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Reflexive emotionalisation in a colonised context

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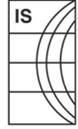
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Article

# Emotions in Aotearoa New Zealand: Reflexive emotionalisation in a colonised context

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## Abstract

Reflexive emotionalisation means increased thinking about and acting on emotional experiences in response to major changes to social life, such as those accompanying colonisation. This article explains and develops this novel concept, assessing its usefulness through an exploratory assessment of reflexive emotionalisation in the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand as a colonised settler state. It is argued that as cultures met and sought to coexist, emotions were vital. Focusing on reflexive emotionalisation in Aotearoa reveals how differences in feeling rules were navigated, sometimes in violent ways, as power shifted towards the colonisers. Feelings of belonging are important in that ongoing process of reflexive emotionalisation, the elucidation of which provides a new understanding of social change and settler state formation that avoids casting colonised peoples as passive objects of ‘progress’ brought by colonisers.

## Keywords

Colonisation, emotions, emotional reflexivity, reflexive emotionalisation

## Introduction

*Pōkarekare ana  
ngā wai o Waiapu,  
Whiti atu koe hine  
marino ana e*

They are agitated  
the waters of Waiapu,  
But when you cross over girl  
they will be calm again.

---

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'Pōkarekare ana' is a Māori folk song, well known and much loved in Aotearoa New Zealand. It tells the story of star crossed lovers yearning for each other, separated by a body of water. It is not surprising that an island nation, over a thousand kilometres from its nearest neighbour, might be emotionally focused on agitated waters that separate them from others. First Māori and later Pākehā (white New Zealanders of European descent) arrived in Aotearoa after long sea journeys. Polynesians migrated to Aotearoa by waka or canoes from about 1000 years ago. For a few hundred years different iwi (tribes) settled parts of the two main islands. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century Europeans began to arrive. Most histories then suggest that the country became home to a lawless Pākehā community sometimes engaging in violence with Māori, who were themselves riven by increased conflict between iwi, some of whom had acquired muskets (Belich, 1998, 2015; King, 2012; Moon, 2007). The British government stepped in and on 6 February 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed between the British crown and some Māori chiefs (Orange, 1987). Thus began the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand as a settler state.

The aim of this article is to understand a process of reflexive emotionalisation as central to the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand. Making sense of the entire emotional history of Aotearoa New Zealand is beyond the scope of this article, so emotional change from the arrival of Europeans onwards is assessed. The history of this small, isolated British colony raises questions about sociological understandings of the relationships between emotions, social order and social change. Colonial expansion saw mainly British settlers take ship for new lives in New Zealand and the indigenous people, the Māori, had their land 'discovered' by Europeans with whom they were then obliged to coexist. The novel circumstances that emerged make this a good location to see how emotional reflexivity becomes important in navigating social life.

Reflexive emotionalisation is theorised as a relational process, in the case of Aotearoa New Zealand it involved navigating cultural differences in feeling rules as shifts in power produced injustice and violence. Using accounts of early contact, I illustrate how reflexive, relational understandings of emotions became increasingly important in colonial state formation as power shifted and different cultures struggled to live together. These struggles continue into the present and I argue that feelings of belonging are an important part of how reflexive emotionalisation contributes to ongoing state formation. Land and sea matter (Tuhivai-Smith, 2012; West-Newman, 2008a). The contribution of the article is to provide a theorising of colonial state formation that takes the emotional injuries (Brown, 1995) of colonisation seriously but recognises indigenous peoples as active, if not equal, agents in processes of social change.

## **Theorising reflexive emotionalisation: Relational and not always restrained**

Reflexive emotionalisation describes a relational process through which thinking about and acting based on emotional experiences increases in contexts of rapid social change such as colonisation. Under such conditions there is uncertainty about how to feel and act when faced with new environments and unfamiliar cultures. Indigenous and colonising peoples do not share the same 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983), especially in the early

stages of contact. Individuals must be reflexive, but this is a relational process – not something that simply happens inside individuals (Burkitt, 2012; Holmes, 2010). Emotional reflexivity is worked at as people interact and consider and respond to what others feel. Feelings are also impacted by power relations, with groups struggling over what the ‘proper’ emotions are in particular contexts and whose feelings are respected (Holmes and McKenzie, 2019). To describe emotionalisation as reflexive is to acknowledge that within late modernity, there has been a degree of detraditionalisation making past, traditional or habitual practices difficult to rely on as a guide for living and feeling in a rapidly changing world. ‘Feeling rules’ are the taken for granted conventions or scripts that establish how people should feel in different social situations (Hochschild, 1979, 1983: 50). However, in newly colonised contexts these rules cannot be taken for granted because they may not be shared across cultures and because change is rapid. Rapid social change compels a higher degree of reflexivity than under previous conditions in which continuity in ways of living was more possible (Archer, 2012). Building on previous work on emotional reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012; Holmes, 2010), the focus here is on revealing longer historical processes of reflexive emotionalisation.

