were implicated in—various forms of violence in new colonies and unruly frontiers. In exploring key humanitarian concepts such as violence, nonviolence, amelioration and protection, for example, we must be attentive to the ways their meanings were produced and maintained in this period of immense social change.

Humanitarianism and British Imperial Expansion

Talal Asad has traced the emergence of a cluster of concepts such as "humanismus" from the fifteenth-century German, the medieval "humanitas" and the nineteenth-century secular "humanism": "humanity, humanism, humanitarianism belong to a tangled and shifting history," he argues.[9] The term *humanitarianism* and its associated concepts and practices specifically "emerged in the nineteenth century with the consolidation of the European nation states, the expansion of European colonial empires and the global development of capitalism," argues Asad. The theological connotations of humanitarianism are associated with ideas of redemption, reaching out, and the language of sentiment and affect.[10] There is a general consensus that what Charles Taylor calls a "moral imperative to reduce suffering" emerged from Enlightenment thought and Christian (and especially Protestant) roots.[11] As Asad argues, with this came an associated and assumed narrative about the elimination of human suffering:

> that moral progress is advanced when the violence of military conflict and dictatorship gives way to the nonviolence of international diplomacy and democratic politics, when harsh physical punishment of convicts gives way to humane confinement, when war gives way to peace.[12]

Likewise Tusan has surveyed humanitarianism and the notion of interventions to alleviate suffering as both an "idea and a practice." She notes that early modern monarchs controlled potential external intervention on behalf of their dispossessed subjects. With the Enlightenment, "broad claims of a universal humanity offered new ways of understanding the obligation to act. By the nineteenth century, an activist sensibility found voice in campaigns that looked to undo long-held practices like slavery through pressuring governments to abolish slavery on humanitarian grounds."[13]

The simultaneous rise of humanitarianism and imperialism in the modern period has been noted by a number of scholars, including Joel Quirk, who delineates the ways that colonialism and antislavery were viewed as compatible in the nineteenth century.[14] Quirk argues that the antislavery campaigns marked an important moment in the development of paternalistic colonialism, and abolitionism was less concerned with human equality than with "colonial priorities," with legal abolition thus enabling other forms of unfree and exploitative labour worldwide.[15] Indeed, the other "colonial priorities" of the period were the expansion of empire in the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions in sites of British settlement such as North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. It was in these colonies of settlement that the entwined projects of liberal humanitarianism and empire took on a particular and potent character.

An apparent paradox saw the rise of British humanitarianism in the 1830s amidst these aggressively expanding colonies marked by intense violence against Indigenous peoples; Lester and Dussart begin their new book by articulating this conceptual riddle.[16] After the abolition of the slave trade (1807) and later of slavery in the British settlements (1833), abolitionist humanitarians began to turn their attention to the fate of Indigenous peoples in the colonies of settlement, and questions of moral empire and the possibility of humanitarian governance grew to prominence.[17] By this time humanitarian precepts had gained influence throughout the British colonies, resulting in the establishment of the Aborigines Protection Society in 1837. In both metropolitan and colonial governing circles, humanitarians generally did not oppose colonisation, but increasingly promoted a benevolent or "Christian colonisation," a civilising mission of moral enlightenment.[18] In the southeastern Australian colonies, while humanitarians emphasised the moral imperatives of a humane colonisation, pastoralists and agriculturalists insisted on access to cheap labour and land. Many expatriate Britons challenged the model of a humane or Christian colonisation through an emerging assertion of "settler" rights and entitlements. A strong doctrine of supercessionism—that settlers should rightly replace Indigenes—was promoted, based on

claims of British moral and racial superiority, and Lockean principles of civilisation, property and the imperative to cultivate land.[19]

Colonial governors could articulate broad humanitarian precepts, yet condone violence both retributive and disciplinary and effectively outsource it to settlers, militia and other groups. So too the amelioration of violence could be left to partly formed and messy plural legal codes, government missionaries and other humanitarians entirely independent of the state. In colonial New South Wales, for example, as settlers crossed the Blue Mountains onto the Bathurst Plains they faced resistance from Wiradjuri warriors who killed or wounded both stock and their keepers. Martial law was proclaimed by Governor Thomas Brisbane (1822–25) on the Bathurst Plains on 14 August 1824 following the killing of seven stockmen by Aborigines in the ranges north of Bathurst, and the murder of Aboriginal women and children by settler-vigilantes in what the *Sydney Gazette* on 14 October 1824 called "an exterminating war."[20] Brisbane also established a mounted police force whose first frontier deployment to "pacify" Aboriginal peoples was in the upper Hunter Valley in 1826.[21] Despite popular and permissive claims that the frontier was a place of lawlessness, instead, as Julie Evans has argued, the declaration of martial law served to formalise the frontier as a legal space of violence and was thereby crucial to the furtherance of the settler project.[22] Within a year Governor Brisbane granted 10,000 acres (4047 ha) to the London Missionary Society for an Aboriginal reserve at Lake Macquarie.[23] The resident missionary, the Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, used his privileged position to witness and publicise settler violence against Aborigines in graphic terms.[24] Some scholars have described Brisbane's policy towards Aboriginal people as ambivalent, on the one hand imposing martial law and on the other seeking to compensate lost Aboriginal land through humanitarian measures. Yet this seeming ambivalence rather reflected the growing tensions of colonisation, where retaliatory and offensive state-sanctioned violence sat alongside an emergent humanitarianism that sought to conciliate, civilise, compensate and protect Aboriginal peoples.[25] By the mid-nineteenth century, the rise of self-governing settler states often permitted and enabled new forms of organised legal violence (martial law, native police corps, and child removal) against Indigenous peoples deemed non-sovereign in their own lands.

