

**Jumping the Fences: Maori Women's Resistance to Missionary Schooling in
Northern New Zealand 1823 - 1835.**

**Tanya Fitzgerald
School of Education
UNITEC, Auckland**

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Introduction

Established in England in April 1799 in response to the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth century, the broad purpose of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was to send missionaries to “Africa and the rest of the heathen world” to “propagate the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathen.”¹ The specific intention of the newly formed Society was to bring the knowledge of the Gospel to “heathen” and it was mainly through the schools that these “plans” were to be “carried into realisation.”² In its early period of inception, the CMS was called “The Society for Missions to Africa and the East.” In 1812 this title was modified to “The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East.”³ In the space of little more than a decade then, West Africa, Australia and New Zealand became the main focus of attention for the CMS.⁴ The Sierra Leone Mission was renamed in 1814 to The Christian Institution of Sierra Leone established and supported by the British Church Missionary Society for the Maintenance and Education of African Children and for the diffusion of Christianity and of Useful Knowledge among the Natives.⁵

As early as November 1799, the CMS had made it quite clear that the primary aim of the African mission was to educate the native children “so as to be missionaries to their countrymen.”⁶ In practice this meant that these children were to be educated

and those new forms of knowledge they acquired would then be transmitted to their families and communities through them. The importance of establishing mission schools to implement these policies is further stated by the CMS in its Committee Minutes:

The efforts of the Society in Africa are wholly directed to the civilising and evangelising of the Natives . . . children received under the Society's care in the colony, and brought up in Christian principles, would add rapidly to the moral influences of the Colony on the natives; and could become, under the Divine Blessing, the means of extensively diffusing civilisation and Christianity. They should all receive a good English education. Some of them should, at a suitable age, be apprenticed among the respectable Colonists to useful trades or place in service: others should be brought up within the precincts of the Institution, in a thorough knowledge of the gardening and agriculture adapted to their country - while the more serious and promising youths should receive such further education as may prepare them for being sent into the interior as schoolmaster, Catechists and Ministers.⁷

It was anticipated that the introduction of the Gospel to indigenous people would transform them from their (supposedly) heathen state to civilised and Christian congregations. The conversion of indigenous people to Christianity was premised on the notion that the adoption of Christian values and structures was beneficial and that civilisation was in some way desired and highly sought by indigenous people. Central to this was the belief that civilisation and Christianity were core attributes of an English (and advanced) nation.

Catherine Hall has suggested that a fundamental evangelical concern was therefore the need to articulate what it meant to be English.⁸ Englishness was however characterised, defined and identified in oppositional ways. That is, in identifying, defining and characterising those who were not English and describing

these groups and individuals as 'other', evangelicals were able to define themselves and their Englishness. Evangelical missionary activity reflected this particular ideology which placed all indigenous people in a subordinate position to European (Pakeha) missionaries. Both Catherine Hall and Antoinette Burton have shown that imperialist ideologies such as those espoused by the CMS simultaneously sanctioned and privileged whiteness or Englishness over indigenous people and provided the mechanism for colonisation to occur.⁹

Within CMS policy discourses, Englishness or whiteness was considered superior to the indigenous or "native" state. Indigenous women such as Nga Puhī¹⁰ in the Bay of Islands area of northern New Zealand were described, therefore, as living in a "moral wilderness"¹¹ and were deemed in need of reclamation and "rescue . . . from certain degradation"¹² by missionary women who sought to confirm and sustain their Englishness according to their own domination of indigenous women.

Underpinning the ideology of Englishness was the evangelical middle class ideal of domesticity; the model to which all women including indigenous women should aspire.¹³ Domestic life involved, among other things, monogamous relationships which simultaneously defined and confined women's sexuality and the subordination of women to men. Within the missionary household the rigid enforcement of gender roles was needed if Maori were to be shown how a well-ordered Christian household and family functioned. It was the model of "a happy Christian family" that Maori were to identify with and attempt to re-create.¹⁴ Central to the Christian household was the role of women as wives and mothers. Women's domestic work and women's sexuality had, of necessity, to be privatised within the confines of the family home.

The separation of workplace and home as a result of the industrial revolution provoked the formation of two separate spheres; the public sphere of industry and commerce and the private sphere that was centred on home, family and hearth. Men were associated with public life and women with the domestic arena of the family home. The home was presented as the site of comfort, security and spiritual and moral values of families and wider society. Women, as (Christian) wives and mothers were placed at the centre of this domain and presented as the provider of spiritual and

moral values and the helpmate of men. An integral part of this construction of femininity was the expectation that women would extend the boundaries of their moral role and engage in charitable and religious activities. Women's public participation in distributing pamphlets, conducting prayer meetings, teaching children of the poor and rescuing 'fallen' women were considered acceptable activities as they contributed to the moral and spiritual well-being of society.¹⁵ In the New Zealand mission field, the construction of the 'fallen' woman was translated to include indigenous women, local Maori women living in the Bay of Islands area in northern New Zealand. The assumption that Maori women were 'fallen' women was based primarily on missionary concerns regarding indigenous women and their potential to be degraded by men. In the minds of CMS missionaries, ethnicity and civilisation were inextricably linked and it was in particular, CMS women's role to redeem "souless" indigenous women.¹⁶

Central to this was the belief that religious conversion offered (Pakeha) men and women the certainty to know that they were speaking with God's authority. Consequently, there was a degree of moral power attached to the speaking of God's word that encouraged men and women to speak about religious as well as contemporary social issues. The ability to speak and act however was constrained by nineteenth century ideology that separated men and women's (domestic, familial and religious) activities.

