

Power that Hurts: Harriet Gore Browne and the Perplexities of Living Inside Empire

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Facing the crisis of a colony at war, Harriet Gore Browne experienced a crisis of mind as the wife of a governor heavily criticized for acting unjustly and illegally in provoking a racial conflict. Analysing the intimacies of power, the article depicts the doubts, pain and haunting pressure of violence on those proximate to as well as subject to imperial authority. Harriet Gore Browne's intense scrutiny of her own and her husband's actions expose an interior questioning of the legitimate use of force against indigenous resistance. The pain running through Harriet Gore Browne's journals, tormenting her days and nights, speaks to the centrality of race, emotion and the intimate in colonial rule.

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On the opening page of an unmarked notebook started in January 1861, Harriet Gore Browne wrote “The first entry in this journal tells of anxiety, a species of mortification, and a sore feeling.”¹ She continued to enter passages speaking of torment, worry, hurt, and pain in her journals over the next four and more years. Thirty-two-year old Harriet did not suffer pain from illness or injury, but from her position as the governor's wife, the lady presiding over Government House. Her husband, Thomas Gore Browne, had been governor of New Zealand since 1855.² Under his rule New Zealand had been plunged into crisis. War between indigenous Maori and imperial troops had broken out in March 1860. The outcome in early 1861 was uncertain: lives had been lost, property and trust destroyed on both sides. Gore Browne's actions had been very publicly criticized in the colony and in London.³ In January of 1861, the political and military crisis was also a crisis within Harriet Gore Browne's mind and being.

Harriet was stung by the vigour and sharpness of Gore Browne's critics; tortured by her own doubt about his judgement; perplexed by the indecisive outcome of what were expected to be clear-cut military engagements and deeply apprehensive of his—and their—imminent public censure and removal from office. Recourse to her journal came in the wake of the latest agonizing prolongation of their fate: “Last night

brought the November mail & an uncertain letter from the Duke of Newcastle [Secretary of State for the Colonies], saying he had not had time enough since his return to be sure of the prudence of Gore's steps in commencing the war but he is to send him a definite opinion next mail."⁴

Whether at the unpredictable distance of the next English mail—up to three months and 12,000 miles away—or close at hand, the situation pressed hard. Offering comfort to the widow of a soldier killed in the fighting, Harriet instead found herself faced with a “broken hearted” woman who “thinks the war wrong.” To her journal she admitted “I feel they must all hate me & all concerned with the Government.”⁵ A little more than two weeks later, in March 1861, ruminating on the situation while sailing back across Auckland's Waitemata Harbour “in the evening, the sky thick with stars & the land lying still & dark round us,” Harriet reflected that she “could not help feeling a sensation & depression & misery to think that my husband had been the means of bringing war & ruin on the people who had once owned all that land which we now enjoyed yet many people think it [the war] was inevitable & would have been worse had it been delayed.”⁶ Anticipating the worst she concluded the day's entry with a prediction, perhaps in hope that its laying down in ink would offset its advent: “I think I expect to be recalled next mail but that selfish care sinks into insignificance when compared with the anxiety about the unravelling of this wretched state of affairs.”⁷

For Harriet Gore Browne, then, power hurt. And it was power that constituted the daily space and business of her life. Under the roof of Government House, the intimate, familial and private world of family and marriage coexisted with the conduct of the colony's administration. Daily life brought the exercise of imperial power to the dining table and fireside. The outbreak of war exposed that power as one of force to be exercised by a white British army over local Maori communities. At the end of January 1861, when Harriet began her journal, Auckland's Government House contained little of the solace that might be expected of the home she had made there over the previous five years, a home where three of her family of then four children had been born (another two were to follow), and a house whose public rooms she had made attractive and popular places for social gatherings and musical and dramatic performances. As a hostess, a friend, a leader of colonial society, Harriet Gore Browne was liked and admired for her intelligence, liveliness, and tact. Her usual nature was far from forlorn, troubled, or complaining.⁸