Since settlers came to stay, questions of universalism versus difference had to be worked out on the ground in highly specific ways, and differently from those of other colonies. Settler colonial dynamics would come to exhibit a civilising mission at the heart of which was an organising grammar that represented invasion in terms of benevolence and White civility.[26] The Whig

humanitarian promise of liberal empire in the Age of Reform offered a sacred covenant, Pax Britannica, a conciliatory agreement or settlement which proffered civilisation and uplift for Indigenous people, as they in turn exchanged their sovereignty in the bargain. Yet liberal universalism's high tenets, including ideas of the brotherhood of man, would manifest in these settler colonies through a thoroughly hierarchised and brutal means of operation.[27]

Observing such inequities, humanitarians would come to assert that the mistreatment of Aboriginal peoples and the theft of their land in British settlements was a form of grave national sin, albeit an "evil of comparatively recent origin."[28] The affective, evangelical tones of such assessment were stark. The landmark 1837 *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Aboriginal Tribes*, which was established to assess the treatment of Indigenous peoples in British settlements in the face of colonisation, exemplified such debates about the virtue or sin of colonisation among people of British origin. As Elizabeth Elbourne has argued elsewhere, the debate was "cast in Christian terms… and heavily influenced by evangelical Christian ideas about sin, repentance and redemption, although the meaning and pertinence of Christianity were also sometimes at stake."[29] The Select Committee report "castigated settlers and traders for their immoral treatment of indigenous peoples and argued that such treatment contributed to [their] physical destruction and moral degradation," writes Elbourne. Solutions proposed by the committee included the metropolitan oversight of settler relationships with Indigenous peoples, envisioning, ultimately, the moral recreation of sinful settlers and non-Christian Indigenes alike, and their eventual joint assimilation into an imagined Christian community of the virtuous.[30] Examining these debates, Elbourne argues "the focus of Colonial Office administrators, of many British critics of imperial policy and of many settlers themselves on sin and virtue, centred on the moral character of the individual and of the nation alike, as well as on the morality of the colonized." Yet often they neglected the "structural issues that drove frontier conflict in the first place, despite moments of real recognition of the importance of structure."[31]

Despite self-representations, then, the benevolence of many colonial states is seriously contestable. Careful interrogation of self-interested settler claims to morality and justifications of violence (both physical and representational) renders progressivist (and presentist) arguments about the inherent civility of the (now) liberal democratic "post"colonial state less than compelling, despite their continued articulation.[32] So too it is important to recognise the ambivalence of benevolence and sympathy in colonial contexts. As Asad argues, humanitarianism could use "violence to subdue violence" and benevolent ideas often played out in deeply

paradoxical ways. In his view, we need to consider the complexities and internal contradictions of enlightenment thought in which "compassion and benevolence are intertwined with violence and cruelty, an intertwining that is not merely a co-existence of the two but a mutual dependence of each on the other."[33] In the colonies outright physical violence and humanitarian modes of action could constitute complementary modes of colonial governance.

Comparisons across differing colonial contexts are revealing. While the settler colonies powerfully galvanised humanitarians, India did not inspire the same fervour in metropolitan activists, Jordanna Bailkin argues.[34] Despite early and vigorous missionary efforts—across denominations, and against the strenuous resistance of the East India Company—external humanitarian interest in India was limited, even if discrete issues such as *sati* attracted widespread metropolitan outrage.[35] Thus the South Asian colonial executive assumed much of the responsibility for humanitarian effort, producing a contradictory and limited sphere of action but also avoiding much of the rancour that characterised other colonial contact zones. This circumstance did not mean that violent interactions between Indians and Britons went unremarked. Indeed, in her study of how and when Europeans could be held culpable for murder, Bailkin demonstrates that governors developed detailed strategies to manage White violence, while the colonial judiciary effectively downgraded such violence into lesser categories than murder. Indian and British sources depict White violence quite differently—the former as an endemic feature of colonial rule, the latter as actions of rogue individuals, often off-duty soldiers—but intriguingly the official archive on interracial violence expanded in scope even as (White) culpability for that violence was diminished through defensive court procedures that rationalized the vulnerability of Indian bodies.[36] Interracial violence deeply troubled the humanitarian precepts of manly behaviour that fuelled the modern scientific theories of British leaders such as Lord Curzon, yet Bailkin notes that such leaders were pilloried by the vernacular press for bigotry: for Curzon, she concludes, the prosecution of White criminality was a way of "preserving the doctrine of racial superiority via humanitarianism."[37]

