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Curating inscription: the legacy of textual exhibitions of tattooing in colonial literature

Anne Elizabeth Werner
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**Curating Inscription: The Legacy of Textual Exhibitions of Tattooing
in Colonial Literature**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

from

University of Wollongong

by

Anne Elizabeth Werner BA

School of English Literatures, Philosophy and Languages

2008

CERTIFICATION

I, Anne Elizabeth Werner, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of English Literatures, Philosophy and Languages, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Anne Elizabeth Werner

25 July 2008

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ABSTRACT

CURATING INSCRIPTION: THE LEGACY OF TEXTUAL EXHIBITIONS OF TATTOOING IN COLONIAL LITERATURE

This thesis argues that the colonial context of the tattoo's reintroduction to the west, and the exhibitionary nature of its cultural presence in the Euro-American public's consciousness, has been mediated and to a degree determined by cultural understandings of processes of exhibition and display. The tattoo's role in performances of Otherness has allowed it to be manipulated and utilized by authors who, I argue, 'curate' their textual artifacts in accordance with the conventions offered by other exhibitionary mediums. The complicated nature of the tattoo's relationship with popular cultural representations of colonialism has meant that the reclamation of traditional tattooing, for many cultures, demands an engagement with the colonial histories of representation illuminated in this thesis.

Selected texts, including Herman Melville's *Typee* and *Omoo*, a number of beachcomber narratives, the narratives surrounding the captivity of Olive Oatman, and contemporary representations of Maori in tourist imagery, are examined in order to expose the colonial history of representations of tattooing and the irreversible impact this history has had upon the west's conception of 'tattoo'. The literary analysis focuses upon the concept of the text as exhibition, and the author as curator, and uses theoretical approaches from museum, performance and tourism studies, including work by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Anne Maxwell, Jane Desmond, Tony Bennett and Dean MacCannell to strengthen and nuance the textual readings.

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I feel that this project has been, above all, a collaboration of sorts, despite the fact that my name appears on the title page. As such, I am honoured to make the following heartfelt acknowledgements:

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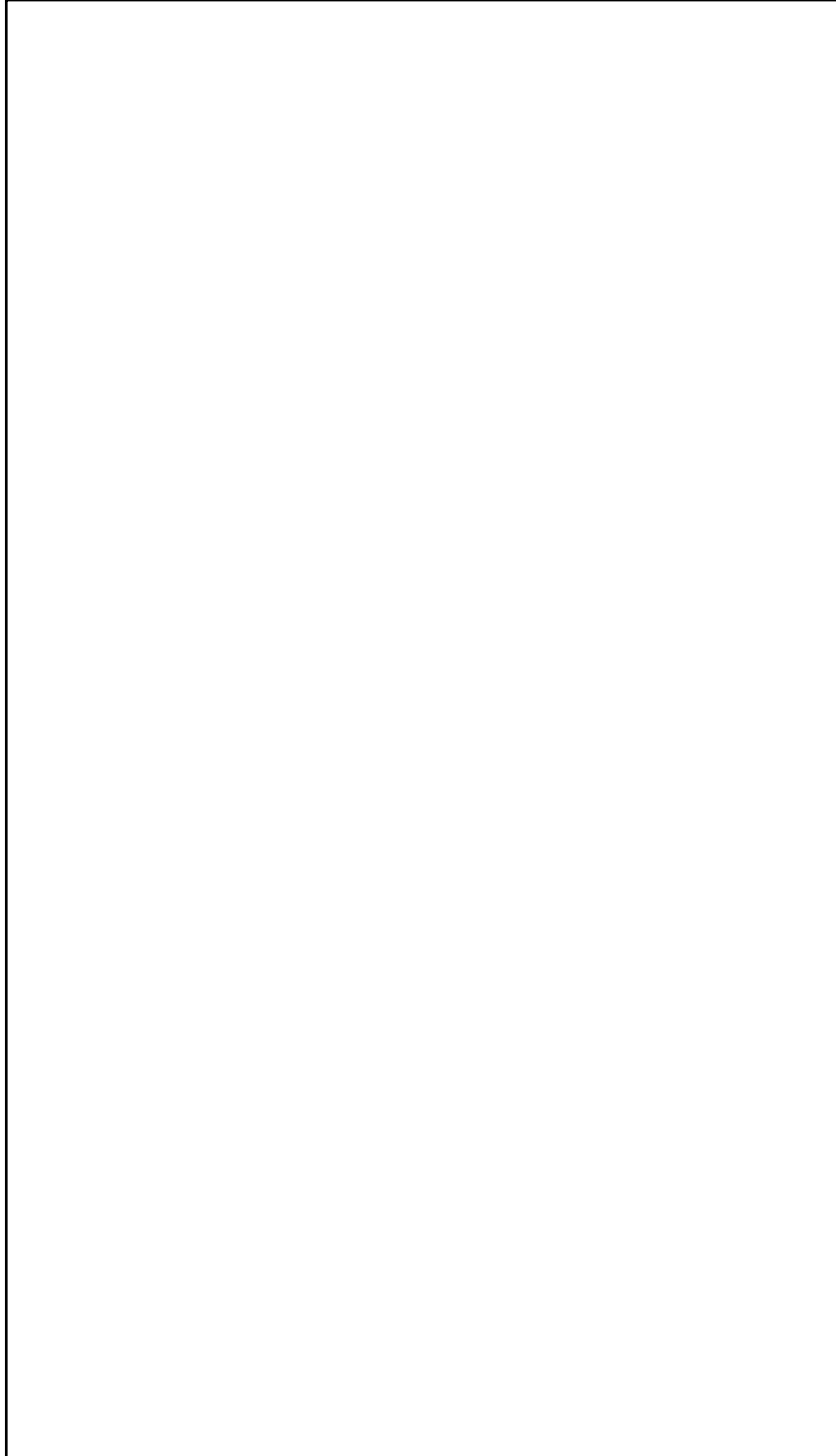
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Sections of this thesis have been published in *Kunapipi* 27:1, *Transnational Whiteness Matters*, edited by Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Fiona Nicoll and published by Lexington Books, and *Something Rich and Strange* (forthcoming). I thank the anonymous reviewers for their engaged, thoughtful and valuable comments and suggestions.

This thesis is dedicated to my best friend, true love, and partner in life, Genevieve. Your faith in me has been boundless, and your inspirations innumerable. I treasure our partnership above all else.

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INTRODUCTION:
CURATING INSCRIPTION



‘Tattoo’ - as we know the word today - is the product of a colonial imaginary founded on performance and exhibition. For 200 years, representations of tattooing in the west have been inextricably and irreversibly informed by spectacularisations of Otherness that have been performed and exhibited in a vast array of cultural mediums. From museums to world’s fairs, from the circus and its sideshow to public educational lectures, tattooed people have been displayed, othered and ultimately objectified in such a manner as to produce a set of meanings and tropes that are still used today in descriptions of colonised people. Beginning with the display of tattooed people who were brought to Europe by explorers to Asia and the Pacific, the public parade of tattooed ‘specimens’ from the colonies places the phenomenon of tattooing within a context of colonial expansion. Moreover, colonial representations of tattooed bodies were explicitly couched within a culture of exhibition, whereby the tattooed subject is objectified and rendered as spectacle. Both of these contexts are still perpetuated in contemporary society by the cultural discourse that surrounds the practice and presence of tattooing.