The missionary identity was, therefore, gendered as well as ethnically specific and it was these beliefs that framed the work of early CMS missionaries in the New Zealand mission field.

CMS Policy

The first wave of missionaries arrived in northern New Zealand in 1814. For a variety of reasons that have been discussed elsewhere, this mission (1814 – 1818) was not successful.¹⁷ Of particular significance is the fact that local Maori, described in negative terms as "savages"¹⁸, and "heathen"¹⁹ who "do not behave well"²⁰ were deemed partly responsible for the apparent failure of the mission. The CMS realised

that its desire to offer Christianity as a prerequisite to the acquisition of civilised beliefs and practices was not a workable policy. Samuel Marsden, the then Superintendent of the New Zealand mission²¹, advised the CMS that a change in policy direction was needed and that “the degraded state of the New Zealanders” required the implementation of “moral and religious instruction” in order to improve “their miserable situation.”²² Marsden forwarded the argument that:

The foundation must be laid in the education of the rising generation. If there were the means equal to give the children generally instruction, ignorance and superstition would soon give way to knowledge and true religion. The children possess great minds, are well behaved and teachable, and would make great improvements.²³

Accordingly, in the early 1820s, there was a change in focus and schools, not the pulpit, became the mechanism through which civilisation, and ultimately the acquisition of Christianity, was to occur. These revised objectives stipulated that the teaching of religious beliefs and practices in schools was critical to changing and converting indigenous societies. More specifically, it was intended that the education of indigenous children was central to missionary endeavours as it was anticipated that these children would be utilised as “missionaries to their countrymen.”²⁴ In practice this meant that indigenous children were to be formally educated in mission schools and new forms of knowledge that they acquired would then be transmitted to their families and communities through them. An integral aspect of the civilising and Christianising policy was the removal of indigenous children from the influence of their family to the mission station. The specific purpose of the mission family home was to provide the model of:

The tidy home and gentle ways of the missionaries . . . such a change from the rough and wild and frightening ways of the Maori pa. It made an impression on the grown up men and women but it made an even

greater impression on the little children, especially on those who soon began to come from far and near to attend the missionary schools.²⁵

Missionary discourses, as the above extract illustrates, presented an image of Maori as degraded and ignorant and in need of the civilising influences of missionaries and schooling. Views such as these were grounded in observations that Maori used primitive tools, lived in dilapidated houses, dressed in scanty attire, engaged in incessant warfare, worshipped non-Christian gods, encouraged abnormal familial relations and placed women in positions of authority over men. These views were further supported by drawings of “natives” that had appeared in publications such as *The Missionary Magazine* and *Missionary Register* that depicted Maori as threatening and “savage.”²⁶ These were the scenes that had possibly informed missionary beliefs concerning the need for the introduction of Christianity and civilisation.

Specifically, it was the position of Nga Puhi women as potential “mothers of future generations” that provided the motivation for CMS women in particular to engage in recuperative activities that focused on reclaiming Nga Puhi women from their apparent degradation.²⁷ Salvation for indigenous women and men was predicated therefore on the adoption of Christian values and practices that involved, amongst other things, the external elements of English culture: clothing, language and gender appropriate behaviour.

The CMS identified work among Nga Puhi women as critical to the success of converting Maori society as a whole and were convinced that their efforts would be undermined if they could not produce Nga Puhi women who would create a family environment in which Christianity could develop and flourish. In other words, CMS missionaries believed that their immediate challenge was to control the sexuality of Nga Puhi women through the domestication of Nga Puhi women and their labour. Civilisation without Christianity was considered meaningless and only possible when Nga Puhi women were located in the homes of privileged (white, middle class) missionary women and, ultimately, under the auspices and authority of missionary men. Nga Puhi women, identified therefore as part of the problem in spreading

Christianity and associated civilised practices, were also defined as a particular missiological problem. There were two related and contradictory reasons for this criticism.

The first perception was that Nga Puhi women were the innocent victims of, in the main, Nga Puhi men and were described as (morally) degraded because men forced them into prostitution. It was the presumed and actual sexual activity that Nga Puhi women were involved in that was pinpointed by missionaries as rendering Maori women the most degraded and therefore most in *need* of education. In order to alleviate this condition, CMS missionaries believed that Nga Puhi women, because of their race, could be sexually exploited and consequently, they needed to be removed from the influence of Nga Puhi men. The assumption was created that Nga Puhi women assumed a different level of sexuality to Pakeha women and that by definition, all Nga Puhi women were morally “degraded.”²⁸ This view was not unique to the New Zealand situation. Marilyn Lake has argued that white colonising women understood prostitution as the paradigmatic female condition and that in some way it was their duty to rescue indigenous women.²⁹ One of the ways this could be achieved was to offer indigenous women independence from their own family. In the New Zealand setting this involved removing Nga Puhi women from their whanau (extended family) and locating them within the geographical boundaries of the mission station. Within the mission family home, Nga Puhi women would come into contact with ideal Christian women who could offer an example of domesticity and teach Nga Puhi women how to become good (Christian) wives and mothers. Missionary women assumed therefore that the acquisition of these (domestic and familial) skills was fundamental to the acquisition of civilisation and, ultimately, salvation through Christianity. In other words, CMS policy was dictated by a taken-for-granted distinction between Pakeha Christian women and indigenous women.