How might we understand Harriet's predicament as a “private life,” an intimate history within the settler empire? She stands at the sharp intersection between gender and social hierarchy: enjoying the prestige and privilege as a member of the elite, yet as a wife limited in authority and independent action. What is the emotion, the hurt, the “species of mortification” that is produced in the space of racial conflict? A space that is simultaneously colony and empire-wide, and that of a marriage and domestic bond. And what is the nature of tumult in a situation where imperial power was vigorously and multiply resisted and contested? As a white woman in the colony as a representative of the British government, she stood

clearly on one side of the authority under contest in the war. But those sides were not drawn only on racial lines. Some of Gore Browne's greatest critics came from within the church and humanitarian circles in New Zealand and in England. The disquiet documented in the diary serves as a parallel record to the noisy and tense debate about the use of coercion in colonial settings that was to escalate further through the 1860s. How might Harriet's perplexity help extend an understanding of the fragility of imperial power, as well as its force; of the affective cost of relinquishing or losing power; and of the ways in which imperialism could damage those who exercised power as well as those on whom such power was exercised.⁹

Harriet Gore Browne's experience of power expands our perception of empire constituted by affect and intimacy in the many ways we have come to understand following the work of Ann Laura Stoler, Antoinette Burton, Tony Ballantyne, Durba Ghosh, Angela Wanhalla, Adele Perry and others.¹⁰ In Harriet Gore Browne's history, we are reminded of the multiple and jarring dimensions that intimacy affords, whether in the form of relations between individuals, as a space constituted by relations of empire or as a perspective on historical events. As the work of these scholars has emphasized, privacy and intimacy were spaces of hurt, abrasion, alienation, and friction; places of alienation and violence as well as affection and attachment. The discussion addresses these questions exploring the space Harriet Gore Browne occupied as a woman whose "private life" was caught in, and constituted by, the interstices of an imperial crisis. It offers an anatomy of the pain and hurt she describes within contemporary structures of feeling.

Harriet Gore Browne is one of many lives of the governing elite that provide us with an atlas of empire's intimacy.¹¹ Her story is of interest and significance in itself, but also serves as a lens through which to connect to larger themes and questions. The strength of microhistory is in its capacity to probe deeply and specifically into the particular formation of imperial subjectivity. As in Catherine Hall's examination of Edward Eyre or Adele Perry's anatomy of James Douglas and Amelia Connolly, the claim is not to the representativeness of the subject but, rather, to the possibility of a more explicit charting of the dynamic of power in shaping the lives of individuals who occupied the deeply asymmetrical domain of empire. Using a diary to access interiority also points to the utility of an individual study as a frame for the discussion.¹² It is the work that colonial conflicts perform in shaping the inner as well as "outer" lives that is to the fore in this study. That inner life is one that encompasses what is suggested as the often distinct realms of privacy, intimacy, and interiority. Harriet's journal provided her with a sometimes welcome refuge from relations of intimacy, especially those with her husband. Its pages were free from all obligation except those Harriet paid herself. In retrospect, it has become the chief means by which we can access a record of interiority.

Weighing individual versus collective pain is an impossible endeavour; no more so than in a context of colonialism and dispossession. There is no way of measuring the pain suffered by individuals with that experienced at a collective level

as a consequence of colonialism. They are incommensurate. The people of Te Ati Awa and Taranaki generally suffered immeasurably from the conflict ignited in 1860 and its consequences.¹³ Understanding the dynamics by which such histories unfolded and acknowledging the tensions between individual experience and broader historical consequence remains an ongoing task in the postcolonial context.

Wretched uncertainty

Wretchedness and irritability stalked Harriet in the early months of 1861. She was annoyed when Gore (the name by which she addressed her husband) refused to accompany her on a daily ride, and vexed by his refusal to give any reason for what was an uncharacteristic decision. Only later did he offer her an explanation: “he then told me that he had been warned from all parts of the country to beware of assassination and that was the reason.”¹⁴ Her diary contains her relief. That such a rumour, running rampant in the suspicious and heightened atmosphere of war, could be taken seriously by her husband’s staff, and drive her to ill disposition towards him, was something she could ill afford. She found it hateful that critical information had been withheld from her, forcing secrecy into the marriage. She chastised herself for her rancour, as it ran against her own measure of what it was to be a wife.¹⁵ The episode, while small in isolation, was an indicator of the contagion with which “uncertain knowledge” could spread in circumstances of racial conflict—a situation that Robert Peckham has recently addressed in relation to imperial panic, specifically under the rubric “Reading the Signs.”¹⁶

