

Where To From Here?

REFLECTIONS ON THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEW ZEALAND¹

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY of New Zealand in the nineteenth century has long been anchored in two paradigms;² Edward Gibbon Wakefield is best associated with the first and William Pember Reeves with the second. Sidney Baker noted the first paradigm when he crossed the Tasman in the late 1930s to investigate the origins of Australian English. The “more English than the English” cliché . . . has become a sort of tradition with New Zealanders, inherited in some vague fashion from their past, coloured by sentiment and time, accepted by rote’.³ The paradigm rested on a complex set of assumptions about civilization, progress, and the success of the New Zealand Company in recruiting ‘superior stock’ and creating civilization in a wilderness. As Baker then remarked, the theme resounds in *New Zealand*, published in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1933), to which several of this country’s first generation of professionally-trained historians contributed. These men, who came of age in the 1920s, devoted much of their scholarly energy to New Zealand’s English-ness and the on-going significance of the Empire. J.C. Beaglehole devoted much of his life to Cook; A.J. Harrop to Wakefield, the New Zealand Company, and the relationship between England and New Zealand; W.P. Morrell to the annexation and development of New Zealand within the context of changing imperial policy.⁴ A.H. McLintock, who belonged to the same generation but went to London for post-graduate study a decade later, worked within the same para-

1 An earlier version of this paper was given to the New Zealand Historical Association’s Conference in Christchurch, May 1991. I am grateful to the organizers for the invitation and to Jock Phillips, Judith Binney and Keith Sorrenson for their critical comments.

2 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed., Chicago, 1970. I use paradigm to mean ‘an apparently permanent solution to a group of outstanding problems’ (p.44), but not to suggest that it prevented people from conceiving of any other solutions or approaches.

3 *New Zealand Slang A Dictionary of Colloquialisms*, Wellington, 1940, p.1.

4 The last two contributed to James Hight (adviser), *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. VII, Pt. 2, *New Zealand*, Cambridge, 1933. See also Beaglehole, *Captain Hobson and the New Zealand Company: A Study in Colonial Administration*, Northampton, 1928 and *New Zealand. A Short History*, London, 1936; Harrop, *England and New Zealand from Tasman to the Taranaki War*, London, 1926 and *The Amazing Career of Edward Gibbon Wakefield*, London, 1928; and Morrell, *British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell*, Oxford, 1930, *The Provincial System in New Zealand*, London, 1932, *New Zealand*, London, 1935, and *British Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age: South Africa, New Zealand, West Indies*, Oxford, 1969.

digm. In *Crown Colony Government*, and he spoke for his generation, McLintock took for granted that New Zealand was blessed to be British and showed how the democratic, practical and high-minded settlers compelled the Crown to modify the excessive 'idealism' of its native policy and finally concede self-government.⁵ English-ness, for these men and their mentors, inhered in the rule of law, our political institutions, and our constitutional arrangements.⁶

That generation of historians concentrated on the 1840s and 50s and by and large they sided with the settlers against the Crown although, to varying degrees, their sympathy for the Maori tempered their enthusiasm for the settlers' cause. Although they disagreed about some matters of detail and emphasis all of these men, like almost everybody else within the Empire, saw colonization as inevitable and, if British, benign.⁷ This generation's experience of two world wars, the depression, and post-graduate study in London or Oxbridge created a fundamental consensus. Besides, they felt self-consciously provincial and even inferior, unsure what it meant to be New Zealanders or whether the concept had any meaning, and rather embarrassed by New Zealand's 'rather scrubby vulgarity, the third-rateness, the complacency'.⁸ British-born historians who took up chairs here, such as J.R. Elder and James Rutherford, felt quite comfortable working within a paradigm which stressed the centrality of New Zealand's English-ness.⁹ English, in this sense, meant culture and civilization, an antidote to colonial vulgarity and crudeness. Morrell, who later wrote the first history of New Zealand as a nation, attached considerable weight to the role of Wakefield and the New Zealand Company in making New Zealand 'more English than England'. So did Beaglehole although his 'brilliantly savage short history',

5 *Crown Colony Government in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1958. The same theme dominated his earlier works, *The Establishment of Constitutional Government in Newfoundland, 1783-1832: A Study in Retarded Colonisation*, London, 1941 and *The History of Otago: The Origins and Growth of a Wakefield Class Settlement*, Dunedin, 1949.