A further consequence of residence within the boundaries of the mission station was that it minimised the possibility of Nga Puhi women visiting the trading ships when they arrived. The missionaries believed that the immediate benefits of the Christian family home presented Maori women with a morally viable and desirable alternative to visiting the “shipping.” In 1831, Henry Williams reported that:

We have stemmed the torrent of opposition respecting the Girls; and I shall hope that we will be able to proceed more regularly. The shipping have had a sad influence upon the Natives generally; and I have been frequently filled with wonder at the great changes which have taken place. There are about fifty females at this Settlement, all behaving in an orderly manner; and very many in a most pleasing way. Several have been reclaimed from the vessels, and are settled among us attending the school.³⁰

This supposed state of independence from their whanau and ‘other’ Maori men rendered Nga Puhi women *dependant* on the Williams family for food and shelter. In particular, Nga Puhi women were dependant on CMS missionary men and were subject to their authority.

On the basis of observations made, a second perception was that Nga Puhi women lived backward and uncivilised lives. Central to this were concerns regarding the nature of whanau and kainga (village) structures and daily life and the belief that Nga Puhi women had the capacity to make necessary changes to redeem themselves, their whanau and ultimately wider society. The remedy for the (supposed) ignorance and degraded state of Nga Puhi women was education and that schools would provide the mechanism to teach “everything of which we are capable of teaching them.”³¹ Since the central problem was defined as Nga Puhi women’s apparent lack of providing a Christian family home and associated practices, curricula in the mission schools emphasised domesticity and the teaching of attributes associated with being a pious Christian woman. In keeping Nga Puhi women away from their families, CMS missionaries hoped that these women would be returned to their families “much improved and improving.”³² In other words, through the successful provision of schooling, Nga Puhi women, rendered as productive Christian women could, in turn, facilitate change within their own whanau and in this way Maori society as a whole could be redeemed.

The desire to regulate indigenous women's lives and introduce changes in family life was symptomatic of missionary endeavours throughout the Pacific as Patricia Grimshaw, Mary Zwiap and Diane Langmore have shown.³³ In the New Zealand mission field, the use of schools to inculcate Christian doctrine and Christian practices was, as I have previously argued, deliberate and directed specifically at one particular group; Nga Puhi women.³⁴ Missionary assumptions furthermore, were that Nga Puhi women welcomed this change and complied with missionary attempts to transform them. This was not the case as this chapter will show.

The introduction of Christianity in New Zealand had far-reaching effects on indigenous people, Maori. CMS missionaries did not confine themselves to solely offering a religious doctrine that offered Nga Puhi a choice as to whether they adopted aspects of these particular beliefs and practices. These missionaries actively intervened in the everyday lives of Nga Puhi through the provision of schooling based on tenets of Christianity. In particular, civilisation and Christianisation were considered synonymous and were based on assumptions regarding the (apparent) 'otherness' of Nga Puhi. For Pakeha missionaries, this sense of 'otherness' invoked simultaneous revulsion and compassion; revulsion because of the nature of the (supposed) heathen and immoral state of Nga Puhi in particular and compassion for Maori as a degraded and savage people. For Nga Puhi women, Christian teaching and the introduction of civilised values and practices had another dimension. That is, the CMS actively sought to create a degree of cultural and social transformation through the provision of schooling.

Becoming Christian and Civilised: the first mission school

In order to meet the changed objectives of the CMS, missionaries recruited for the second mission to New Zealand were educated middle class men *and* women.³⁵ Missionary men whose wives had the necessary teaching skills and who could complement the work of their husbands' were considered more acceptable candidates for mission work. In 1822, Henry Williams and his wife Marianne Coldham Williams were appointed to the mission station at Paihia in the Bay of Islands area of northern

New Zealand. They arrived in New Zealand with their three children in 1823. Their specific objective was to provide for “the Christian education of young New Zealanders, perhaps of both sexes,” and to “bring the noble but benighted race of New Zealanders into the enjoyment of the light and freedom of the Gospel.”³⁶ More specifically, the CMS accorded responsibility to Marianne to improve “the condition of women in New Zealand”³⁷ whose situation was further described as “far more degraded than that of males.”³⁸ Accordingly, the first school that was established was for Nga Puhi women.³⁹ As the numbers of pupils increased, Marianne enlisted the assistance of her sister-in-law, Jane Nelson Williams and their own daughters, Marianne and Catherine, to teach in the school.