Violence and Nonviolence

Violence itself is historically contingent, shifting, and culturally determined. Just as conciliation and conflict would always be closely intertwined on colonial frontiers, so too were violence and nonviolence mutually imbricated. Our collection broadens and reconceptualises available understandings of violence in the context of intercultural encounters on frontiers and other colonial sites. Scholars have valuably reassessed the notion of colonial frontiers to expand its meaning from

either a delimited moment in time or a particular spatial category.[38] Nonetheless, it is still the case that violence in frontier settings remains examined largely through a model of martial warfare, sited on remote borderlands as clashes between strangers, too often male. This is the case with histories of violence more generally, as Arthur Kleinman and others argue. Political violence now expands beyond wars between states (and civil conflicts) to include oppressive governmental practices. Social violence, understood as the suffering that social orders at local, national and global levels bring to bear upon people, now seeks to account for the unjust distribution of disease, premature death, and everyday forms of violence.[39] As a range of scholars have pointed out in relation to frontier massacre, however, violence was not only racially marked, but was proximate, prosaic, gendered, intimate and all too often enacted between those known to each other.[40] Historical materialist, critical legal and new imperial studies have persuasively demonstrated that colonial violence can be reimagined as part of a continuum reaching from acts of physical punishment or terror to something embedded in prosaic, everyday bureaucratic and social domains, and enacted in an array of sites and settings including ones of labour, domesticity, the law and governmental policy.[41] Within colonial and neocolonial situations, violence has been conceptualised as a civilising force. Indeed, far from arising only from discrete "events," violence must be viewed as structural and relational, manifesting in ways that stretched between and across cultures and generations. Violence is destructive; yet as broader postcolonial scholarship indicates, it is also productive of new situations, subjectivities, and revolutionary and resistive actions.[42]

The linear trajectory often articulated around colonial regimes from outright terror, physical or despotic violence to bureaucratic or infrastructural violence (in other words, Foucault's shift from "punishment" to "discipline") also cannot be taken at face value.[43] As James Ron argues, it is often a given that as infrastructural power grows, despotic power declines, noting that in this increase in the "scope" of state power occurs at the expense of intensity, in line with the views of social theorist Anthony Giddens.[44] Under "infrastructural regimes of power, weaponless citizens are to be policed, not destroyed," observes Ron. Yet, echoing sociologist Michael Mann, Ron points out that "any notion that modern infrastructural power invariably limits state repression is wrong, since some states with high infrastructural power massacre their own populations… as examples of Nazi Germany and Rwanda demonstrate."[45] In the colonies of settlement, high levels of infrastructural power could exist coterminously with outright acts of state-sponsored terror and massacre. The high level of coordination of the state-sponsored mounted and Native police corps in Queensland in the mid- to late nineteenth century is a case in point. The mounted and Native police corps were "notorious throughout Queensland as the blunt instrument of land-clearing

settlers," writes Tracey Banivanua Mar.[46] Indicative of the organisation and reach of state violence, at least eighty-five Native Police barracks were established across Queensland between 1859 and 1898 as the frontier war advanced.[47] Likewise, complicating the notion of a linear shift from despotic violence to less brutal disciplinary measures in penal colonies, Edmonds and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart consider the rise and demise of the flogging of convicts in colonial Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). As they show, over a short period of time the sheer terror and high rate of state flogging gave way to multiple forms of punishment as the infrastructure of the penal state developed, yet this was only in part driven by the humanitarian impulse. Nevertheless, sites of despotic power remained, for example in the form of chain gangs in the bush, where petty despots and severe and violent forms of physical punishment continued to be administered in the name of the state.

Humanitarianism, Protection, and Colonial Violence

Just as every act of violence has a history, so too humanitarian reactions against colonial violence must be understood as emerging through a complex genealogy of political and ethical thought, a trajectory which itself must be historicised. Nonviolence, both as a term and as an activist approach and moral philosophy of anticolonial and later civil rights action, most popularly emerges in the early twentieth with Mohandas K. Gandhi's use of the "ancient but powerful idea of *ahimsa*, or nonviolence, and made it familiar throughout the world. Martin Luther King, Jr. followed in his footsteps."[48] A long history traces various forms of nonviolence, especially in the West, the elaboration of which is outside the scope of this introductory essay.[49] Of pertinence here, however, is that during the early nineteenth century, humanitarians and activists against violence mobilised antecedent ideas, especially via potent and affective Biblical tenets, not only of dishonour, shame and national sin and redemption, but also of pacification, conciliation, amelioration and protection.[50]

The positive connotations of many of these terms—pacification, conciliation, amelioration and protection—supported well-intentioned nineteenth-century actors, even if subsequently humanitarian terminology has faced critique and revision, especially in settler cultures. The loaded language of nonviolence serves to remind us of its provocative role in challenging the ethics of imperial expansion, and also the ways in which humanitarian efforts to combat the ill effects of colonialism upon Indigenous people have themselves become contentious. Humanitarians on the frontier advocated nonviolent means in order to stabilise precarious and highly dangerous social conditions, and Elizabeth Elbourne's paper in this collection raises the "impossibility" of

nonviolence in confrontational colonial zones, where Indigenous men, especially, were inevitably drawn into messy violent relations involving multiple foes and allies. In such ways, the utopian ideals of activists could themselves be seen as forms of intervention that effectively sought to "pacify" Indigenous people in ways that rendered them more easily subjected to governance and more vulnerable to both physical and cultural damage.