The ultimate purpose of this thesis is to explore in greater detail the processes by which tattooing - both as a practice and cultural presence - has entered the consciousness of the contemporary west. For the purposes of this thesis, tattooing refers only to the process of injecting ink under the dermis of the skin. Though it has been defined otherwise in other studies, I will follow William Sturtevant’s definition, as given in ‘A Short History of the Strange Custom of Tattooing’. He states, “Tattooing, properly speaking, refers to the introduction of pigment under the skin to produce a permanent or nearly permanent mark” (53). I find this definition to be useful because it clearly distinguishes the practice of tattooing proper from other forms of body modification such as scarification and branding that are sometimes referred to as ‘tattoos’. This definition also distinguishes tattooing from more temporary forms of body art and decoration such as henna ‘tattoos’ and body painting. In this thesis, I pay particular attention to the transgressive and invasive nature of the tattooing process itself, and the ways that this process has actually nuanced comprehensions of the transformative nature of tattoos and tattooing. In light of these issues, a proper regard for Sturtevant’s definition is called for.

Literary representations of tattooing – particularly ‘exotic’ tattooing - have been influenced and framed by the conventions surrounding performative exhibitions of tattooed bodies. In this thesis I argue that the integration of such processes into the west’s cultural consciousness has been inextricably linked to and influenced by colonialism and, explicitly, the closely associated history of objectifying and displaying physically, culturally and racially Other bodies. By examining the way that popular colonial texts acted as a space within which tattooing was ‘performed’ and ‘exhibited’ in alignment with ideological and generic conventions, I will argue for and expose the colonial history that tattoo, as we understand it today, emerged from and is necessarily contextualised by. I believe that the connection between colonialism and the presentation of tattooed bodies is significant because it has an impact on contemporary representation and understanding of tattoos, and has been informed by traditions of exhibition and display, hence my theoretical approach to the texts as carefully curated ‘displays’ of tattooed bodies. My contention is that *tattoo* as created by Cook, was utilised as a tool of colonial and expansionist ideologies throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. This utilisation was enabled by the representation of Indigenous tattooing in a number of popular texts, including those that are the subject of analysis in this thesis, which include a number of beachcomber and captivity narratives, Herman Melville’s early work, and contemporary textual exhibitions of tattooed bodies, including tourist paraphernalia. I argue that the tattoo’s involvement with colonial exploration influenced the way that it is perceived and deployed within these texts, and this in turn has influenced the way that Indigenous tattooing is represented in a contemporary context.

This approach occupies an obvious niche in existing tattoo scholarship, which has to date been primarily concerned with modern sociological readings of contemporary tattooing practice. Despite the connections between colonialism, the re-emergence of tattooing in the west and the history of the tattoo on display, a great deal of scholarship on the topic of tattoos does not address these links in any great detail, the notable exceptions being Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole and Bronwen Douglas’ anthology, Tattoo: Bodies, Art and Exchange in the Pacific and the West, and Juniper Ellis’ Tattooing the World: Pacific Designs in Print and Skin. Both of these texts provide an important contextualisation for my work, in that they draw attention to the colonial histories I have mentioned above, and Ellis’ book in particular approaches a number of texts, such as Melville’s early novels, which also appear in this thesis.

What my work brings to their foundational discourse, however, is the perspective of exhibition, and a consideration of the literature and other texts from the outlook provided by the fields of museum, tourism, exhibition and freak studies. To identify the colonial threads in the history of tattoo representation in the west is to embark upon an exploration of not only the roots of modern western tattooing, but also its context, and it is the spectacular, performative and exhibitionary context of the tattoo's display that is central to this thesis.