Harriet and Thomas Gore Browne’s relationship as husband and wife was the immediate space in which the imperial crisis of New Zealand in 1861 was played out. Imperial administration had made their marriage possible ten years earlier. Harriet’s father, a Scottish lawyer and landowner, had initially refused the suit made by the forty-three-year-old retired army officer to his twenty-one-year-old daughter on the grounds that Thomas Gore Browne’s modest half-pay income was an insufficient basis for marriage. When Gore Browne was offered the position of governor of St Helena with a salary of £4000 per year, James Campbell’s opposition disappeared. Harriet and Thomas were married on 4 June 1851 and sailed for St Helena two weeks later. The intimate relation of marriage and the space of colonial rule were inextricable.¹⁷

The business of governing and the “private” life of marriage and family did not necessarily fall into a clear division. In Harriet’s journal, the voice of a wife whose interests were indissoluble from those of her husband, and of her separate mind and judgement, are evident in the shifting use of “we” and “I.” Irked by one of the Auckland newspapers’ response to a proclamation from her husband’s office calling on all loyal subjects to cease agitating on the legality of the war, Harriet remarked she found it “annoying & strange to say the Southern Cross which we believed to be a staunch friend interprets such an act as a sign of fear & compares it to knocking

over the chess board before the game is finished.”¹⁸ “We” placed Harriet within a shared responsibility for the work of drafting and publishing the proclamation. Harriet was furious with the editor of the *Daily Southern Cross*, but she was unable to enter the public realm of print to defend her husband, or herself, from this criticism.

There is no doubt that at times Harriet did take a direct hand in the business of governing.¹⁹ Her journal records hours spent after breakfast one morning drafting “an intelligible sentence on representative Govt,” which was to be part of a speech Gore was to deliver later that day. The same day’s entry then proceeds to tell of the much more conventional calling round Harriet made both as a matter of public duty and personal inclination. Visiting at one address, she found a Mrs Jarvis “caught on her knees scrubbing the store room.” The scene speaks to another kind of intimacy: that of a woman’s domestic routine and household task normally performed out of view. Embarrassment overcome, the visit proceeded with the women’s joint pleasure in admiring the sleeping baby in the house and enjoying the company of the other little girls of the family.²⁰

Moments of this kind brought light into a time of difficulty and pressure. Throughout the first part of 1861, Harriet suffered acutely under the expectation that her husband would be removed from his office—and that such a step would, very likely, be accompanied by public rebuke, destruction of his reputation with its consequent public humiliation, and loss of livelihood. They—he—continued to be under fierce public scrutiny. The highly public space of official judgement hung over what had been, for over a year, a heated trial by accusation and controversy conducted in public—by speech, in the settler parliament and the House of Commons, in colonial and London newspapers, in public and private correspondence, and in what had broken out as a pamphlet war running alongside the fighting war with weapons. In February 1861, the *Sydney Morning Herald* was indignant that Maori bullets were supported by “printed artillery” issuing from the pens of the governor’s opponents.²¹ Gore Browne’s critics accused him of acting illegally and unjustly in taking the colony to war, and in doing so ruining its prospects, creating a crisis for the empire at large, and undermining both Christian principle and British rule of law in the eyes of those Maori who had been led to believe in these as guarantees of their rights as British subjects and followers of a Christian faith. New Zealand had appeared to many to offer the highest hopes for colonisation to proceed in tandem with the Christianising transformation of the Maori, both peoples coexisting as British subjects in a common political economy. The Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 recognised Maori property rights and chieftainship; Maori were the dominant population and players in many parts of the country through the 1840s and early 1850s. The outbreak of war was a devastating collapse of such promise.²² Gore Browne’s accusers included people of influence: the bishop of New Zealand George Selwyn; the long-serving Church Mission Society missionary Octavius Hadfield, whose networks linked him in closely to the humanitarian and evangelical circles across the globe; and William Martin, the former chief justice of New Zealand.