"Protection," key to the nineteenth-century humanitarian vocabulary, has diverse meanings that change over time. This is particularly so in settler colonies, where the rhetoric of protection was increasingly harnessed to the demands of the settler state, and was frequently used to remove, incarcerate, and delimit the rights of Indigenous peoples. Ironically, for Indigenous people seeking self-governance, the language of rights often defaulted on to protection. Strategies of protection could too easily turn to regulation, surveillance and the spatial incarceration of Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, scholars have more recently illuminated the ways in which strategies for a benevolent empire were ultimately tied to securing the colonial order and the central goal of colonial state building. As Amanda Nettelbeck's essay in this volume shows, the rhetoric of protection and civilisation, along with ideas of reparation, offered Australian settler colonialism a benign face.[51] Despite this, Aboriginal people enlisted the humanitarian agendas and rhetoric of protection in encounters with representatives of the British Crown to further their own goals and to make claims on the state.

Protection also played out distinctively in India. Vinita Damodaran traces a protectionist discourse that emerged between 1830 and 1930 in relation to tribal peoples and areas: comparisons between tribal, Dalit, and Indigenous groups in settler cultures has proved compelling for a range of postcolonial scholars. Damodaran's analysis of the mountainous region of Orissa—a rural, heavily forested area populated mostly by Indigenous (*adivasi*) people—reveals how Raj officials intervened to reinstate customary law. Ironically, the "noble savage" discourse of the eighteenth century allowed a humanitarian discourse to emerge about the position of tribes and their custom in the mid-nineteenth century.[52] Traditional land tenure systems, which accounted for both sedentary and shifting cultivation, had been eroded by the moneylending landlords (*zamindars* and *mahajans*). Early British involvement in India colluded in the displacement and marginalisation of tribal communities, yet fierce and irreconcilable hostility to Raj models of governance forced a recognition of tribal rights and the limits of colonial power. Administrators, missionaries, and ethnologists used the language of humanitarianism to argue, successfully, for the importance of forest rights (for ritual and other practices) after early 1850s rebellions: "Often misjudged, but sometimes appropriate, the efforts to protect these customary rights helped to institutionalize the

fact of tribal autonomy."[53] Damodaran argues that more sophisticated readings of colonial ethnography are necessary in order to trace both the complex strands of imperial thought and the variety of agents involved in colonial projects.

Sympathy, Self, Suffering and Early Rights-talk

We must attend carefully to the powerful "cultural politics" of emotion, as Sara Ahmed has termed them, and in particular those entwined with the imperial humanitarian project.[54] The dialogic relationship of sympathy in the mutual constitution of self and (colonised) other is "fundamental to asymmetrical relations of power," notes Asad. Early encounters between Europeans and Indigenous peoples often threatened the integrity of the European colonising self, suggests Asad, leading to "defining interpersonal relations in terms of the asymmetry of sympathy," creating on one hand an "antithesis between the colonizing subject of sympathy and on the other the colonized subject of suffering," yet with "each side dependent on the other for its identity."[55] Thus sympathy and sentiment might be considered as both the constitution and assertion of self and other, and as key "emotional complexes shaping relations of domination and subjection."[56]

Pain and suffering—as witnessed by humanitarians and especially Quakers travelling "under concern" to gather evidence of sufferings in slave plantations and on the violent frontiers of colonized land—were both relational and through text made highly representational. In tracing the rise of humanitarianism and its entwined relations with suffering and pain, Margaret Abruzzo in her *Polemical Pain* describes the "changing place of cruelty in moral thinking," in particular the rise in arguments about the humaneness of slave treatment over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[57] Focusing on these shifts in moral thinking and the very particular relationship of Quakers with suffering, she charts the connection between the "suffering spirit of Quakerism" to the moral opposition to slavery, and the crucial work this effected in reshaping the self-image of these humanitarians.[58] Quakers "invoked a language of spiritual power exercised through suffering" and, though by the late eighteenth century no longer martyred, had developed an identity as a suffering people, and so too a religious lexicon of "sympathy running parallel to moral-philosophical theories."[59] Suffering and pain was thus a pathway to spiritual growth, while cruelty was viewed as "antithetical to this identity."[60] Members of the Religious Society of Friends were therefore encouraged to "imagine themselves in the place of the sufferer and to share sufferers' feelings" and, in the case of slavery, to see remote slave pain as a particular form of cruelty and "their moral concern."[61] On Flinders Island in the Bass Strait in Australia's southern

ocean in 1832, Quaker George Washington Walker used the language of humaneness versus barbarity and cruelty in his eyewitness testimony of the treatment, including the flogging, of Aboriginal women whom he believed "enslaved" to sealers. Interviewing the women and communicating though halting language and bodily signs, he wrote, "some… bear testimony to the cruel treatment they have received from their unfeeling masters… and were treated with great inhumanity by their inhuman men."[62] Condemning slavery—or in the colonies of settlement rebuking the various "species" of slavery and unfreedom—required defence of one's position in terms of "humaneness," which "struck at the heart of slaveholders" and their critics' moral identities, writes Abruzzo.[63]