Emotions do appear in some theories of colonisation, but usually in ways that render the colonised as passive victims of hurt. Attention to reflexive emotionalisation can challenge this by examining the relational, if not equal, ways in which emotional restraint is constructed in the process of colonial state formation in Aotearoa, and potentially elsewhere. Elias (2000) provides the classic account of state formation as linked to a ‘civilising process’ centred around a growing internalisation of bodily and emotional restraint. Shifting power relations in Europe saw the power of the court maintained partly through its ability to insist on ‘proper’ forms of conduct that showed control over one’s emotions. Some critical evaluations of Elias consider how colonial state formation has utilised civilising discourses in often violent dealings with indigenous peoples (Al-Azmeh, 2001; Breuer, 1991; Burkitt, 1996; Van Krieken, 1999), but in most of these critical accounts the collective emotional othering involved is under-analysed. The colonised are rendered as doomed to political ineffectiveness by the fetishising of their wounds (Brown, 1995), as having little hope of their testimonies of pain being heard (Ahmed, 2007: 34–39), or portrayed as only just becoming recognised as fellow human beings rather than objects of disgust (Van Krieken, 1999: 310). Bhabra (2007) has powerfully argued that sociologists need to rethink understandings of a transition to modernity. She challenges common assumptions of rupture from the past and she takes issue with the way in which ‘the West’, especially Europe, is presented as unique in ushering in a new form of society. I further this critique by engaging in analysis of the increasing importance of emotions and their reflexive, relational management (Holmes, 2010; Patulny and Olson, 2019) and by extending Bhabra’s challenging of discourses that place ‘the West’ as the leaders and bringers of social change. The aim is to build a picture, not of a civilising process as tending towards more or less violence (Breuer, 1991; Burkitt, 1996; Elias, 2000; Van Krieken, 1999), but of an emotionalising process in which individual and collective actions come to rely on a relational, flawed and often ambiguous reflexivity about feelings. I do not offer a systematisation of work on emotions in Aotearoa New Zealand in the way Scribano (2019) does for Latin America, nor a periodisation (Stearns, 2019) of New Zealand emotionality, nor a detailed account of racialising processes like Stanley’s

(2017) work on South Africa. I offer a more exploratory assessment of how reflexive emotionalisation shaped the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand and the social relations within it.

Cultural clashes between different feeling rules might be expected (West-Newman, 2004, 2008a), yet histories of Aotearoa New Zealand often narrate its formation as a 'modern' nation as proceeding from pre-treaty lawlessness and violence to increasing emotional self-restraint and the peaceful accommodation of cultural clashes (see for example, Belich, 1998; King, 2012). Critical accounts of colonisation have pointed out how indigenous ways of being and doing were often considered worthless or greeted with disgust and subject to barbaric responses in Australia (Van Krieken, 1999). I argue that the racialised devaluing of Māori tikanga (customs) similarly treated increased emotional restraint as though it was a gift brought by Europeans. The 'settled' social order is one that privileges European emotionalities.

Increasing emotional restraint requires reflexively considering one's circumstances and what feeling rules apply, but Aotearoa was formed through shifting power relations – not just individual or group interactions. Within the power structure of a new colony like New Zealand, local power is organised initially around a Governor. There may be elements of a courtly society to this elite (Elias, 2000), and indeed Paul Moon (1998: 9) compares the first Governor, William Hobson, to Charles I. However, Hobson did not have absolute power and was tasked by the British government not to get involved in conflicts between a changing hierarchy of Māori chiefs, the land hungry New Zealand Company, as well as the various traders and missionaries, some of whom had established a degree of power prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (Belich, 1998; Burns, 1989; King, 2012). Cultural differences in feeling rules (West-Newman, 2001: 257–260) were related to complicated shifting power relations. European hegemony was not established overnight and nor was it uninfluenced by Māori ways of being, doing and feeling, especially when they outnumbered colonisers. Also, colonisation could be an intimate business, sometimes achieved through close emotional relationships between members of Māori and Pākehā elites (Wanhalla and Paterson, 2018). To present colonisation as (eventually) bringing a more regulated or emotionally restrained society ignores the sophisticated organisation of Māori society in pre and early contact Aotearoa. New ways of behaving in the fledgling colony may have been more informal, less restrained, compared to the 'old country' for Europeans or compared to the 'old ways' of Māori culture. Aotearoa New Zealand might be described as allowing some degree of informalisation of emotional expression (Wouters, 2008), for example because of arguably less rigid class distinctions (Wouters, 1995: 111–112). However, care is needed not to reproduce the myth of early New Zealand as a classless society with a more relaxed lifestyle (Pearson, 2013: 81), allowing greater emotional freedom. Different groups may have travelled differently in navigating the 'emotional cultures' that came to dominate in this and possibly other colonial contexts (see for example, Gilabert, 2020). However, care is needed in how 'emotional cultures' are characterised.