Throughout 1860 and into early 1861, the accusations made against Gore Browne were gathering ground in pressure applied to the Colonial Office in London as well as in heated and polarizing debates in New Zealand. Gore Browne also had his supporters. Bellicose sections of the settler community defended the governor in his actions to press for faster and larger land sales from Maori, and to insist on a single loyalty to the British administration as sovereign authority. A public meeting attended by around 1,000 people in Auckland's Queen Street in May 1860 heartily cheered what it considered "necessary" force and the Governor's "manly policy."²³ The issue around which Gore Browne had taken the colony to war was the disputed sale of a valued block of land at Waitara, in the province of Taranaki, where a New Zealand Company settlement had been founded in the early 1840s. Against Te Ati Awa leader Wiremu Kingi Te Rangitake's avowed opposition, Gore Browne had proceeded with purchase from a lesser chief. In pressing the case, and in insisting on the disloyalty of those who opposed his actions, Gore Browne had forced Maori into armed resistance. Such a sequence of events drew the ire of Te Ati Awa and allied iwi (tribes) who were, by now, keen to resist further land sales. They had formed a wider movement amongst a number of central North Island tribes to join together in a political organization, the Kingitanga, to resist further settler incursion into their territory and autonomy.²⁴

How Gore Browne's actions were to be judged by the Duke of Newcastle in London was a key part of Harriet's "mortification" in early 1861. The dispatch they received at the end of January was equivocal. Judgement was still to come. The indecision, along with the possible outcomes—dismissal, demotion with its associated humiliation—was one torment. That would be bad enough, but it also would leave them with a most uncertain material future. Their youngest child, Frank, was less than a year old. Gore's reputation as a loyal and successful former army officer was their most valuable asset in securing public office. Without his "good name," they were in dire straits. The uncertainty fuelled Harriet's torment. A month after she began her diary, Harriet set down her situation carefully, her writing an attempt to bring the intolerable strain under some discursive control. Rehearsing the various scenarios and events that had led to her husband being accused of gross acts of illegality and injustice, she persuaded herself to "think a rebuke & not a recall is what I expect but neither will be altogether pleasant."²⁵ A few weeks later, she turned to emotion rather than reason, drawing on the anniversary of the critical moment in her life with Gore, to gather strength in the face of her current adversity. "This night ten years ago Gore proposed to me. I was more excited but equally anxious then as now. All went right then. God grant it may do so now & if not why it may be better for us in the end."²⁶

Throughout these months Harriet continued her round of duties at Government House, hosting "at-homes," appearing at levees, and overseeing the education of her children and management of the household. Even as an experienced and highly skilled hostess Harriet felt the strain. On one occasion Harriet admitted: "I lost my temper at dinner & called the Bishop a theatrical humbug."²⁷ It was

behaviour at odds with her usual accomplished and tactful demeanour. George and Sarah Selwyn had been part of the social circle with whom Harriet had lived in the small orbit that was colonial Auckland in the years 1855–61. Both she and Sarah Selwyn had young children, husbands who were preoccupied and often absent on official duties; both were women of education and deeply engaged observers of the world around them. The war made a deep rupture in what had been a cordial social circle. When Sarah Selwyn came to see her on a private visit before leaving the colony to take her sons to school in England, Harriet found it impossible to reconcile words with feelings. “She [Sarah Selwyn] called before going to wish me goodbye & did so warmly saying the wretched war had not altered their private feelings. I don’t believe her.”²⁸ At her writing desk, in the pages of her own journal, Harriet could be impolite. An intimacy made cold by public critique left a hard space to occupy. (Thomas Gore Browne also had to break off his friendship with William Martin, telling him “he could no longer visit because of their difference over Waitara.”)²⁹

