As we have seen in the previous chapter, missionary opposition to indigenous performance forms could be implacable and was very often efficacious. The first missionary in Hawai‘i, the American Congregationalist Hiram Bingham, opposed hula in all its forms and with the help of the powerful queen regent Ka‘ahumanu managed to ban all public performances in 1830. Despite such opposition hula did not disappear, but continued to be practised covertly and eventually overtly after Ka‘ahumanu’s death in 1832. By this time, however, Hawai‘i was being gradually Christianized so that the religious aspects of the performance form became obsolete. Rather than withering away or fossilizing into touristic folklore hula returned with a vengeance in the second half of the nineteenth century, where it came to occupy important cultural and political functions that continue until the present day. Every year, the foremost hula troupes of the various islands compete for prizes in a variety of disciplines, traditional and modern, in the Merrie Monarch Festival, a cultural event of considerable magnitude.

In New Zealand, Maori performance forms underwent similar processes of transformation. The famous haka, an intimidating dance involving chanting, foot-stamping and aggressive gesturing, traditionally preceded and in some cases surrogated actual hostilities. The first explorers to reach New Zealand were continually greeted by hakas, both as preludes to attacks and in the context of peaceful ceremonies. By the late nineteenth century, the haka had become synonymous with European perceptions of the Maori as a belligerent Polynesian people. Today the haka represents not just the Maori people, but also on occasions bicultural New Zealand when it is performed as a prelude to All Black rugby games.

In this chapter I shall explore what could perhaps be termed the roots of these new performance phenomena. They can be seen as parallel developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Against a
background of growing colonialist domination both cultures resorted to a revitalization and redefinition of their performance traditions. In Hawai‘i the hula revival dating from the late 1870s, and in New Zealand the new idea of cultural performance festivals after 1900, resulted in a significant recoding of performance forms. ‘Traditional’ Hawaiian or Maori performance forms can in fact be located at a particular point in time, a moment of historical crisis, where the remedial strategies were performative as much as political, or indeed where the two merge.

**Performative metonymy**

Representation in the colonial context is anything but ‘neutral’. On the contrary, in the conjunction ‘colonial representation’ it belongs to the most maligned and at the same time extensive and therefore ill-defined of concepts. The writings of Homi Bhabha and Edward Said, which can be subsumed under the heading ‘colonial discourse analysis’, have identified a set of discursive practices and reading strategies that have now solidified into established critical practice. This field of interdisciplinary research is intrinsically open to all textual genres as Peter Hulme noted already in the 1980s:

> Underlying the idea of colonial discourse, in other words, is the assumption that during the colonial period large parts of the non-European world were *produced* for Europe through a discourse that imbricated sets of questions and assumptions, methods of procedure and analysis, and kinds of writing and imagery normally separated out into the discrete areas of military strategy, political order, social reform, imaginative literature, personal memoir and so on.¹

Colonial discourse becomes in this Foucauldian (or Saidian) reading a kind of meta-perspective by means of which hitherto separate domains of knowledge and action are reorganized into an interconnected field. Whether scholars follow Edward Said’s technique of ‘contrapuntal reading’ or Bhabha’s deconstructive analyses of the ‘colonial unconscious’, their frame is, however, almost exclusively textual, only occasionally iconographic and almost never performative. Colonialism, however, acted on bodies more directly than it did on texts, and bodies responded to these impositions more often in performance than they did in writing.

Self- or imposed representation by corporeal means in a colonial situation leads to a form of theatricality that can be defined as metonymic representation, understood here in the sense of synecdoche, where a part stands for the whole. The implications of metonymic representation have been much discussed in recent years.² What I wish to investigate, in particular, is the situation where performance gradually becomes almost synonymous with