In New Zealand the often unequal, sometimes violent, colonial encounter initially occurs between supposedly individualised and restrained white settlers and Māori often portrayed as emotional and communally oriented. To represent settlers as rugged

pioneering individuals neglects the collective nature of much colonisation and the capitalist and Eurocentric power hierarchies behind it: evident in the New Zealand Company, church-backed endeavours such as the Free Church of Scotland settlement of Dunedin and continued government assisted migration schemes (Burns, 1989; Collie, 1948; Harper and Constantine, 2010). Equally, too much emphasis on the emotional communality of Māori social life can neglect power hierarchies within and between Māori iwi, disrupted as they were by colonisation. Communal sharing (especially of resources and land) and tribal affiliations may have been, and remain, central to Māori culture (Mead, 2016). However, individualisation of land titles after colonisation had major negative economic impacts for Māori (Tau and Rout, 2018). These impacts contributed to the ways in which new colonial structures undermined how land emotionally connected communities, although place-based iwi remained vital for most. However, there are problems with histories that divide tribally oriented Māori from individualised Pākehā. There have long been many Māori who live in urban areas and may not be closely linked to, or wish to identify with their iwi or Māori traditions (Sissons, 2004) and to claim that moving away from communal cultural practices is *inevitably* emotionally impoverishing for Māori is contentious. Besides, Europeans and other 'Westerners' are arguably not as emotionally disconnected from others as often claimed (Jamieson, 1999; Smart and Shipman, 2004). New Zealand based studies which pay some attention to reflexivity and emotions suggest that not all Pākehā are rational, individualised actors (although see Howland, 2010) whose reflexivity is free from concerns about the feelings or wishes of others, including indigenous others (Huygens, 2011; Martinussen et al., 2020; Walton et al., 2018). Hence, a more relational approach to emotional reflexivity is needed to understand colonisation and moves towards decolonisation. This does not mean neglecting the violence associated with colonising processes.

In colonial settings like New Zealand processes of reflexive emotionalisation were full of conflict. Interpersonal and inter-tribal violence may have gradually diminished in British colonies, but the ramifications of an increasing state monopoly on violence (Elias, 2000) were highly racialised. Van Krieken (1999) cites the violent policies of the Australian government, in particular its removal of indigenous children from their families, and Ahmed (2007) writes more specifically about the pain and shame attached to these 'stolen generations' and to more recent efforts at reconciliation. Stanley (2017) notes the part that regulation and racial categorisation played in the emergence of a deeply discriminatory apartheid regime in South Africa. Aotearoa New Zealand has also inflicted violence upon its indigenous people via state policies. These have ranged from the aforementioned individualisation of land titles, to the imposition of settler state criminal justice and welfare systems that have disproportionately marginalised and incarcerated Māori. As Andrae and colleagues (2017) argue, these abusive state policies produce profound forms of marginalisation when combined – for some – with socialisation that is far from ideals of emotional nurture within a tribal setting. In such cases, they argue that family and state violence can produce feelings of loss and abandonment, but also shape angry, hate directed forms of resistance such as gang membership. More such work is needed to articulate the specificities and variations in how colonial power produces emotional relations to self and others. This article contributes to that work by examining the history of those relations.

Early accounts of Aotearoa's formation into the settler state of New Zealand can be used to explore reflexive emotionalisation. The examples chosen are illustrative, selected from a small number of accounts of New Zealand in the years just before and after the Treaty of Waitangi, and from twentieth and twenty-first century advice on manners. The examples flesh out this largely theoretical account of reflexive emotionalisation. The early accounts are diverse but well known ones: Frederick Maning's (1863) colourful account of his adventures living amongst Māori in *Old New Zealand*, Lady Martin's (1984) story of her time in 1840s New Zealand as wife of the first Chief Justice and Joel Polack's (1840) *Manners and Customs of the New Zealanders* ('New Zealanders' at this time meant Māori), based on his residence in New Zealand. Maning was suspicious of the benefits of 'civilisation', mainly because it might constrain his trading, whereas Martin was a little more ambivalent than might be expected of one so close to colonial power. Although Polack's book was treated as a serious scholarly account of Māori cultural practices for many years, like the other books it 'came from the ignorant, self-absorbed opinions written within the tales of the first European voyagers and missionaries' (Hokowhitu, 2008: 1355). Nevertheless, they can provide 'insights into the European mindset of the time' (p. 1355) and show Europeans trying to make sense of Māori emotions and conduct. They are read with the help of work by a key authority on Māori tikanga (customs), Hirini Moko Mead (2016). More recent examples are taken from that and from an essay on 'Manners and social behaviour' by Nancy Swarbrick (2013) in *Te Ara: The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*. The official New Zealand Immigration website directs readers to the encyclopedia from its page on 'Customs and communication', indicating that this is seen as a source with some authority. All these texts, even where they may be inaccurate, can reveal something about how people relationally reflected and acted on the basis of what they understood about emotional meanings. Māori and Pākehā try to make sense of each other's feeling rules from their first encounters. There needs to be care to not confuse prescription and description (Seidman, 1991: 6), because how people are expected to behave and how they do behave do not always match. However, the examples give information about feeling rules, even if the rules may be broken, misunderstood and also in flux. These examples thus provide some initial grounding for the conceptual and theoretical account I have sketched about reflexive emotionalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **Reflexive emotionalisation in the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand as a settler state**