Harriet Gore Browne and Sarah Selwyn may have found it hard to speak to each other in private but they both found it extremely difficult to remain silent in public. In August 1860 Sarah Selwyn wrote to her cousin, “I must write a pamphlet, or I shall burst.”³⁰ Despite misgivings that her own voice might compromise the position of her bishop husband, Sarah joined the pamphlet war against the Governor in 1861. With her close associates in New Zealand, Caroline Abraham (whose husband was the Bishop of Wellington) and Mary Ann Martin (whose husband was the former Chief Justice), Sarah published a set of letters in England in 1861 outlining objections to the war.³¹ In informing their families and their well-connected circles of acquaintance-ship the three women sought to influence both British public opinion, and decisions at the Colonial Office. At her writing desk Harriet Gore Browne was occupied at the beginning of 1861 writing her own “full account of the origins and progress of the war... to be published or made into an article” alongside her journal.³² She completed a lengthy manuscript but did not proceed to print. Her explanation of events followed the detailed political and legal steps, carefully plotting the legitimacy of decisions made by her husband but it acknowledged also a partial view of all that had transacted. The account languished in her private papers.

Harriet also struggled to keep at bay her private doubts about her husband’s judgement. Still without any adjudication from London on their future in May 1861, Harriet let her scepticism onto the page. She confessed: “Nothing damps me so much as the idea that either in the eyes of the world or in reality the course pursued by Gore with regard to the Waikato has produced evil and evinced a want of judgement & ability.”³³ As his wife, Harriet was stung by attacks on her husband. But she was perplexed by the doubts in her own mind as to whether he had acted rightly. If his critics were right where did that leave her? Could she separate her own thinking, her political and judicial assessment from her attachment and loyalty to Gore as a wife to a husband? Did she feel some responsibility for his actions? Where was the space for a wife to question the actions of her husband?

Fate

The long suspense over the couple's future came to an end in late July 1861. There was no dismissal or public chastisement. The Duke of Newcastle's instructions were that Gore's term was to come to an end (thereby bringing a period of six years' service to a close) with Sir George Grey to be his successor. There would be a further position for Gore Browne in Tasmania. Harriet was clear that the Duke's decision was not a censure and Tasmania was "the plan." But she also observed: "Gore alternates between satisfaction & humiliation."³⁴ The news was generally good. And there was a logic to it. Sir George Grey had been Gore Browne's predecessor as governor of New Zealand, from 1846 to 1851, and had since served a term as governor at the Cape of Good Hope. He came with a reputation as a skilled troubleshooter. To the secretary of state, he also brought with him a familiarity with settler-Maori relations in New Zealand.

On the long-awaited day when Sir George Grey arrived in Auckland to take over as governor in late September 1861, Harriet received him at Government House. The transfer of power was immediate. That evening, she recorded the "office is given up to Sir George & Gore & I are sitting in a corner of the dining room behind the screen."³⁵ Their place of governing had gone. And in Grey's return, alone, Government House became a very different, markedly empty space. In the years since Grey was last in Auckland, his own "private" life had taken a dramatic turn. Suspecting his wife Eliza of having an affair with the captain of the ship on which they were travelling between London and the Cape, he had ordered her onshore and was living estranged (a situation that was to last for over forty years). The couple's only child had died at just five months old. The Government House of George Grey in the 1860s carried none of the familial circle and cultivated socializing that Harriet Gore Browne had brought to it.³⁶

Harriet and Thomas Gore Browne, their family and household staff, sailed from Auckland in late October 1861. They spent several weeks in Sydney, staying with the family of the governor of New South Wales, Sir William and Lady Caroline Denison, before going on to Hobart at the very end of the year, where they took up the position that had by then confirmed them as the incoming occupants of the newly built and palatial Government House, which was set in spacious grounds overlooking the Derwent River. As successors to Sir Henry and Lady Young, Thomas and Harriet Gore Browne were part of the marking off of the convict and transportation era of Van Diemen's Land from the future of Tasmania as a respectable, settler colony. Harriet's outward life and position at her husband's side, together with her practiced demeanour, may have proclaimed that freshness, but her inner life was anything but calm or clear.