Henry Williams echoed the concern of his fellow missionaries and the CMS itself when he reported that:

The condition of the females requires seriously to be considered. At present their situation is very degraded - they are not only viewed as inferior to the male, but at an early age are taken to the shipping from all points of the Island at peace with these tribes. As in every house in the Mission there is a young family, it will require a considerable effort on the part of our wives to attend to this duty; but we doubt not but that it may be effectually accomplished with care and by uniting our strength.⁴⁰

The view that Nga Puhi women were immoral was frequently reported to the Parent Society in England. Captain Jacob Sydney wrote his impressions of his voyage to Paihia:

There is much to discourage Missionary efforts in this village, from the scenes of immorality and vice which are constantly exhibited through the intercourse which subsists between it and the shipping, and the disolute [sic] habits of too many of the inhabitants which that intercourse has engendered. Their efforts have, however, so far been

blessed, that some few of the wretched victims of that intercourse have been rescued from their evil courses, and are now residing in the Mission Settlement, where they have given satisfactory evidence of their sincerity, their altered life, and their readiness to gather further instruction in the Schools.⁴¹

A short term solution to this apparent degradation was to remove Nga Puhi women from the influence of their whanau and kainga to “witness the blessed effects of the Gospel” that was evident within the mission family.⁴² Mission families, not individual missionaries, were considered the most effective means of inculcating Christian values and beliefs. The mission family, as an example of a Christian family, provided the witness of how “true” Christians lived and worked. In their instructions to Marianne Williams, the CMS stipulated that it was:

An object worthy of the attention of both of you, though it may fall particularly within the province of a Female, in training her own children, to associate others with them, and endeavour to make her family an example to the whole.⁴³

In order to be able to attend the Paihia mission school, Nga Puhi women were required to adhere to a number of prerequisites. In the first instance, Nga Puhi women were required to leave their whanau and reside permanently within the confines of the mission station. Located in the mission family home, it was expected that Nga Puhi women would become “useful” and “civilised” Christian women.⁴⁴ Within the Christian family home, considered the cornerstone of decent society, Nga Puhi women were to be taught the necessary domestic skills in order to be able to transform and restructure their own homes. Furthermore, the provision of a domestic curriculum reinforced appropriate roles for Christian (Nga Puhi and Pakeha) women. These roles did not reflect the realities of Nga Puhi women’s lives.

Secondly, Nga Puhi women were required to wash and cut their hair. In a symbolic gesture of the transition from their “heathen” self, the hair was “accordingly

shorn” and then burnt.⁴⁵ Nga Puhī women were then required to dress in appropriate European attire that was described by Jane in 1829 in a letter. “You must imagine . . . the males clothed in white duck and trousers, the females in dark blue gowns, white aprons, and buff handkerchiefs.”⁴⁶ The wearing of clothes was regarded as an important aspect of Christian piety and purity. Thirdly, Nga Puhī were required to stay within the “picket fences” of the mission. These fences were erected to “keep the natives out.”⁴⁷ Presumably, this meant those Maori who did not attend the schools. A fourth requirement was that Nga Puhī were to undertake and complete tasks according to preordained times. A bell was regularly rung which signalled the beginning of the school day, meal times and prayer times; the various activities associated with the Christian day. Time was divided into complex units. From 9.00 to 12.00 each day, Nga Puhī women were expected to be in the classroom and in the afternoon they were required in the mission houses to learn “the principal domestic concerns.”⁴⁸

The most noticeable and immediate changes in the lives of Nga Puhī women were external. Once confined within the precincts [sic] of our gardens,”⁴⁹ Nga Puhī women were required to publicly renounce their “native ways” by being “cleaned and clothed,”⁵⁰ adopt Christian names and participate in religious ceremonies such as baptism and marriage.⁵¹ The underlying assumption was that some outward change in the lives of Nga Puhī women had to occur before the adoption of Christian beliefs was possible. A further reason for permanent residence in the mission station was that Marianne and Jane recognised that “the Natives around us are much under our influence while they remain at our home.”⁵² It was anticipated that Nga Puhī women “under the eye of some of us at all times to divert their attention from mischief”⁵³ would assimilate (supposedly) civilised and Christian practices. This mischief was explicitly the “shipping” which frequented the Bay of Islands area and which contained “evils . . . in every way opposed to the precepts and steady example of the faithful missionary.”⁵⁴

The physical relocation of Nga Puhī women that served to alienate these women from their whanau was, in many ways, indicative of the more radical and colonising changes they were to encounter. Because the CMS missionaries considered Nga Puhī women to be morally suspect and in danger of being sexually

exploited by Nga Puhi men, they endeavoured to keep apart those Nga Puhi women and men who lived in the mission station. In other words, even within the confines of the mission station, Nga Puhi women were separated from their own iwi (people). In 1830, Marianne described her efforts at keeping the two groups separate:

You will think of me in my new house with seven boys more than my own to take care of. I have looked carefully to count the cost in undertaking them, and in order to keep them distinct from the girls, they are always to dine at our house, and the little girls at Jane's . . . We intend also to have a fence down the middle of the garden. It will take from the beauty of our pretty lawn but it will divide the children and keep them in their places.⁵⁵

This social fragmentation of Nga Puhi women's lives was not confined solely to the New Zealand mission field. Patricia Grimshaw has shown that the need to bring about a change in the lives of indigenous Hawaiian women preoccupied missionary thinking.⁵⁶ The strategy for reform was shaped around family life and it was indigenous women who were singled out as the agents for regeneration of Hawaiian society. An integral aspect of this practice was to isolate indigenous women within the missionary household by segregating them from indigenous men as Modupe Labode has shown.⁵⁷ In both the Hawaiian and African missions, this separation was designed to reinforce the separate nature of women's lives, women's work and women's status.