Reflexivity around emotions occurred from the early days of the colonial encounter because feeling rules often clashed, but many Māori practices were unintelligible to Europeans (Hokowhitu, 2008: 1359). One example related to how to feel about greeting strangers. The wero, or challenge, was formally used to ascertain whether visitors' intentions were friendly. According to early European observers it involved using deliberately frightening facial and bodily gestures, such as 'shewing the whites of their eyes, and lolling out their tongues' (Maning, 1863: 49), gestures Pākehā thought 'would best tend to excite fear and horror in the breasts of their enemies' (Polack, 1840: 4). These European accounts of the wero as involving 'distorted' and frightening emotional displays clashed

with their own expectations of more restrained emotional expression. Typically, such accounts betray an ethnocentric, and sometimes racist belief in the superiority of Pākehā emotionalities. Polack (1840: 4) makes this explicit when he claims that the formerly ‘savage warrior, who having once tasted of security and the blessings of peace, now wields with greater satisfaction the implements of agriculture, than ever he did those of war’ (Polack, 1840: 4). The supposedly enlightened colonisers are misrepresented as bringing the ‘blessings of peace’ (Polack, 1840: 4). Polack neglects that the European ‘example’ to Tangata Whenua (original people of the land) was frequently far from peaceful, given their provision of muskets to iwi and their instigation of violent conflicts (see for example, Belich, 2015). Existing conflicts between iwi in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Aotearoa were exacerbated by the arrival of Europeans and thus the wero was vital for ascertaining whether or not visitors came in peace. If Māori visitors reacted properly to the challenge, displaying their emotions in the expected, ritualised ways then all was well. For example, Maning’s account of a wero notes ‘the furious, yet measured, and uniform gesticulation’ and then towards the end:

. . . a man from the new-arrivals comes to the front of his own party; he runs to and fro; he speaks for his tribe; these are his words: – ‘Peace is made! peace is made! peace is firm! peace is secure! peace! peace! peace!’ (Maning, 1863: 52)

This suggests that the display of aggression is ‘measured’, restrained according to rules, and that the wero became a ritualised way of avoiding conflict (Mead, 2016: 136). It could be interpreted as part of Māori processes of pacification. Fear of strangers was not simply a remnant of a supposedly more violent pre-contact society, but a feeling rule that was reflexively adapted as iwi faced shifts in power and status in relation to each other and to the newly arrived Pākehā.

In colonial contexts, making sense of differing and shifting hierarchies added to the reflexive task of interpreting and acting on emotions. Power hierarchies within and between iwi were heavily disrupted by colonisation. To reflexively make sense of this, they could be likened to European court society, with chiefs seeking to maintain their power. Polack makes exactly this comparison:

The general feeling of a tribe towards such chief consorts may be likened similar to such formed connexions in European states; the minor chiefs are raised to a greater share of importance as their leader is lessened in the admiration and submission of his followers. (Polack, 1840: 30)

Polack suggests that minor chiefs exploited any lessening in the importance of their leaders to increase their own power. The feelings of a tribe towards their leaders are altered as power relations shift and feelings such as lessened admiration contribute to further shifts in power.