Yet the language of humaneness, sympathy and suffering frequently centred on the body of the enslaved, colonised or subaltern subject, and on the infliction of pain on that body, rather than the "rights of those subjects to be free from pain," as Abruzzo suggests.[64] Humanitarian benevolence, sympathy and witnessing could diverge widely from rights-based talk and action. In examining colonial violence and antecedent histories of rights discourse in the nineteenth century, we must consider continuities and disruptions, as well as historical specificities of their role in humanitarian discourse. Although Quaker James Backhouse wrote passionately to Thomas Fowell Buxton on the "rights of Aborigines" in respect of the colonisation of their lands while in Van Diemen's Land, he did not invoke the "rights" of the Straits Aboriginal women. Instead, he spoke of their cruel treatment by sealers, and employing the language of protection, urging they be protected against exploitation or abuse. Both Backhouse and Walker urged sealers to marry the women so that their union should be a Christian one.[65] Rights discourse, and the way in which it is enacted, is too often gendered. Backhouse's language of morality and emancipation, of overcoming degradation, was aimed at the women's moral realignment, protection and reform, and not their freedom.

Representation and the Cultural Politics of Emotion

Attention to the specific vocabularies of humanitarianism and its discursive field serves to remind readers to pay attention to the economies of representation that provided the textual motor for humanitarian, nonviolent and related social activism. Missionaries and other well-intentioned activists strategically circulated narratives of violence, pain and suffering in order to motivate the sympathies of governors, metropolitan supporters and media outlets. Using the exceptionally well-developed modes of evangelical print culture, and mobilising the narrative style of the abolitionists, humanitarian agitators circulated compelling evidence of the physical suffering incumbent upon much imperial expansion.[66] This eyewitness testimony is crucial to understanding

the dark side of empire, but it also placed pacifist activists in a curious position: they needed explicit narratives of violence in order to pursue their moral and political campaigns.

Humanitarian testimony undoubtedly provided eyewitness evidence of the excesses of imperial expansion. Without such testimony, much colonial violence would have been little-known and easily ignored, especially given the geographical distance between colonial frontiers and the oversight of Colonial Offices in metropolitan centres. So too considerable intellectual distance separated imperial policy and colonial practice—thus what may have been benign (or simply unclear) aspects of imperial policy and governance may have had unintended consequences when applied in new colonial situations. Some colonial actors found benefit in exploiting that distance (such as settler demands for cheap labour and land), while others were uncomfortably aware of their complicity with implementing policies that at best directly threatened the coexistence of Indigenous and European people, and at worst were genocidal. Colonial eyewitnesses who grew increasingly concerned at the destruction of Indigenous people and their culture, and imperial travellers who set out deliberately to gather evidence of conflict, produced a vast amount of testimony from their observations, and a flood of textual accounts.[67]

Much like abolitionist literature, humanitarian print culture sought to inform and energise its readers. Missionary writing sought to solicit support—both religious and pecuniary—from the metropolitan audiences whose weekly donations funded the expansion of globally minded missionary societies.[68] The metropolitan social organisations that emerged from nineteenth-century philanthropic concerns—such as the Aborigines Protection Society, amongst many other groups at provincial and urban locations—sought texts and information to devise their campaigns and to direct their attention to peoples and locations that were deemed the most deserving. “No greater calamity has been inflicted on the Aborigines of Australia and the South Seas than the transportation of our convicts,” Thomas Fowell Buxton declared at Exeter Hall in 1838. He called for correspondence from “well-informed gentlemen” to convey “the most specific and authentic intelligence” on colonial matters, information that would influence imperial policy and provide the basis for “cheap publications” to “excite the interest of all classes… and correct their opinions.” Most importantly, colonial knowledge could ameliorate the “deep stain” that colonialism had made on the “national escutcheon of Great Britain.”[69] Such calls for eyewitness testimony generated streams of correspondence from colonists keen to participate in a global knowledge economy which united colonies and imperial centres. Anna Johnston’s essay in this collection examines the ways in which sensational stories of colonial violence were strategically circulated to Britain from Sydney and Tahiti in the late eighteenth century. Rich archives bear testament to this exchange of

information between colonists and metropolitan activists; so too do the shelves of published texts —magazines, tracts, travel accounts, missionary memoirs and so forth—that were produced under the aegis of humanitarian concern.