Unlike the mission stations in Hawaii and Africa, CMS missionaries actively involved their own children in the reformation of Nga Puhi women. At times it seemed to Marianne and Jane that these strategies were successful. For example, in 1830 it was reported to the CMS that:

This morning, one [Native] Girl, with my Brother's youngest child in her arms teaching another, who was at work at the wash-tub; and

generally, in the evening you may hear the sound of the Catechism from one end of the Settlement to another.⁵⁸

The fact that Nga Puhi women were becoming useful was a clear signal to the CMS missionaries that improvements had been made. Not only had Nga Puhi women assimilated the necessary domestic skills, they were also useful to the mission family as unpaid domestic servants. This was, as the following passage demonstrates, considered an improvement:

The natives behave well . . . they are very attentive to the Missionaries and there never was a fairer prospect of usefulness amongst this extraordinary nation - their minds are enlarging very fast; and very great alteration is made in their manners and general conduct - they are most urgent to introduce themselves into civil society.⁵⁹

It would seem, on the surface that Nga Puhi women were displaying useful attributes but there are however, other possibilities that must be considered. It is important to look beyond official missionary discourses that promote the notion of the success of the Paihia mission. The assumption that the introduction of civilisation via the schools and the resultant commitment to Christianity improved the condition of Nga Puhi women is difficult to sustain. An examination of letters and diaries penned by Marianne and Jane Williams offer a re-interpretation of the impact of schools and the active resistance of Nga Puhi women to missionary attempts to reform their lives.

Interrupting Schooling: Nga Puhi women's resistance

Nga Puhi women initially supported the idea of Pakeha providing a *secular* education and supported the mission school for the print literacy that it offered.⁶⁰ Nga Puhi women complied with a number of initial requirements regarding clothing and adopting the values of "civility, quiet and obedience."⁶¹ However, attempts to re-form

Nga Puhi women as Christian women were actively resisted. Although Marianne and Jane Williams thought they had gained a degree of compliance, they frequently complained that “there is great difficulty in conducting the school as the Natives are independent of us, and some will frequently leave us after they have received much instruction.”⁶²

As Kuni Jenkins has shown, Nga Puhi women attended the early mission schools ostensibly to gain knowledge of the Pakeha world.⁶³ When it was realised that this knowledge was not being taught, Nga Puhi women remained in the mission station to acquire the tools such as knives, needles and blankets that Pakeha had brought to New Zealand.⁶⁴ These tools were considered a fair exchange for their residence in the mission home. CMS missionaries, on the other hand, described this as “pilfering.”⁶⁵ A further way in which Nga Puhi women resisted attempts to re-form them as evangelical women was to ignore the active efforts of Marianne and Jane to introduce domestic skills and knowledge. This was not the knowledge that Nga Puhi women required. Both Marianne and Jane recorded their frustrations when they found it difficult to give instructions to Nga Puhi women because:

The mistress must do the work, while the servants gaze abroad. She must not scold either, for if they are ‘Rangatiras’ (ie of good birth) they will run away, and if they are ‘kukis’ that is, slaves, they will tell her she has too much of a mouth.⁶⁶

Nga Puhi women were not present in the mission station to learn about Pakeha ways and frequently did not complete domestic tasks that were assigned; tasks that their missionary hosts saw as a necessary first stage in the progress towards civilisation. Consequently, Marianne and Jane constantly complained that Nga Puhi women were temperamental and would not follow instructions. On an earlier occasion, Marianne had commented that:

Being a fine day I set all the girls to wash some mats, to go to England. From Betsy's carelessness in neglecting to pin them on the line the best we had was blown into the fire, and burnt.⁶⁷

It would seem that Betsy was careless as she did not consider these mats to be important. This example shows the different view each woman had of the task. For Marianne it was an important task as the mats were to be sent to her friends in England whereas for Betsy, it was another laborious task. On another occasion in 1832, Marianne recorded in her journal that she:

Had some trouble in setting my girls to wash their different shares, one of the married ones being absent gathering kumeras and the other, Maria, having walked off in an ill humour on Saturday . . . if you desire a girl to do anything she will not now as formerly tell a second, and the second a third, and all leave you to do it for yourself.⁶⁸

Nga Puhi women considered their own family activities more important than the domestic tasks Marianne and Jane required them to perform. As this extract demonstrates, Nga Puhi women simply walked away rather than be "taught" their domestic responsibilities. This proved frustrating for Marianne and Jane. In exhibiting a degree of resistance, Nga Puhi women attempted to make clear to the two missionary women "how necessary they were to their proceedings."⁶⁹ bell hooks has described this form of resistance as "making homeplace."⁷⁰ That is, black women struggle against labouring in white women's homes by creating homes for themselves where they have an opportunity to grow, develop and nurture their spirits. Working to establish a homeplace was an active form of resistance that encouraged black women to have access to their own private place. In resisting the imposition of domestic activities and running away from the mission home, Nga Puhi women demonstrated ways in which they were prepared to struggle to maintain their own identities; identities that were inextricably linked with whanau and iwi.