In addition to the scholarship identified above, most other work on tattooing has emerged from the schools of anthropology and cultural studies, with a large proportion of the latter being written from a 'participant observation' standpoint, regarding tattooing only from a western perspective. This approach often assumes that "A tattoo, while social, is of the person: a signature on one's skin" (Blanchard 14) – an outward expression of an intrinsic selfhood that is apparently ahistorical. This, and other sociological areas of tattoo scholarship, pioneered by scholars such as Nikki Sullivan (Tattooed Bodies: Subjectivity, Textuality, Ethics and Pleasure), Victoria Pitts (In the Flesh) and Margo DeMello (Bodies of Inscription: A Cultural History of the Modern Tattoo Community) share very few intersections with my own work, as it is very firmly grounded in a twentieth century, primarily western context. For this reason, most of the existing body of tattoo scholarship does not form a significant part of this thesis, and only informs my work to a limited extent. My concerns here – the *representation* of tattooing in colonial texts, and the establishment of a framework for reading the text as an exhibit – diverge from the existing work to such a degree that I do not consider my work to be comparable with it. Indeed, the limited intersections with the growing body of tattoo scholarship highlight the extent to which my work is not, in fact, about tattoos or tattooing. Rather, I consider my work to be an analysis of the relationship between representation and ideology, using the example of the exhibition of tattooed bodies within colonial texts. The example – the tattooed body – is essentially incidental, in that the general 'text-as-exhibition' framework could be applied theoretically to any artifact that is 'exhibited' within a text. With this said, however, I should also acknowledge the very deliberate and specific reasons that I have chosen the ostensibly 'random' example of tattoos and tattooing as the foci of this analysis. Central to this selection is the rich history of the tattooed body within exhibition and performance, and this history's intersection with colonialism. In addition to this, I find that the concept of the tattoo as a text within a text, or indeed, a text

within an exhibition, is intriguing, and deserves attention. My research in popular and academic literature has revealed that the connections between colonial and contemporary representations of tattooing are significantly under-addressed: this thesis goes some way towards filling this void as well as providing a theoretical framework that allows for a more sensitive reading of ideologically-driven representations of Otherness on a broader scale.

Although a growing number of authors, such as Thomas, Cole, Douglas and Ellis have approached the colonial connections of bodily trade and exhibition with regards to the Indigenously tattooed body, none have as yet approached this subject from the perspective of *textual* exhibition. In my analysis, I position texts as exhibitions in and of themselves, responsible for displaying the artifact – in the context of my thesis, the tattooed body – in terms that are tied to a specific ideological intention. This perspective provides an opportunity to consider the embedded and intertwined histories of literature and display that have simultaneously informed and shaped each other, as well as a globalised imagery of tattooed Others.

A textual analysis of tattooing is useful and valuable because tattoos are, and always have been, a text. They pre-date colonial contact, and in many cases, they represent the writing of a nation, and have played a key role in colonial interactions, treaties, and trade, especially in the Pacific, and in particular, Aotearoa New Zealand, where tattoos, along with other forms such as carving and weaving, acted as the literature and writing of the Maori people. Although the reclamation of this pre-contact literature marks a significant and potent reappraisal and postcolonial response to the experience of colonialism, the wearing of a tattoo is also a performance, a participation in a social language that is determined by context. This point underscores the crux of this thesis: literary texts provide a framework within which tattooed bodies are exhibited, as they perform the function of the exhibition space. A text is an exhibition and the author a curator, embedding his or her exhibit with social meaning that is necessarily linked to ideology. As Robert Rydell writes in World of Fairs, expositions or world's fairs were routinely organised in the United States and several countries throughout Europe “to build support for imperial policies at home and in their colonies” (61). Similarly, Anne Maxwell has argued that the images produced during the “age of high imperialism,” (1850-1915) - live displays of primitive people at exhibitions, and photos that formed part of

the beginnings of the international tourist industry – contributed to white hegemony by exposing the masses to “the spectacle of racial difference” (ix) and making “people of the white Anglo-Saxon nations feel mentally, physically and morally superior to the colonized” (2). The explicit link that Rydell and Maxwell identify between the mass entertainment of the fair and political and ideological propaganda is not dissimilar to the connections between popular literature, such as is discussed in this thesis, and colonial ideology.