The discursive strategies of humanitarian writing were rarely subtle, given their desire to motivate readers and bring about change. Accounts of suffering, often detailed and corporal, had become familiar to readers of abolitionist literature, and had moved them to support the cause. Similarly, humanitarian narratives focussed on the suffering, tortured, and cruelly mistreated bodies of Indigenous people caught up in the maelstrom of colonialism in their own lands, as Tony Ballantyne well describes in his account of suffering Maori bodies in this collection. So too, comparisons were drawn between the plight of the chained and flogged convict and that of the slave. Explicit parallels between slavery and the vicissitudes of settler colonialism were made, to polemical effect. The mainstream acceptance of abolition encouraged activists to think that the same strategies would bring about broader agreement with humanitarian principles and nonviolent practices, especially towards Indigenous peoples and unfree felons. Although we do not want to diminish the veracity of humanitarian testimony, it is important to recognise its discursive strategies and analyse closely its textual effects, both intentional and collateral.

"The new humanitarian sensibility revolutionized the meaning of pain in Anglo-American culture," Karen Halttunen argues, resulting in what she terms "the pornography of pain."[70] Drawing on Lockean theories of sensation and moral-sense philosophies, eighteenth-century modes of sensibility cultivated men of feeling, whose virtue could be mapped by their response to suffering others: and the category of deserving others gradually expanded to include animals, prisoners, slaves and other suffering minorities. Such privileging of sentiment, compassion and self-restraint in causing suffering reshaped English social mores, alongside the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, encouraging new bourgeois subjectivities through which a reformation of manners and society could emerge. Halttunen traces the relationships between eighteenth-century sensation literature (which had always had colonial resonances in captivity narratives and the dime novels that were their successors), early nineteenth-century pornography (a translated French and Italian import into Britain and America), and humanitarian literature: "The modern pornography of pain taking shape in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was not merely a seamy sideline to humanitarian reform literature but rather an integral aspect of the humanitarian sensibility."[71] Caught between their horrified response to violence, and the need to arouse popular opinion against evil practices, humanitarian reformers were in an awkward position: they felt it necessary "to display those practices in all their

horror [because] ‘civilised’ virtue required a shocked spectatorial sympathy in response to pain scenarios both read and wilfully imagined.” In so doing, despite their revulsion towards spectacles of suffering, reformers were caught within the new cultural linkages between revulsion, desire, and obscenity.[72]

Colonial reform literature—or, more precisely, humanitarian literature that drew upon colonial knowledge and eyewitness—was thus caught up in complex and formative modes of representation. Its frontier testimony was crucial to the cultivation of metropolitan sensibility and modern reform of manners; yet because the bourgeois “civilizing process” marked compassion and an aversion to causing pain as specifically civilized emotions, with cruelty labelled as savage, testimony that drew attention to European savagery at the outposts of empire was inevitably contentious, both at the site of eyewitness and the multiple colonial and metropolitan sites at which that testimony was vicariously consumed.

With its critical focus on violence and non-violence in the colonies, this special issue provides important new insights into the development of humanitarian protection and the amelioration of, or resistance to, violence. The scholarly considerations here of both colonised Indigenous peoples and unfree Europeans, allied with transecting themes of corporal punishment, temperance, protest, travel, textuality, and witnessing, are reflective of the transnational and multi-reform humanitarian agenda from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We put these themes, usually studied separately, into close conversation through the lens of humanitarian theories on violence and nonviolence: this approach is extremely productive, and reveals the synergies between many of the papers that comprise this collection. It also enables an analysis that reveals how reform agendas in one sphere impacted on others. Thus antislavery witness and testimony of the flogging of slaves could be invoked by anti-transportationists in the Australian and other colonies, as Edmonds and Maxwell-Stewart show, and then taken up again later in the nineteenth century about the abuse of Indigenous people on frontiers and pastoral holdings, when activists invoked the language of slavery. Print culture was crucial in the movement of ideas from one colonial location to another, as Johnston and Ballantyne reveal in their respective essays, and thus crucial to the portability of racial thinking and an emergent global humanitarian resistance to the excesses of empire. Nettelbeck and Scalmer reveal how Indigenous or colonised peoples in different colonial cultures appropriated humanitarian discourses for their own political aims, while Elbourne reveals how in other locations Indigenous peoples were caught in a web of violence that foreclosed their resistance.

Anna Johnston's essay foregrounds questions about print culture and humanitarian narratives. It brings questions about the history of the emotions to London Missionary Society narratives of contrasting but temporally adjacent events in Polynesia and New South Wales. This represents an innovative break with past interpretations, opening up a new train of investigation which focusses on the ways of seeing of the missionaries, and the religion they avowed. Focussing on the textual representation of humanitarian endeavours, this paper reveals how colonial knowledge production both underwrote and challenged European expectations about expanding empires. Sentiment, reform and divergent colonial interests are here played against the background of imperial humanitarianism as mobilised by the major Protestant missionary organisations that struggled to control narratives of Christian reform and moral uplift when competing accounts emerged in a vigorous print culture.