Unwilling to conform to missionary expectations, Nga Puhi women actively sought to contest missionary educative activities. In the first instance, Nga Puhi women resisted attempts to physically transform them. This involved choosing how the dresses, bonnets and aprons were to be worn. Marianne Williams reported that Nga Puhi women wore “their gowns over their shifts”; that is, the reverse of what was required.⁷¹ It would seem that Nga Puhi women used these garments as decoration not as a means of covering their bodies as missionary women intended. As well, Marianne and Jane found it difficult to engage Nga Puhi women in civilising practices as it was:

A difficulty of no small magnitude to find employment for those who can neither read, write or sew decently, and who are too wild and dirty to assist in housework.⁷²

Secondly, in an attempt to resist their geographical positioning and associated practices, Nga Puhi women frequently defied missionary attempts to separate them from their whanau and ran away from the mission family home. Marianne and Jane’s letters contain numerous accounts of incidents whereby Nga Puhi women “ran away” to the shipping.⁷³ In other words, Nga Puhi women not only left the confines of the mission station but they also engaged in those very acts that located them as “degraded” in the first instance. Furthermore, according to Marianne and Jane Williams, an additionally disdainful aspect of this morally abhorrent behaviour was that those “wretched victims” who engaged in “immorality and vice”⁷⁴ did not “bathe” before they left and “jumped” the fences.⁷⁵ This was a form of deliberate and visible resistance by Nga Puhi women to the social conditioning of Marianne and Jane Williams. On their return from the ships, it was reported that:

Several females gaily dressed, paraded outside the fence. Our three native girls behaved very well, and kept steadily within, for which we afterwards commended them.⁷⁶

Nga Puhi women “congregated together” and rolled “about in the sun” to actively demonstrate their resistance to missionary women and their attempts to define their lives and activities.⁷⁷ Public demonstrations of active resistance caused a fundamental dilemma for Marianne and Jane Williams who were forced to concede that despite their efforts, “the natives are independent of us.”⁷⁸ Of greater concern was the fact that these two missionary women were required to “rescue of this portion of the rising generation from certain degradation.”⁷⁹ This could not be accomplished as Nga Puhi women were required to comply with missionary expectations in order for these missionaries to achieve their own objectives. In other words, the unwillingness of Nga Puhi to accede to Christian and civilised practices placed CMS missionaries in jeopardy of being recalled to England.

Ways in which these forms of non-compliance were recorded offer an insight into ways in which the two missionary women viewed themselves in relation to Nga Puhi women. For example, in 1829, Jane Williams recorded that:

What grieves and mystifies us most is when a girl has been some time with us and is making satisfactory progress at school and beginning to be useful in the house, to have her taken away by her nearest connections and carried on board the vessels which frequent the Bay, because the reward they receive for their iniquity there is greater than we can afford for her services here.⁸⁰

What is clear is that Nga Puhi women were not viewed as actively engaging in visiting local ships. The popular perception was that Nga Puhi women were at the mercy of Nga Puhi men who provided (unwilling) women for the sailors; that Nga Puhi women were kidnapped and forced to provide sexual services for Pakeha men. It was inconceivable to the missionaries that Nga Puhi women would actively seek out sexual relationships. The notion that women would willingly and openly engage in sexual activities with men was contrary to evangelical doctrine that supported the asexual nature of women’s lives. In describing the sexual transaction in Nga Puhi women by Nga Puhi men, the CMS missionaries were further placing the

responsibility and blame for the imminent failure of the mission firmly with Nga Puhi themselves.

A third way in which Nga Puhi women resisted attempts to condition them on the basis of their gender was to interrupt domestic work. Marianne and Jane believed that sitting quietly and occupying oneself with needlework was an aspect of reformed behaviour that their pupils needed to learn. Nga Puhi women were unable to sustain the silence and actively interrupted these activities through their continuous conversations. Jane Williams reported that it was difficult to engage in these necessary domestic tasks as Nga Puhi constantly lamented “eh mother give me some thread! eh mother I have broke my needle, eh mother fix my sewing.”⁸¹ In not keeping quiet and constantly interrupting, Nga Puhi women continued to demonstrate that they were not uniformly ready to accept Pakeha ways.

Tensions between Marianne and Jane Williams and Nga Puhi women were evident. This was due, in part, to misconceptions regarding Nga Puhi women’s role within contemporary Maori society and the desire of the two missionary women to conform to evangelical ideology that shaped and defined the respective roles of women and men according to exigencies of race, class and gender. Nga Puhi women were trapped between the two competing worlds. Nga Puhi women could not accept Christianity and reject eurocentric practices as both were inextricably linked. Marianne and Jane Williams, as missionary women, offered no form of compromise.