While colonisation disrupts chiefly power, in the early days of European contact chiefly Māori were still able to assert their customs and feeling rules. Resident traders are initially reliant on the protection of Māori chiefs and must adhere to the chief’s rules. Maning’s stories reveal efforts to understand those rules, flawed though his interpretations may be. For example, he reflexively attempts to understand his protection by the

Chief as based on both a reasoned appreciation of the valuable trade he brings and on the collective shame if that is lost. He reports the Chief as berating his followers for a fight with Maning, claiming he ‘shall be sick with shame; [if] the pakeha will run away, and take all his taonga [treasure] along with him’ (Maning, 1863: 17, 34–35). Whether or not this is a correct report of the Chief’s feelings and actions we do not know, but Maning is trying to interpret the feelings and actions of the Chief and his account often shows him acting in deference to those feeling rules or at least recognising that in breaching them he ‘had not only offended and hurt their feelings, but that [he] had lowered [him]self greatly in their estimation’ (Maning, 1863: 138). Maning’s ‘old New Zealand’ is one in which Māori are still dominant and their feeling rules must be respected. Polack tells of a later time, in which such respect is waning. He presents the Chiefs as governed by arbitrary passions and seems to lack an understanding of what the feeling rules are. He does not set out the complex rules of exchange and their relationship to the respective status, pride and past interactions between the parties (Mead, 2016: 193–200) and the importance of mana (status) is mistaken for pride.

These traits of generosity are solely to be attributed to the ruling passion of a chief, which is pride in the most aristocratical sense of the term; to gratify which, a variety of mean, unworthy actions are resorted to, that are often practised with effect on Europeans, who have had but a scanty experience in the country. Formerly it was the practice of resident traders to place themselves under the protection of the principal chief of the district where they resided, and is yet practised at the Southern part of New Zealand. On strangers or followers of the chief, wishing to barter their flax, provisions, timber, for the commodities of the trader, the chief would generally interfere, and demand for the produce offered for sale, a much larger valuation than the article was worth, or than was demanded by the owner. This system, once allowed, becomes an intolerable nuisance to the trader, who is threatened with loss of protection, (an absolute excommunication to a European, the tribe having liberty to plunder him of his effects for which he has no appeal) unless the chief is allowed to proceed as he wishes. (Polack, 1840: 44–45)

Polack however fails to see how what must be given in gratitude is a matter of status (Hochschild, 2003: 104–118) but also part of Māori understandings which continue to see embodied and felt subjectivities as shared, or interrelational (Shaw et al., 2012).

Māori, especially those who retained some chiefly power, were able for some years to continue to express disdain for how Pākehā rules and laws regulated feelings. Lady Martin tells of her husband visiting a chief who ‘was very civil and friendly but did not disguise his opinion that our [British] laws were unnecessarily cruel’, for example commenting on how Pākehā ‘put people in prison for such small things’, whereas if someone ‘piflers little things’ he claims he takes no notice (Martin, 1884: 59). Equally, there are glimpses of Pākehā emotional reflexivity showing some influence from Māori rules. Lady Martin (1884: 24) reported:

We were doubly anxious to be liberal after hearing a very good-tempered Maori man contrast[ing] the large-handed hospitality of his people to English travellers, with the ‘one pannikinful’ of flour – about half a pound, – doled out to him when he visited anyone in Auckland.

She reflects on how Pākehā may look distinctly ungenerous from a Māori perspective and suggests this makes her hospitality more liberal.

Yet reflexive emotionalisation in the colonial context sees the gradual ascendance of European feeling rules, partly through selective understandings of what constitutes ‘civilised’ self-restraint. For example, Polack struggles to reflexively understand how chiefly power complicates gendered feeling rules which may govern self-restraint:

When an infirm chief, of but moderate prowess, is married to a superior chief wife, the engagement is accounted as ill assorted. The parent of inferior rank is often rebuked by his children and followers for the insignificance of his birth, and is not unfrequently called a slave. The wife almost invariably opposes the husband in favour of her children, and the former dares not assume any superiority, as the relatives of his wife are ever ready to avenge, even with his blood, any unkindness shown to her or the children, the latter being regarded as less belonging to the parents than to the tribe in general. (Polack, 1840: 33)

Polack’s sympathies seem to lie more with the implied individual humiliation ‘inferior’ husbands may suffer, rather than him appreciating the communal restraints imposed on unkindness to women and children. European norms are presented as the route to happiness.

The power of the chiefs has therefore taken a less arbitrary, less forcible, yet more salutary turn, gradually fitting themselves and their followers to amalgamate with British subjects, act as fellow-labourers in the same peaceful occupations, that can alone change their present decreasing state to that of an important integral portion of British subjects, increasing their now stunted and disunited population, and adding to their future comfort, security and happiness, that the knowledge of a just yet merciful religion will assuredly afford them. (Polack, 1840: 37)

Polack regards the power of the chiefs as having taken a turn for the better in directing Māori to assimilate peacefully and happily as Christian British subjects. He fails to recognise the grief and anger associated with the cultural losses of being colonised (West-Newman, 2008a).

The formation of New Zealand as a colonial settler state involved establishing a monopoly on violence, partly through denial or suppression of Māori feelings, including feelings of loss and grief. Early accounts suggest an emotionalisation for Māori in which their supposed previously unrestrained, violent, emotional expression gave way to emotionalities based on feeling secure, at peace and happy. This ‘promise of happiness’ (Ahmed, 2010) however, became reliant on Māori assimilating to Pākehā feeling rules.