Speaking also to the mobility of text and humanitarian narratives of suffering and the body, Tony Ballantyne's essay reveals the ways in which narratives about violence and suffering on the New Zealand frontier were generated and circulated through circuits of empire in the 1810s. Graphic accounts of suffering Maori bodies "moved" from colonial sites to imperial centres and profoundly "moved" some readers into action: specifically, volunteering their services for overseas missionary service, which often involved significant risks to their own physical health and safety. Evangelical and humanitarian lobbyists mobilised the pain of individual Maori bodies in order to bring about a shift in British understanding of colonial violence. They also sought to make Britons feel responsible for ameliorating it. In this, print culture is crucial: what Ballantyne describes as the characteristic materiality of paper and its important function for the global reach and impact of humanitarianism. The textual predominance of British print narratives about Maori pain ironically brought about the annexation of New Zealand and the end of Maori self-government. Here, humanitarian narratives are instrumental in the disempowerment of Indigenous groups. The history of humanitarian emotions, and shifting political alliances, suggest new connections between imperial policy and colonial development.

Looking to the pervasive violence on the frontiers of post-revolutionary America and the Cape Colony in South Africa in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Elizabeth Elbourne's important and thought provoking addition to the collection elucidates the interlaced nature of Indigenous and European religious and military alliances on violent borderlands. Elbourne traces the complex and messy nature of politics in these protean frontier contexts, in particular exploring the way in which the Christian and proto-"humanitarian" dispositions of a range of actors were articulated, contested and compromised by the perceived necessities of stability, order, and protection on violent frontiers. She argues for the near impossibility of neutrality or nonviolence

especially for Native men in these "anomalous zones," as Lauren Benton terms them. Querying the very term "humanitarian," Elbourne productively rethinks its possibilities and limits in these particular colonial contexts, thus throwing any neat presumptions into contestation.

Problematising the presumed character of colonial violence, in line with Elbourne, and taking up the theme of state violence, Penelope Edmonds and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart's essay looks to early nineteenth century Van Diemen's Land. It critically reassesses tidy renderings of the rise in humanitarian reform around issues of physical punishment and the use of the lash. Officials and humanitarians, especially travelling Quakers James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, were greatly disturbed by flogging and its consequences. The essay provides a detailed taxonomy of the multivalent dimensions of humanitarian opposition to flogging; the whip did nothing to reform the individual, they argued, and was an unchristian, degrading punishment only inciting feelings of resentment and obduracy of heart. It is often presumed that humanitarian agitation, focussed on the issue of the lash and expressed in the evidence given to the Molesworth Committee on Transportation (1837) assisted in making a decisive turning point in Britain's deployment of convict labour to sites such as Van Diemen's Land. However the authors argue instead that a shift in punishment strategies was already underway before the late 1830s. The silent prison would also come to also wreak its own form of violence, not on the body but on the mind.

Looking to colonial frontiers and astutely interrogating forms of indigenous agency and protection, Amanda Nettelbeck's essay argues that while much scholarship exists on the deployment and failures of humanitarian protection as a mechanism of colonial governmentality, far less attention has been given to the value that humanitarian and affective politics of protection might have held for Indigenous peoples. Addressing key themes of affect, sympathy and obligation and highlighting the strategic engagements with the humanitarian politics of protection by Indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia, Nettelbeck exposes the tensions in colonial conceptions of humane governance and the degrees of agency Indigenous people could deploy. Such strategic uses, she shows, reveal a great deal about Indigenous peoples' assertion of a political place within the new nineteenth-century colonial order.

Pursing the theme of anticolonial Indigenous agency and the critical deployment of humanitarian thought by colonised people, Sean Scalmer's essay brings this special issue forward into the early twentieth century and challenges the historiography of humanitarianism that effectively denies non-European agency in shaping and engaging with humanitarianism as a concept and political movement. Scalmer concludes that Gandhi was not a humanitarian, but does so through a careful consideration of Gandhi's engagement with both humanitarian ideologies and

individual Christians. Here we can see the dynamic transnational, interfaith and supra-colonial networks that "made" the late imperial world among South Africa, India and the United Kingdom. Even if Gandhi's political views drew support from European humanitarianism, they diverged importantly in terms of a specific Biblical tradition and the meaning of suffering (the specificity of suffering for Quakers is integral to Edmonds and Maxwell-Stewart's essay, too). If humanitarians interpreted the suffering of Maori, for example, as justifying the need for imperial intervention, Gandhi saw voluntary struggle as empowering and transformative. Crucially, Gandhi's politics were also inflected by racial ideologies that challenged humanitarian assumptions.

Humanitarianism, violence, and nonviolent resistance were negotiated by diverse colonial, imperial and Indigenous subjects across these distinctive colonial contexts. The concepts were refined by and developed in response to the messy realities of colonial contact zones, as well as by a regular textual traffic between colonies and with metropolitan activists. Attention to the specificities of each context reveals much about how ideas about empire were played out in the colonies; so too we can see the profound influence that colonial experience had upon the development of theories of population management, political systems and the role of violence and regulation in modern society.