Conclusion

The link between Christian and civilised behaviour was dubious but, nevertheless, was the clear policy of the CMS and its missionaries in the Paihia mission station. The restructuring of Maori society to represent and replicate the structures of Christian society involved an ideological shift. In implementing CMS policy and practice, Marianne and Jane Williams had to create Nga Puhi women who would then be instrumental in spreading Christianity to their whanau and kainga. The education of local Maori women was not simply the provision of a domestic

curriculum. It also involved the defining and redefining of what it meant to be Maori Christian women.

As educators, Marianne and Jane attempted to replicate and reinforce the notion of the well-ordered, gendered, evangelical society. The early mission schools based in Paihia provided a curriculum that prepared its (Maori) pupils for their intended future occupations and spheres of activity. Consequently, these schools were utilised as the agencies for change.

¹Cited in E. Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work* (London, 1899), Vol. 1, p. 68.

²The University of Auckland Library, *Committee Minutes 1799-1884*, 14 November 1814, MC.

³Although the CMS was an autonomous body and independent of the Church of England it was supported financially and ideologically by it.

⁴J. R. Elder, (Ed.), *Marsden's Lieutenants* (Dunedin, 1934), p. 15.

⁵The University of Auckland, *Committee Minutes 1789-1884*, 14 November 1814, MC. Note: Title underlined as in the original.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, 1992).

⁹Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*; Antoinette Burton, "Rules of Thumb: British History and 'imperial culture' in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Britain", *Women's History Review*, Vol. 3, No. 4, (1994), pp. 483-500.

¹⁰Nga Puhī were the local iwi (tribal group) living in the Bay of Islands area of northern New Zealand.

¹¹The University of Auckland, *Committee Minutes 1821 – 1837*, 21 June 1830, CN/05b.

¹²Hocken Library, *Prospectus of an Institution for the Maintenance and Education of Children of the Offspring of English Fathers by New Zealand Mothers*, 1839, Var. 4/5.

¹³See Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes* (London, 1987).

¹⁴Auckland Institute & Museum Library, Instructions to Henry Williams, 6 August 1822, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, No.1C, MS335.

¹⁵This point is well argued by Christine Krueger, *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers and Women Writers and Nineteenth Century Social Discourse* (Chicago, 1992).

¹⁶Georgina Gollock, *Missionaries at Work* (London, 1898), p. 44.

¹⁷See Judith Binney, *Thomas Kendall* (MA Thesis, The University of Auckland, 1964); Isla Nottingham, *The Coming of the Missionaries: A Study of Evangelical Beliefs and Maori Understandings* (MSocSci Thesis, University of Waikato, 1980); R. Glen, (Ed.) *Mission and Moko: Aspects of the Work of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand 1814-1882* (Christchurch, 1992).

¹⁸Marianne Williams, 17 July 1824, Hocken Library, *Typescripts Concerned with the Career of Henry Williams & His Family, Missionaries*, Folder 1, p. 10, MS1093.

¹⁹The University of Auckland, *Committee Minutes 1799 – 1884*, 14 November 1814, MC.

²⁰Samuel Marsden to Josiah Pratt, 10 November 1823, Mitchell Library, *Transcripts, Missionary*, p. 1252, BT52.

²¹Samuel Marsden was resident in Port Jackson (Sydney).

²²Samuel Marsden, "New Zealand Journal 1814-1815", in: J. R. Elder, *The Letters & Journals of Samuel Marsden 1765-1838* (Dunedin, 1932), p. 61.

²³Samuel Marsden, 17 September 1823, in: Elder, *Letters & Journals*, p. 370.

²⁴The University of Auckland, *Committee Minutes 1799-1884*, 14 November 1799, MC.

²⁵H. Miller, *The Maori and the Missionary* (Wellington, 1954), p. 7.

²⁶*The Missionary Magazine for 1799: a periodical monthly publication intended as a repository of discussion and intelligence respecting the progress of the gospel throughout the world* (Edinburgh, 1799).

²⁷Henry Williams, 22 September 1828, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Marilyn Lake, "Colonised and Colonising: The White Australian Feminist Subject", *Women's History Review*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (1993), pp. 377 – 386.

³⁰Mitchell Library, Report of the Australasia Mission, *Church Missionary Record: Detailing the Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for the Year 1830*, Vol. II, No. 9, p. 202.

³¹Ibid.

³²Marianne Williams, 10 July 1826, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, No.1C, MS335.

³³Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth Century Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1989); Mary Zwiep, *Pilgrim Path: The First Company of Women Missionaries to Hawaii* (Wisconsin, 1991); Diane Langmore, "The Object Lesson of a Civilised, Christian Home", in: Margaret Jolly & Martha MacIntyre, *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 84 – 94.

³⁴Tanya Fitzgerald, "Missionary Women as Educators: The CMS Schools in New Zealand, 1823 – 1835", *Historical Studies in Education*, Vol. 23/3, (1994), pp. 139 – 149.

³⁵Gollock, *Missionaries at Work*.