## **Reflexive emotionalisation continues**

The continuing formation of Aotearoa New Zealand as a settler state in the twentieth century saw urbanisation further alter Māori–Pakeha relations and increased the privileging of Pākehā ways of feeling and being.

During and after the Second World War more Māori young people and families moved from rural communities into large towns and cities in pursuit of work and educational opportunities.

Increasingly, urban Pākehā and Māori worked together and lived in close proximity. Inter-marriage also became more common. During this period, Māori were pressured to conform to Pākehā ways. These changes often led to racial tension. (Swarbrick, 2013: 5)

Between 1840 and 2013 Māori forms of emotional expression continued to be misunderstood and Pākehā ways privileged. However, Māori culture is a living entity and not a relic of the past (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012).

It is impossible to isolate changes in Māori culture from European influences, but they are not simply a passive adoption of 'European' self-restraint. A key authority on Māori tikanga notes the more widespread current use of the hongi in Māori settings, rather than the wero – which is reserved for special visitors (Mead, 2016: 136). Swarbrick's account of manners also advises that '[i]n a formal Māori situation, shake hands and hongi (press noses briefly)' (Swarbrick, 2013: 7). The hongi has, it seems, become typical of Māori greetings. Māori customs and feeling rules are subject to ongoing change as Māori reflect on how to incorporate them into their everyday lives and work (Middleton, 2020).

However, cultural differences in emotional expression remain and processes of culturally specific socialisation can complicate whether behaviour is understood as peaceful or aggressive.

One of the many cultural misunderstandings to do with manners relates to the way people look at each other. Pākehā children are taught to look people in the eye to show trustworthiness, interest and undivided attention. Māori and Samoans often think that it is rude to look at people directly because to them it suggests a challenge and encourages conflict and opposition, so they may fix their gaze elsewhere or even close their eyes. Pākehā in turn may read this as rudeness or shiftiness. (Swarbrick, 2013: 5)

Whether and how we can speak of reflexive emotionalisation in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand thus also depends on acknowledging the oppression of Māori and other non-Pākehā groups and the hegemony of Pākehā feeling rules and forms of emotionality. Continued differences in interpreting expressions of aggression and trustworthiness may disadvantage Māori and Pacific Islanders when most employers are likely to be Pākehā who are unaware of these differences.

Reflexive emotionalisation about Māori and Pākehā relations continues to shape the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand as its citizens arguably begin to make more reference to Māori language and practices. Not only has understanding of Māori tikanga increased in recent decades (Mead, 2016: i) and been incorporated by Māori into their work and everyday lives (see for example, Middleton, 2020), but use of Māori greetings and other salutations has become widespread.

It is increasingly common for both Māori and Pākehā New Zealanders to say 'Kia ora' in greeting and 'Ka kite' or 'Ka kite anō' in farewell. (Swarbrick, 2013: 5)

To use Māori salutations is hardly a sign of radical revolution, but it could be understood as a form of decolonisation displaying a reflexive emotionalisation in which Māori ways of being and doing are incorporated with pride into everyday life in Aotearoa New

Zealand. This incorporation does not signal an end to racialised discrimination and injustice, but suggests that ongoing processes of reflexive emotionalisation can move people towards improved knowledge, greater tolerance and different ways of doing things. To incorporate without appropriating can be difficult but rather than interpret these changes in line with the tainted, racist notions of peaceful progress as brought by colonisers, there are advantages to understanding processes of reflexive emotionalisation in which people emotionally navigate with, and sometimes against, each other and the social structures around them to create feelings of belonging.

## Reflexive emotionalisation and feelings of belonging

Emotionally reflexive bargaining over belonging is central to settler state formation, but the emotional othering that occurred within colonisation must be recognised. Migration literature discusses belonging (Boccagni, 2016; Johnston and Longhurst, 2012; May, 2017; Sirriyeh, 2016; Wilding, 2012), but colonisation literature seldom does. Where it does, belonging is portrayed as almost impossible for marginalised and racialised communities to craft given how stories of pain accentuate bodily differences. As Ahmed argues with respect to the stolen generations in Australia, pain 'is not simply an effect of a history of harm, *it is the bodily life of that history*' (Ahmed, 2007: 34). Pain was inflicted on indigenous Australians through the severing of attachments to land and loved ones and injured not just individuals but the indigenous community. Ahmed is pessimistic about the 'conditions of possibility' for really hearing the stories of pain in the Australian context. However, the cultural politics of emotions in Aotearoa New Zealand have had a different history. The formation of New Zealand was not free of violence, but it has produced different possibilities. It can be said that the emotional encounters that have occurred,