Prior to European ‘discovery’ of the islands of the Pacific, the practice of tattooing in Europe had been all but forgotten. Jane Caplan’s Written on the Body, the most important tattoo history to have been published to date, provides a significant counter-argument to the commonly perpetuated misconception that tattooing was brought to Europe from the Pacific by Captain Cook. In fact, the practice of permanently marking the skin by injecting some kind of pigment had been practiced on the continent for centuries, the earliest-known tattooed person being Ötzi the ‘Ice Man’, found in the alps near the border of Austria and Italy in 1991. It is estimated that Ötzi died between 3300 and 3200BC, making him not only the oldest known tattooed specimen, but possibly the oldest known human mummy (Jones 2).

It is patently clear from Caplan’s anthology that Cook was not responsible for ‘discovering’ tattooing. What is interesting about Cook’s voyages to the Pacific and his published journals and accounts of these events, is that he helped *re-introduce* the practice and, significantly, introduced the term *tattoo* to the English language. As C.P. Jones and others have pointed out, Cook’s description of the practice of “tattowing” on Tahiti in 1769 is the first appearance of the word in English (Jones 1). By introducing the term within an explicit context of colonial expansion and exploration, Cook was responsible for embedding the European use of the term within the discourse of colonialism. Within this discourse, tattooing and, perhaps more significantly, tattooed people, took on a meaning that was far more complicated than just a suggestion that the individual in question had permanently marked skin. Though it was not immediate, and Cook was not single-handedly responsible for the meaning that was to emerge, ‘tattoo’ quite quickly came to denote primitivity, savagery and, more generally, Otherness. People in Europe had been injecting ink under their skin for various reasons for centuries – the practice in itself was nothing new. Cook’s invocation of a new term for the

practice, however, as well as a depiction of a different kind of people engaging in the practice – exotic, tawny savages – meant that the new terminology was loaded with racialised, exoticised, and necessarily imperialist overtones.

Perhaps more than his journals, which were not widely published until 1893, Cook's return to Europe, and the introduction to London society of his 'specimen', Omai was responsible for the rapid and broad dispersion of popular knowledge of tattooing. Moreover, their exhibition powerfully suggested the position of tattooed bodies as subjects/objects of a spectacular gaze. Omai was brought to London from Tahiti following Cook's Pacific voyage in 1774, and was immediately accepted by London society as the epitome of the 'Noble Savage'. Though Omai was not the first tattooed Pacific Islander to be exhibited in London¹, his connection to the celebrated explorer meant that he was immensely popular and drew unrivalled attention and acclaim. He was the subject of many and varied literary and artistic representations, including newspaper articles, plays, poems, a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds² and a falsified 'autobiography', *Narrations d'Omai*. In addition to these representations, ethnographic 'shows' about the South Pacific were popular in London at the time, 'promoting' the 'friendly' Pacific Islands as paradisaical (McCalman).

William Cummings notes how striking it is that Omai's tattoos "were seen as generalized signs of an 'otherness' supposedly common to the entire orient rather than specific to Tahiti or even Polynesia" (9). What Cummings identifies here is the kind of blanket primitivism that the display of tattooed people evoked, and which is a recurrent theme throughout this thesis. Tattooed bodies became interchangeable, and symbolic of a general 'idea' of the kinds of people who might be tattooed. Cummings believes that the exhibition and performance of tattooed people such as Omai and Lee Boo was significant because the corporeality of the

¹ Jeoly, from Meangis near Mindanao, in 1691, Aotourou from Tahiti, in 1769, Timoteitei from the Marquesas in 1799, and Te Pehi Cupe (known in England as Tupai Cupa), a chief from New Zealand in 1820 all visited and were displayed or exhibited in Europe and/or England (Fellowes). The most famous and influential of these early tattooed exhibits however, was Omai, who was brought to London from Tahiti by Captain Cook in 1774. In 1783, Lee Boo from Palau appeared in London. He received a similar reception, and was aggrandized and known as the "Black Prince" (Hezel 75), though he did not garner the same level of popularity as Omai, and, perhaps as a result of this, is not as iconic as his Tahitian counterpart.