³⁶Auckland Institute & Museum Library, Instructions to Henry Williams, 6 August 1822, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, No1C, MS335.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Henry Williams, 17 July 1826, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

³⁹Fitzgerald, "In a Different Voice".

⁴⁰Henry Williams, 17 July 1826, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS33.

⁴¹Mitchell Library, *Church Missionary Record 1834*, Vol. V, No. I, p. 9.

⁴²Mitchell Library, *Church Missionary Record 1834*, Vol. II, No. 9, p. 197.

⁴³Hocken Library, Instructions to Henry Williams, Church Missionary Society, *Pamphlets & Sermons*, 1817-1852, MS81.

⁴⁴Jane Williams to Lydia Marsh, 27 March 1828, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series A, No132, MS335.

⁴⁵Marianne Williams, 4 April 1828, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS33.

⁴⁶Jane Williams, 2 February 1829, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS33.

⁴⁷James Hamlin, 26-30 June 1826, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Diary*, 1830-1837, MS1005.

⁴⁸Henry Williams to Dandeson Coates, 13 May 1826, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 143, qMS2225.

⁴⁹Marianne Williams, 5 February 1829, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

⁵⁰Marianne Williams, 11 February 1824, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

⁵¹Marianne Williams, 4 April 1828, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

⁵²Jane Williams, 22 September 1828, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals written by the Rev Henry Williams & Mrs Marianne Williams & Rev William Williams & Mrs Jane Williams, 1822-1864*, Vol. 2, p. 100, qMS2225.

⁵³Henry Williams to Dandeson Coates, 13 May 1826, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters to the Church Missionary Society from Henry Williams*, Vol. 1, p. 140, qMS2230.

⁵⁴Marianne Williams, 12 August 1823, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 48, qMS2225.

⁵⁵Marianne Williams, 25 May 1830, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 2, p. 156, qMS2225.

⁵⁶Patricia Grimshaw, "New England Missionary Wives, Hawaiian Women and The Cult of True Womanhood", in: Margaret Jolly & Martha MacIntyre, *Family and Gender in the Pacific*, pp. 19 – 44.

⁵⁷Modupe Labode, "From Heathen Kraal to Christian Home: Anglican Mission Education and African Christian Girls 1850 – 1900", in: Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood & Shirley Ardener, (Eds.),

Women and Missions: Past and Present Anthropological and Historical Perceptions (Oxford, 1993), pp. 126-144.

⁵⁸Mitchell Library, Report of the Australasia Mission, *Church Missionary Record 1830*, Vol. II, No. 9, p. 197.

⁵⁹Samuel Marsden to Josiah Pratt, 10 November 1823, Mitchell Library, *Transcripts, Missionary*, p. 1252, BT52.

⁶⁰The desire for print literacy is well argued by Kuni Jenkins, “*Te Ihi, Te Mana, Te Wehi O Te Ao Tuhi*” (MA Thesis, The University of Auckland, 1991).

⁶¹Henry Williams, 20 September 1831, in: L. M. Rogers, (Ed.), *The Early Journals of Henry Williams: Senior Missionary in New Zealand of the Church Missionary Society 1826 – 1840* (Christchurch, 1961).

⁶²Marianne Williams, 11 February 1824, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters and Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 75, qMS2225.

⁶³Jenkins, “*Te Ihi, Te Mana, Te Wehi O Te Ao Tuhi*”.

⁶⁴Marianne Williams, 12 January 1824, Hocken Library, *Typescripts*, p. 6, MS1093.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷Marianne Williams, 5 November 1828, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Extracts 1822-1824*, p. 2, MS2409.

⁶⁸Marianne Williams, 31 March 1828, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

⁶⁹Mitchell Library, William Yate, ‘An Account of New Zealand’, *Church Missionary Record 1836*, Vol. VII, pp. 176-177.

⁷⁰bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (Boston, 1990), p. 43.

⁷¹Marianne Williams, 28 March 1828, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 2, p. 90, qMS2225.

⁷²Jane Williams to Mrs Nelson, 2 February 1829, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

⁷³Marianne Williams, 12 August 1823, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 48, qMS2225.

⁷⁴Mitchell Library, *Church Missionary Record 1834*, Vol. V, No. 1, p. 9.

⁷⁵Marianne Williams, 30 March 1828, Hocken Library, *Typescripts*, p. 30, MS1093.

⁷⁶Marianne Williams, 14 November 1824, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Extracts 1822-1824*, p. 357, MS2409.

⁷⁷Henry Williams, 24 April 1831, Hocken Library, *Journal, 26 September 1827 - 31 January 1840*, p. 64, M1569.

⁷⁸Marianne Williams, 11 February 1824, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 1, p. 75, qMS2225.

⁷⁹Hocken Library, *Prospectus*, Var. 4/5.

⁸⁰Jane Williams, 24 April 1829, Auckland Institute & Museum Library, *Letters & Papers*, Series B, Vol. F, MS335.

⁸¹Jane Williams, 27 May 1828, Alexander Turnbull Library, *Letters & Journals*, Vol. 2, p. 115, qMS2225.