. . . signal that something needs to be done and, given serious attention, [and] may contribute to substantive change. Arguably, without the anger-fuelled Māori activism of the 1970s, the Waitangi Tribunal<sup>1</sup> would not have existed in its present form and the socio-economic base of Māori society would not have been strengthened by substantial treaty settlements. (West-Newman, 2008b: 115)

Creating a shared sense of belonging involves reflecting on and responding to Māori emotions. Anger is not inevitably combined with hate, and subjectivities resistant to colonial domination have emerged which have collectively contributed to positive change and to the continual crafting of a partnership through which Māori and Pākehā can feel they belong. However, this highlights the relational aspect of emotional subjectivities. Angry activism can only ameliorate inequalities if there is some recognition of those who are angry; their anger must be heard (Holmes, 2004; Holmes and McKenzie, 2019).

Conversely, when governments see and feel popular emotional arousal and yet choose quick legalistic solutions over inclusive political dialogue then opportunities for positive outcomes are lost. The Māori-Government standoff over ownership of the foreshore and seabed in 2004 is an example of precisely the latter situation. (West-Newman, 2008b: 116)

Frustration when dialogue fails is likely to seed resentment, but there are also questions about who should be heard in discussions and decisions about Aotearoa.

In forming Aotearoa New Zealand reflexive emotionalisation is complicated by debates about who can belong. Biculturalism stresses the primacy of recognising Māori sovereignty, given the treaty signed with Māori as *Tangata Whenua* (original people of the land) (see for example, Awatere, 1984; Bell, 2006). It is argued that Māori and Pākehā, as the signatories to the treaty, should recognise their obligations as it stipulated and focus on their relations to each other before any kind of multiculturalism becomes realistic (Orange, 1987). Accounts of the usually negative emotional consequences of colonisation on Māori are rightly subject to attention. However, considering settler identities highlights the ‘entanglement’ of Māori and Pākehā within colonial history (Wanhalla and Paterson, 2018) and can expose Pākehā to a sense of unease important in acknowledging historical violence (Bell, 2006). The term Pākehā is a Māori word for those of white European descent. One meaning is ‘foreign’, or from a different country (Moorfield, 2020). A survey in 2011 suggested that it was not a derogatory term, 14% of respondents (European New Zealanders comprised around 70% of the population at that time) used the term to describe themselves and they were more likely to have positive attitudes to Māori than white New Zealanders using other labels (Sibley et al., 2011). That some ‘white settlers’ use an indigenous word to identify themselves might be seen as an indication of the successes of the partnership between Māori and Pākehā. However, it can trouble the usual expectations about belonging and attachment to the nation. Its use could signal acceptance of Māori rights over land and sea in Aotearoa. On the other hand, it has been argued that those who self-identify as Pākehā employ the term in ways that obscure their white privilege (Gray et al., 2013). It is important to acknowledge what adoption of the term might do, but Bell (2006) provides a more nuanced account of the uncertainty attached to proclamations of settler identity, whether they use the term Pākehā or not. Bell highlights the way in which migration is problematised; moving is morally dubious and doubly so if your ancestors were colonisers. She argues that ‘Pākehā nationalism consequently depends more on assertions of emotional attachment to place than on narrations of history or of cultural distinction, while the history of how that attachment was secured is “forgotten”’ (Bell, 2006: 256; see also West-Newman, 2008a). However, biculturalism, while crucial for combatting the effects of earlier assimilationist policies on Māori culture, has also contributed to that forgetting because for Pākehā it neglects the entanglement of emotional subjectivities as they were produced by colonial *relations* between Māori and Pākehā, and not just the elites discussed by Wanhalla and Paterson (2018). Bell asserts that one product of this amnesia is Pākehā lack of sympathy for Māori claims for redress in the present, but there is more thinking to be done about the emotional consequences of such forgetting and also about the gendered exclusions of much belonging associated with Pākehā nationalism (see for example, Bruce, 2014). By implication, there is also room to consider the further emotional entanglements of colonial history as other peoples have arrived in New Zealand.

For more recent arrivals, feelings of belonging and attachment to place and people may be difficult to find, but hospitality and hope may be important in building new relationships and shifting unequal structural relations. Some women migrants, for example, feel stuck, underappreciated and suffer humiliation as a result of everyday racism from

both New Zealanders and other migrants. However, there are intercultural moments and moments of hope. Food sharing is one way in which migrants from different cultures might come together with each other and those from their host culture and feel some connection. Johnston and Longhurst's (2012: 330) accounts of food sharing show how 'feelings of both belonging and not belonging are bound up with justice and injustice and how bodies are included and excluded from various hegemonies in New Zealand society'. Another possibility is that Māori values of hospitality could be used to found a more welcoming reception for asylum seekers (West-Newman, 2015) and migrants, and arguably this could extend to a creating a shared sense of belonging for all in Aotearoa. Further research is needed to understand feelings of belonging and the work they do in helping or hindering civil and equitable cultural relations.