For all the lavishness of Hobart's Government House, Harriet found little peace. She remained haunted by the New Zealand question. Within days of landing in Tasmania, Sir George Grey appeared in a nightmare and disturbed her sleep. Harriet dreamed Grey was injuring her husband. A week later, for all she had been enjoying

the pleasures of Christmas and new year holiday festivities and the business of a new circle of introductions, she remained tortured by the possibility that their fresh horizon would be marred by Gore's being required to travel to London to stand before a public enquiry. "I am like Saul who lived with the unknown murderer of his past wife forever hanging over him. New Zealand is my murdered first wife & Sir G G [Sir George Grey] is the judge who will lose no opportunity of bringing in sentence upon Gore."³⁷ There was still the possibility of a public enquiry into Gore's actions in taking the colony to war hanging over them.

A few weeks later, Harriet's anxiety had moved from dreams and imaginings to a debate over what had occurred in New Zealand, and an arbitration over culpability. She allowed onto the pages of her diary the possibility that her husband carried responsibility for the war: "It is clearly by Gore's act that this whole sad war began. Now if by any chance that act was a wrong one which public opinion now seems to say it was, who is to blame? I am sure Gore acted to the best of his ability and I am also sure that in every step he asked for wisdom, so what could he have done more?"³⁸ In her thinking, as well as her feeling, the question had moved from whether it was right or wrong, to the circumstances in which Gore had acted, whether there had been alternatives, and how he had arrived at his decision. She was looking for ways to comprehend and interpret her husband's mistake. Was it a sign of his frailty, or had he committed a serious error of judgement? Who was to blame, and where should blame lie?

Her own continued searching, in the arguments of her diary at this time, were attempts to sift through the legal and political elements of events over the previous year and a half. She was scrutinizing her own mind and judgement as well as that of her husband. It was also a process propelled by the urgent need for preparation in the eventuality of Gore being called to public account. An underlying question in Harriet's deliberation was whether she may have led her husband to a wrong set of resolutions. In her reviewing, rehearsing, and scrutinizing of her own decisions, understanding, and judgement, she was attempting to appraise her own actions. If these were errors of judgement, were they *her* own lapses or deficiencies? Was she also standing accused by history as having acted illegally or unjustly?

Despite her efforts to immerse herself in new surroundings, New Zealand was never far away. In March 1862, Harriet found herself in "a blue fit about N Z" having read claims made about Gore's actions, and the possibility that the Duke of Newcastle was now receiving information that would lead him to withdraw his trust in Gore. Sir George Grey was the main author of the accusations that incensed Harriet. In taking this course of action, Grey was unscrupulous and unforgiving in depicting the deeds of his predecessor. There was still the very real prospect of a public enquiry into his actions. Their plans in Tasmania kept being conditioned by the possibility that Gore would be required to travel to London to defend himself before a select committee or other public investigation (and the possible outcomes that might follow). Their frail hold on the Hobart position and Harriet's painful state of mind was

highlighted by her reaction to an apparently trivial request. When their private secretary asked if, or when, they would be ordering a billiard table, Harriet reacted sharply. The exchange sparked a jab of inner turmoil. “I fought my pain but had it come like a stab ever & again.”³⁹ Several months later Harriet noted she had woken three mornings in a row “with the New Zealand pain at my heart.”⁴⁰ It continued over the next three to four years, and was to remain a sharp jag in her mind and being, and in the marriage. In January 1864, she wrote to one of her confidants in New Zealand, in response to the latest of Sir George Grey’s dispatches placing his own actions in a favourable light against those of his predecessor: “I know my husband is an honest man, but it chafes and stabs me to think that the ingenuity of others may make him appear in the eyes of his fellow men as the cause of an evil that might have been averted.”⁴¹

In September 1862, Harriet very deliberately marked the anniversary of George Grey’s arrival in Auckland as a day of significance in political life (it marked the end of Gore’s tenure as governor of New Zealand); but it was also highly memorable in her inner life. Her diary entry records a deliberate narration of how she manages herself on a day that is only redolent of pain. The insistence on normalcy, on family, on the daily routine is striking:

Saturday Sept 27th As yesterday year was the day on which Sir George Grey arrived in Auckland I wish to describe the anniversary. The morning was ... cloudless but we did not awake as early. The children swarmed into bed & I heard Willie read his word of three letters lesson. Got up as usual. A little later than was right & did not get down until after nine when every one was at breakfast.⁴²