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Notes

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2. Skinner and Lester, "Humanitarianism and Empire"; Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the nineteenth-century British empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 5.

3. On "despotic" and "infrastructural" power see Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its origins, mechanisms, and results," *Archives européenes de sociologie* 25 (1984): 185–213; Deana Heath, "Bureaucracy, power and violence in colonial India," in *Empires and Bureaucracy from Late Antiquity to the Modern World*, ed. P. Crooks and T. Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 180–210.

4. Tusan, "Humanitarianism," 85.

5. See also Sean Scalmer, *Gandhi in the West: The Mahatma and the rise of radical protest* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

6. Andrew Porter, "Trusteeship, Anti-Slavery and Humanitarianism" and "Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm and Empire," *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. 3: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 198–221; Henry Reynolds, *This Whispering in Our Hearts* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1998); Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, missions, and the contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2002); Elizabeth Elbourne, "The Sins of the Settler: The 1835–36 Select Committee on Aborigines and debates over virtue and conquest in the early nineteenth-century British White settler empire," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 4/3 (2003): 1–39; Amanda Barry, Joanna Cruikshank, et al., eds., *Evangelists of Empire? Missionaries in Colonial History* (Parkville: University of Melbourne, 2011).

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11. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The making of the modern identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 394.

12. Asad, "Reflections," 21.

13. Tusan, "Humanitarianism," 86, 90.

14. See Tusan 94; and Joel Quirk, *The Anti-Slavery Project from the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2004).

15. Tusan, 94, 95.

16. Lester and Dussart, *Colonization*.

17. Lester and Dussart, *Colonization*.

18. Elbourne, "Sin of the Settler," 1–46.

19. See Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds, "Indigenous Peoples and Settlers," *New Cambridge History of Australia, Vol. 2*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Mcintyre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 342–66.

20. See Henry Reynolds, *Frontier: Aborigines, settlers and land* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1996), 4, 5.

21. John Connor, *The Australian Frontier Wars 1788–1838* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2002), 63, 64.

22. Julie Evans, "Where Lawlessness is the Law: The settler-colonial frontier as a legal space of violence," *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 30 (2009): 3, 22.

23. See J.D. Heydon, "Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane," *Australian Dictionary of Biography. Vol. 1*: 151–55.

24. See Johnston, *The Paper War.*

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27. See Julie Evans et al,, *Equal Subjects Unequal Rights: Indigenous peoples in British settler colonies, 1830–1910*, (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2003); Penelope Edmonds, *Settler Colonialism and (Re)conciliation: Frontier violence, affective performances, and imaginative refoundings* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2016), 1–28, 22.

28. See also *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlements), Reprinted with Comments by the Aborigines Protection Society* (London: William Ball, 1837), 104.

29. Elbourne, "Sin of the Settler." See also *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Aboriginal Tribes.*

30. Elbourne, "Sin of the Settler," para. 1 [online].

31. Elbourne, "Sin of the Settler," para. 3 [online].

32. See, for example, arguments for the civility of the democratic state as proposed by Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

33. Asad, “Reflections,” 2.

34. Jordanna Bailkin, “The Boot and the Spleen: When was murder possible in British India?,” *Comparative Studies of Society and History* 48 (2006): 462–93.

35. On the latter, see Lata Mani “Production of an Official Discourse on Sati in Early Nineteenth Century Bengal,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 21/17 (1986): WS32–40, and “Cultural Theory, Colonial Texts: Reading eyewitness accounts of widow burning,” in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Cary Nelson, Lawrence Grossberg and Paula Treichler (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), 392–405; Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*, (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

36. Bailkin, “The Boot and the Spleen,” 493.

37. Bailkin, “The Boot and the Spleen,” 486.

38. See, for instance, Lynette Russell, ed., *Colonial Frontiers: Indigenous-European encounters in settler societies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A theoretical overview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

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45. Ron, 19, cites Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State.”

46. Tracey Banivanua Mar, “Settler-Colonial Landscapes and Narratives of Possession,” *Arena Journal* 37–38 (2012): 176–98.

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56. Asad, "Reflections," 3.

57. Margaret Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, cruelty and the rise of humanitarianism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 8, 48

58. Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 34.

59. Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 35, 36.

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61. Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 40, 43.

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63. Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 9.

64. Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain*, 48.

65. Edmonds, "Collecting," 13–33, 29.

66. See, for example, Johnston, *Missionary Writing* and *The Paper War*.

67. For analysis of some examples of the former, see the case of LMS missionary Lancelot Threlkeld in Johnston, *The Paper War*; for examples of the latter, see Edmonds, "Travelling 'Under Concern'"; see also Laura E. Franey, *Victorian Travel Writing and Imperial Violence: British writing on Africa, 1855–1902* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2003); Robert M. Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness accounts of colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo* (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).

68. See Johnston, *Missionary Writing*; Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

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71. Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain," 304.

72. Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain," 330.