² For a detailed analysis of Reynolds' portrait and Omai's reception in London in general, see Harriet Guest's 'Curiously Marked: Tattooing and Gender Difference in Eighteenth-century British Perceptions of the South Pacific'.

displayed individual both gave credence to, and stood independently from, the textual representations that were concurrently popular. The Pacific Islanders' bodies perpetuated images, and perhaps more importantly, ideas, about tattooing within an expansionist context, and in so doing, inhabited the intersection between exhibition and textual representation.

Following the success of Omai in London came a series of ethnographic displays, which continued throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century and provided the stylistic foundation for the exhibitions of Indigenous people in world's fairs, dime museums, circuses and sideshows that perpetuated the situation of the tattoo as an object of spectacle. These exhibitions and displays accounted for much of the general public's exposure to tattooing, and the material that accompanied the exhibition of the tattooed individual – usually in the form of written pamphlets or spoken 'lectures' – created an aura of exotic Otherness that perpetuated the perception of tattooing as a liminal practice. These texts, I argue, were as much an exhibition of the tattooed body as the physical displays themselves, and several exhibitionary tropes were translated from physical displays and performances to their textual accompaniments. In the cases of the beachcomber and captivity narratives addressed in Chapters Two and Three, the narrative acted both as an accompaniment to the exhibition, and as an exhibition in its own right. The authors of these texts engage explicitly with the conventions seen in exhibitions of exoticised Others in a number of performative modes, most notably those related to the ethnographic displays mentioned above, which in turn influenced exhibitions in the nineteenth century's world's fairs, circus, sideshow and museum displays.

In time, such representative methods and structures have influenced the ways that racial and cultural Others are represented in tourism advertising and souvenirs, an industry which is deeply indebted to the kinds of cultural tourism that the world's fairs, exhibitions and circuses popularised. Also as a result of such traditions, all of the primary texts that I examine in this thesis contain a certain degree of ethnographic posturing. That is, they all offer some kind of (at times quasi-scientific) insight into the lives of 'primitive' people. The ethnographic side-notes that are present in these texts can be likened to and aligned with the announcements and pamphlets that accompanied many exhibits of tattooed people. In her analysis of colonial photography and exhibitions, Anne Maxwell suggests that the pseudo-scientific aspects of

display and arrangement allow the exhibited people and cultures to become ‘knowable’. In effect, they create what Svetlana Alpers has identified as “the museum effect”: “the tendency to isolate something from its world, to offer it up for attentive looking and thus to transform it” (27). Ultimately, this effect allows an adjustment of perception and the imposition of a value system that did not previously operate around the exhibited object. The exhibition of cultural artifacts, extracted and decontextualised, turns them into objects of spectacle. To extract people from their context, to display them (and their cultural effects such as clothing, implements and tattoos) as artifacts or specimens not only objectifies them, but also sets them up within the metonymic capacity that Cummings identifies. In postcolonial societies such as Aotearoa New Zealand, traditions of human display which have both centred around and in turn informed a spectacularisation of tattoos and tattooing, have profoundly affected the ways in which contemporary tattooing practices are exhibited, both within literature and in more traditional performative formats.

My textual selection reflects this thesis’ methodological approach, which lies at the intersections of literary history, literary criticism, cultural studies and historical interrogation. The texts discussed in this thesis have been chosen for three primary reasons. Firstly, each text contains a detectable ideological objective. This objective is at times explicit, and at other times it is implicit, and is of interest to me as it is reflective of the objective of exhibition, freak-show and museum curators, whose ideological position, and the ideology of the time, invariably influenced their curatorial style and technique. The texts’ colonial contexts, moreover, are foregrounded by such an approach, reiterating the extent to which literature operated as important colonial propaganda. Secondly, the treatment of the tattooed body, whether Indigenous or white, follows a markedly similar pattern to the display of tattooed bodies in the world’s fairs and exhibitions discussed in Rydell’s and Maxwell’s work. In some cases, the texts were accompanied and/or promoted by a corporeal display of tattooed Otherness, and this display served to nuance and highlight the narrative subject’s position as an object of spectacle. The third, and perhaps overriding reason behind the selection of the texts is their popularity and influence. Each text has been widely dispersed and read/consumed by a broad audience. Many of the literary texts were best-sellers, and, like the extremely popular exhibitions of Omai in London, played an essential role in the distribution

of imagery and information about tattooing and tattooed people, which undeniably influenced generations of perceptions.