Predictable, comprehensible normality was everything Harriet’s existence had lacked over the preceding two years. This was true for all the protagonists in this domain of racial conflict. Danger, fear, and vulnerability were the product of bloody clashes with rifle, bayonet, and shotgun. Accusation and counter accusation now existed where negotiation, debate, and exchange once stood. War had inked a sharp boundary between “us” and “them,” ally and enemy, friend and traitor. Across that boundary, the meanings of difference—rebel and loyalist, savage and civilized, soldier and civilian, feminine duty and masculine responsibility—took on starker profiles and hierarchies, ordering the world of ruler and ruled. But the tumultuous events had also thrown up uncertainties. Reputation and responsibility were at stake then, and they have continued to be debated. Effective armed resistance and political opposition by Maori to the settler administration in New Zealand and to London authority did not so much set off an imperial panic in the sense that C. A. Bayly, Kim Wagner, and Robert Peckham describe.⁴³ Instead, they disturbed an existing assumption of power. Feelings of strength had turned to awareness of weakness.⁴⁴ Assurance that control lay in the familiarity and knowledge of Aotearoa-New Zealand and its inhabitants was deeply fractured. It was not the “Mutiny-motif” that Wagner argues resounded as a pathological echo through the later nineteenth-century metropolitan and colonial world. Rather, it was an affective knowledge that made settler occupation an achievement by force rather than by right.

Conclusion

The pain running through Harriet Gore Browne's journals, tormenting her days and nights, speaks to the centrality of race, emotion, and the intimate in colonial rule. As her husband took the colony to war, Harriet endured the crisis inwardly as well as in her outer life. From the anatomy of her dilemma, it is possible to tease apart the distinct domains of that inner space: private, intimate, and interior. An intimacy of marriage made Harriet a close witness, and even a collaborator, to Thomas Gore Browne's exercise of power as governor. She felt some share of responsibility through the marriage that joined them in common cause and her involvement in critical decisions. Together they faced public criticism, the prospect of humiliation and failure, of official rebuke; they read official despatches and discussed responses that issued from the governor's desk. Harriet, at times, spoke of "we." But she also wrestled with the conflict between her loyalty as a wife and her independent adjudication of the politics and justice of the war and its consequences.

In the pages of her journal, Harriet found a refuge from that discomfiting intimacy: an interior space. There she engaged in her own debates, pursued her own thinking, made her own judgements and gave expression to feelings, doubts, and fears. Harriet's journals provided an inner life of empire that can be thought of in terms Emma Rothschild has proposed as one encompassing "the interior of the household or the home, and the interior of the mind, or the intentions, character, and conscience of the individuals."⁴⁵ The lives of individuals and families in empire, she suggests, were constantly connecting these inner spaces to each other, and to the outer lives of public office, trade, and worldly fortune. The inner world was a dynamic and unstable construct, as responsive to shifts in circumstance and meaning as anything beyond. As the principal means of accessing Harriet Gore Browne as an historical subject, the journals' record of interiority also becomes the focus of examination. Rothschild's definition of the "inner life" of empire notes this meaning of the term to include "the ideas and sentiments" that become "one of the subjects of historical understanding."⁴⁶

To designate the intimate or interior aspects of Harriet Gore Browne's life as evidence of a "private life" within empire is to risk re-inscribing the public/private binary. To do so would be to fail to capture the fluid and porous nature of colonial rule in Government Houses and their milieus across the nineteenth-century imperial world. Social, political, familial, and domestic life overlapped with the apparatus of governing. In the historical record, gender largely determines the space women inhabit as a "private" world of correspondence and journals.⁴⁷ Unlike men who had access to "official" voice in correspondence and a separate "private" realm, women only had a "private" voice. The official archive, that vast creation of the imperial state, is very largely a product of the men writing in an official capacity.