## Conclusion

Reflexive emotionalisation has been central to the formation of Aotearoa New Zealand as a colonial settler state. Processes of reflecting and acting on emotions in interaction with others are vital in a changing world, and especially in colonial contexts where cultures have differing feeling rules. This analysis suggests that reflexive emotionalisation in the colonial context of Aotearoa New Zealand was a relational process not well-captured by narratives of Europeans as bringing increasing self-restraint. Re-reading some early accounts of the formation of New Zealand exposes and challenges the way in which Māori were portrayed as emotionally unrestrained others in need of civilising and gives a glimpse of the ways in which Māori and Pākehā tried to interpret and act on their often flawed understanding of each other's emotions. These processes of reflexive emotionalisation were complicated by shifting power relations as they were disrupted, reformed and contested under colonisation. Māori feeling rules may have lost influence but they altered and adapted, they did not disappear. I also suggest that Māori ways of doing and feeling are being incorporated more widely into everyday behaviour and feelings of belonging in present-day Aotearoa New Zealand. While this may not signal a radical decolonisation, it does indicate that reflexive emotionalisation in colonial settler states is not a process of indigenous peoples receiving the supposed gift of progress and self-restraint from 'civilising' colonisers. The waters may sometimes be agitated, but attending to feelings is vital in how relations in colonised nations proceed.

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## Note

1. The Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 to deal with breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi signed between Māori and the British Crown in 1840. It has continued to adjudicate on claims made by Māori relating to land ownership and sovereignty over other resources such as fisheries and the foreshore. See <https://waitangitribunal.govt.nz/about-waitangi-tribunal/>

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## Author biography

Mary Holmes is Professor of Emotions and Society at the University of Edinburgh, where she teaches Sociology. She grew up in Aotearoa New Zealand and hopes she might be able to visit again some time. Recent books include *Internet Dating: Intimacy and Social Change* (with Chris Beasley) and *Young Refugees and Forced Displacement: Navigating Everyday Life in Beirut* (with Lili Riga, Arek Dakessian, Johannes Langer and David Anderson).

## Résumé

L'« émotionnalisation réflexive » intervient lorsqu'on pense et agit davantage sur les expériences émotionnelles face aux changements majeurs de la vie sociale, tels que ceux qui ont accompagné la colonisation. Cet article explique et développe ce nouveau concept, en évaluant son utilité grâce à une estimation exploratoire de l'émotionnalisation réflexive dans la formation de la Nouvelle-Zélande–Aotearoa en tant que qu'État de colons colonisé (*colonised settler state*). Il est prouvé qu'au moment où les cultures se sont rencontrées et ont cherché à coexister, les émotions ont été essentielles. L'étude de l'émotionnalisation réflexive en Nouvelle-Zélande–Aotearoa révèle comment les différences dans les règles de sentiments ont été gérées, parfois de manière violente, lorsque le pouvoir s'est déplacé vers les colonisateurs. Les sentiments d'appartenance sont importants dans ce processus continu d'émotionnalisation réflexive, dont l'élucidation permet de comprendre autrement les changements sociaux et la formation de l'État de colons, en évitant de faire passer les peuples colonisés pour des objets passifs du « progrès » apporté par les colonisateurs.

## Mots-clés

colonisation, émotionnalisation réflexive, émotions, réflexivité émotionnelle

## Resumen

La “emocionalización reflexiva” implica que se piensa y actúa en mayor medida sobre las experiencias emocionales en respuesta a cambios importantes en la vida social, como los que acompañan a la colonización. Este artículo explica y desarrolla este concepto novedoso, evaluando su utilidad a través de una evaluación exploratoria de la emocionalización reflexiva en la formación de Aotearoa – Nueva Zelanda, como un Estado de colonos colonizado (*colonised settler state*). Se argumenta que a medida que las culturas se encontraban y buscaban coexistir, las emociones eran esenciales. El estudio de la emocionalización reflexiva en Aotearoa revela cómo se gestionaban las diferencias en las reglas sobre los sentimientos, a veces de manera violenta, a medida que el poder se desplazaba hacia los colonizadores. Los sentimientos de pertenencia son importantes en ese proceso continuo de emocionalización reflexiva, cuya elucidación proporciona una nueva comprensión del cambio social y la formación del Estado colono que evita considerar a los pueblos colonizados como objetos pasivos del “progreso” traído por los colonizadores.

## Palabras clave

Colonización, emociones, emocionalización reflexiva, reflexividad emocional