Chapter One provides an introduction to the various modes of display, following on from the exhibitions of Omai and Lee Boo, which inform the curatorial techniques employed by the authors of the texts discussed. I identify a traceable lineage, running through the world's fairs and exhibitions, to the circus side- and freak-show, through the texts discussed in this thesis, and on to contemporary literature and tourist souvenirs, which creates, manages and perpetuates a specific tradition of spectacularly Othering the tattooed body. In this chapter I also address a number of 'narratives of enfreakment' which were utilised by tattooed performers to enhance their performance. These narratives, I argue, contributed to processes of Othering by perpetuating the kinds of stereotypical imagery of colonised people that was popularised by earlier modes of display.

Chapter Two follows from these themes with a discussion of James O'Connell, George Vason, Edward Robarts, Horace Holden and John Rutherford's nineteenth-century beachcomber narratives. Their attitude towards the practice of tattooing, and their descriptions of its effects, are reflective of the influence of the traditions of display discussed in Chapter One. Beachcomber narratives were often the first texts to represent the newly-discovered Pacific Islands to the Euro-American reading public, and the subjects of the narratives – those men who had crossed the boundaries of civilisation and lived, sometimes for many years, amongst 'savages' – capitalised on the public's demand for stories of adventure in barbaric, far-off lands. The lack of contextualising literature meant that these narratives were extremely influential in the perpetuation of certain types of imagery surrounding the distant Pacific and its 'primitive', often tattooed inhabitants.

Each beachcomber narrative discussed in this chapter engages extensively with representations of tattooing and tattooed people. More significantly, however, each beachcomber whose narrative I discuss, was tattooed. Often, upon their return to Europe and/or America (many of them were exhibited on both continents) these men performed their transgressive identity by displaying their tattooed bodies in circuses, sideshows and museums. In these cases, their narratives became narratives of enfreakment, enhancing,

contextualising, and supporting their performances. The beachcombers' spectacularised display – the origin of the immensely popular 'tattooed man' – perpetuated the notion of tattooed bodies as objects of display. More than this, however, the exhibition of Indigenously tattooed white bodies, and the accompanying narratives, which almost invariably framed the tattooing process as a form of torture, entrenched notions of tattooing as a transformative process, which was ultimately perceived as threatening to terms of identity definition.

These threats are quite literally embodied by Olive Oatman, the subject of Chapter Three, whose story brings the process of tattooing into the context of the popular genre of North American captivity narratives. Oatman's narrative was most widely dispersed in the form of a bestselling book, *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* (1857). A significant accompaniment to the book was a lecture tour that spanned the United States, which saw Oatman lecturing on the topic of her captivity, and Reverend Stratton, the editor of her narrative, lecturing on "the present Condition, Traits, Customs and Prospects of the Numerous Tribes on the Pacific Slope, their Antecedents, &c. And the True Position our People and Government should assume towards them" ("Lo! The Indian Captive!" [Broadsheet]). Stratton's presence alongside Oatman's appearance essentially positions both Oatman and her narrative within the broader objective of his anti-Indian stance, and crystallises his use of the narrative for his own agenda. The quasi-scientific/anthropological theme of Stratton's talk lends itself to a comparison with the role of the curator in museum displays. Indeed, Stratton has the same task in 'presenting' Oatman in her narrative that the museum curator has when exhibiting a cultural artifact, and in this chapter I argue that, like the curator of a museum or exhibition, Stratton chose how he wanted Oatman displayed and, to a certain extent through his accompaniment, he chose how she was received. In 'Locating Authenticity' Spencer Crew and James Sims highlight that there is an element of authority in exhibition, especially when accompanied by a brochure or lecture that may affect the 'voice' of the exhibition. Stratton 'created' and essentially 'curated' the travelling exhibition of Olive Oatman, as well as editing her experiences within the text. The authenticity of what Oatman divulges in her own lecture is therefore compromised, as it is mediated by Stratton.