If Harriet's record of hurt and feeling tells us something about the space in which colonial rule operated, it also tells us something of the waxing and waning of such power. The nineteenth-century British empire bestowed on individuals (most notably those serving as governors) specific authority and powers to exercise in the name of

the sovereign, Queen Victoria.⁴⁸ Those individuals entrusted with the mantle of governor were vested with confidence, with the panoply of instrumental and symbolic trappings of office. At times, they also served as targets of resistance. In New Zealand in 1860–61, Thomas Gore Browne provoked a conflict that drew armed resistance and challenges over law and justice. The contest between indigenous autonomy and imperial sovereignty was at its root. Defending his position became a battle with guns, a fervent political debate, and a struggle to protect his name and reputation. The exercise of power was difficult and uncertain and holding on to power was testing; colonial rule was anything but a consistent force. Public office was an abrasive place. Resistance in the form of racial conflict exposed the often frail and incomplete character of imperial rule. Harriet Gore Browne's 1861 crisis of mind is evidence of such frailty. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that, given the deep asymmetry of colonial relations, and especially colonial conflict, attempts to conceptualise an "inner" world of empire are rife with tension. Understanding such spaces on both sides of the colonial fissure presents challenges in the face of the extant archive.

Harriet Gore Browne's crisis of mind needs to be thought of not only in realm of affect but also as part of the creation of colonial knowledge. The space of power that hurt was one of politics and knowledge as well as of affect and feeling. Here, we bring to the fore the arguments made as to the place of information and the work of pen, print, and paper at the centre of the maintenance of imperial power.⁴⁹ Harriet's diary is a record of debate as much, if not more than one of feeling. It is remarkably unconcerned with religious questions. Her painful scrutiny of her own views and actions, her husband's decisions, and those of his critics revolved around the key questions concerning the extent and circumstances in which imperial force could be used in defending a single sovereign authority, in suppressing disloyalty (rebellion), and in enforcing a legal ruling. These issues formed the basis of accusations that her husband had acted unjustly and illegally. They remained central as war in New Zealand escalated in 1863, and then burst into the heated and highly polarized controversy over the actions of Governor Edward Eyre in violently crushing those designated as "rebels" at Morant Bay, Jamaica, in 1865.⁵⁰ The judgement made against Thomas Gore Browne by contemporaries—that he had acted wrongly in enforcing the Waitara purchase and thereby igniting conflict—is one that has stuck.

Harriet Gore Browne's crisis of mind was an affective and emotional, but equally judicial and political space. It is one that exists within marriage and within colonial rule. The debates that proceed show something of the formation of an understanding, a sensibility, that underlies the formation of Britishness, the forging of a worldview of a single authority—a sovereign view. It is a setting in which Harriet Gore Browne can see what has been done, and express regret, yet at the same time justify her husband's actions of enforcing authority and sovereignty in the face of resistance by force of arms. The work to reconcile the strands, the contradictions, the daily "on-the-ground" resistance to British authority was one that required work at the inner life of empire as much as it did in the outer world of fighting, politics, and law.

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Notes

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- 8 See, for example the assessment of a contemporary, Jane Maria Atkinson, JMA to Margaret Taylor, 3 October 1860, quoted in Porter, *Born to New Zealand*, 149–50; and Fargher, *The Best Man Who Ever Served the Crown*, 135.
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- 10 Stoler, “Tense and Tender Ties”; Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire*; Burton, *The Empire in Question*; Ballantyne and Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact*; Ballantyne and Burton, ed., *Moving Subjects*; Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India*; Wanhalla, *Matters of the Heart*; and Wanhalla, *Invisible Sight*.
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- 43 Kim Wagner, “‘Treading Upon Fires’”; and Peckham, ed., *Empires of Panic*.
- 44 Misra, “Review of Maurus Reinkowski and Gregor Thum, ed., *Helpless Imperialists*.”
- 45 Rothschild, *Inner Life of Empires*, 9.
- 46 *Ibid*.
- 47 Macdonald, *Women Writing Home*
- 48 Indigenous peoples frequently invoked the power of Queen Victoria as a named but absent authority in advancing claims to land or to recognition; see Carter and Nugent, ed., *Mistress of Everything*.
- 49 Bayly, *Empire and Information*; and Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*
- 50 Hall, *Civilising Subjects*; and Evans, *Edward Eyre*.