In addition to Stratton's version of the narrative, I also address a number of previously unaddressed texts including personal journals, letters, newspaper accounts and, finally, a

contemporary teen fiction version of the story. In addressing these differing versions of the story, I highlight the power of the curator, by pointing out that a single artifact, in this case, the narrative of a captivity on the North American frontier, can be curated differently depending on the intentions of the author/curator. In turn, this leads to a discussion of the way that authority is created, both in literary texts, and in exhibitions. As Crew and Sims note, “Authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects [in the context of this thesis read ‘tattoos’] have no authority; people do. It is people on the exhibition team who must make a judgement about how to tell about the past.” (163).

This judgement is essentially the same as is made by the authors and/or editors of the texts I have chosen to discuss in this thesis, and in Chapter Four I approach Herman Melville’s first major works, Typee (1846) and Omoo (1847), with this in mind. These texts, I argue, present a literary exhibition of tattooed Otherness that engages with tropes, imagery and stereotypes that were developed in the exhibitionary formats following from Omai’s display in London, including the displays and performances of tattooed beachcombers, and on to the World’s Fairs. Yet, unlike these exhibitionary formats, Melville’s texts do not actually engage with an exhibition or display of tattooed corporeal Otherness. Typee and Omoo indicate that exhibitions of racial and cultural Otherness, as signified by the presence and practice of tattooing, became popular in purely literary displays, and no longer interacted with, promoted, or responded to physical exhibitions of Otherness: the literary texts became, in themselves, exhibitionary. A number of factors have influenced the decision to include Melville’s texts here. Not least of all is the undeniable influence his work has had over popular perceptions of the Pacific and Pacific Islander people. As Lyons has pointed out, “no U.S. writer has been more influential than Melville in reflecting and (re)establishing the basic patterns through which Oceania came to be perceived” (American Pacificism 40-41). Additionally, Melville, particularly in Typee and Omoo, draws quite heavily from, and engages with, the traditions of the captivity and beachcomber narratives already discussed in earlier chapters. Essentially, he perpetuates the conventions established by these genres, and blends them with the genre of travel writing, thereby entrenching an image of the spectacular, tattooed Other within perceptions of travel and tourism *in general*.

This blend has profoundly influenced contemporary representations of tattooed bodies, and in the final chapter, I address these legacies as they are reflected in a number of postcolonial Maori texts, and consider ways that images of tattooing and tattooed people have been repossessed and re-appropriated by Indigenous authors and artists in order to both respond to and realign the previous representations. In addition to this consideration, the final chapter also offers an assessment of Aotearoa New Zealand's tourism industry, and its associated proliferation of Maori imagery. Given that cultural tourism is a direct descendant of the world's fairs' ethnographic displays, it is no surprise that a number of similarities are identifiable, which reinforce Otherness via processes of display that find their foundation in binary opposition and stereotypes. This imagery, I suggest, is answerable to the legacies of colonially determined representations, and is certainly, in some cases, constrained by the traditions of display that I have discussed throughout the thesis. Ultimately, I argue that contemporary reclamation of Indigenous tattooing practices and symbolism is dependent upon a recognition of the ways that contemporary perceptions of tattooing, tattoos, and tattooed people have been influenced, and in some way dictated, by the history of ideologically-driven displays of tattooed people.