6 Sir James Hight was perhaps the most important mentor and his major scholarly work, written with H.D. Bamford, was *The Constitutional History and Law of New Zealand*, Christchurch, Wellington etc., [1914].

7 The key historiographical issues were: should Auckland have been the capital; the 'idealism' of official policy and the role of London 'theorists'; the practicality of 'moral suasion'; and the success of Grey's policies etc; e.g. Beaglehole, *Captain Hobson and the New Zealand Company*; McLintock, *Crown Colony*. In 1969, by which time anti-imperialism was in vogue, Morrell tersely spelt out his faith in colonization as an historical process; see *Colonial Policy in the Mid-Victorian Age*, p.241.

8 J.C. Beaglehole, 'The New Zealand Scholar', Margaret Condliffe Memorial Lecture, Canterbury University College, 21 April 1954, republished in Peter Munz, ed., *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969, p.243. He had, however, felt homesick in Britain; see T. H. Beaglehole, "'Home'?" J.C. Beaglehole in London, 1926-1929', *Alexander Turnbull Library Record*, XIV (October 1981), pp.69-82.

9 Elder's major scholarly works, profoundly flawed though they are, looked at the Church Missionary Society and its missionaries as the key to New Zealand's British-ness; see his edition of *The Letters and Journals of Samuel Marsden*, Dunedin, 1932, and *Marsden's Lieutenants*, Dunedin, 1934. Rutherford did some innovative work on the 'contact period' but his major scholarly work was also concerned to explain the establishment of British rule; *Hone Heke's Rebellion: An Episode in the Establishment of British Rule in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1946, *The Treaty of Waitangi and the Acquisition of British Sovereignty in New Zealand*, 1940, Auckland, 1949, and *Sir George Grey, KCB, 1812-1898: A Study in Colonial Government*, London, 1961.

published one year after Morrell's, mocked the country's mediocrity, its failure to be English enough.¹⁰ Even as recently as 1959 Philip Curtin, in a wide-ranging review essay, contrasted the way in which Australians and New Zealanders handled the issue of nationalism, pointing out that 'In Australia it was the image of material welfare, fair shares, and a nearly classless society. In New Zealand it was that of a newer and better England in the southern seas, leading a charmed life far from the ills of the Old World.'¹¹

Curtin also claimed that the Maori wars (as they were then known), had been forgotten or 'covered over by pride in a later and more successful "native policy"'. While this view was true of official and popular views it did less than justice to the handful of professional historians who had dealt with the period 1840-70 let alone the thrust of thesis research being undertaken by young students such as Keith Sorrenson.¹² Although Harrop and McLintock were notably more sympathetic to the settlers than Morrell, even they tried to be even-handed in dealing with such events as the Wairau 'affray' or land purchasing. For others, the Maori often served as a dramatic foil who highlighted the vulgarity and materialism of the colonists. Yet the first generation had undoubtedly been Eurocentric and confident that they understood the meaning of civilization. They still believed, as the colonists had in the nineteenth century, that the arrival of organized settlement confronted the Maori with a choice between savagery and civilization. By the 1920s Te Rauparaha, the subject of more biographies than any other New Zealander,¹³ often personified savagery while the Young Maori Party personified the triumph of civilization. Historians still operated within the beliefs and assumptions of their nineteenth-century ancestors. As Curtin said, however, the handful of general histories tended to ignore the Maori after 1870.¹⁴

Even as Curtin wrote another generation had begun debunking the 'more English than England' paradigm and turning, in Beaglehole's words, to study New Zealand for its own sake.¹⁵ Beaglehole himself, of course, continued to work on Cook.¹⁶ By and large, however, those who studied New Zealand for its

10 The quotation is from J.O.C. Phillips, 'Of Verandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 24 (October 1990), p.124.

11 British Empire, Commonwealth Historiography', *American Historical Review*, 65 (October 1959), p.80.

12 For the most popular history see A.H. Reed, *The Story of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1945. Reed's book went through nine editions before 1960. Sorrenson's thesis was entitled, 'The Purchase of Maori Lands, 1865-1892', MA, University of Auckland, 1955.

13 The most recent being Patricia Burns, *Te Rauparaha, a New Perspective*, Wellington, 1980.

14 e.g. Morrell, *New Zealand* and Beaglehole, *New Zealand*. It is only fair to note that as the Maori shrank as a proportion of the total population — and they were only 5% by 1901 — it became increasingly difficult to solve this problem.

15 'The New Zealand Scholar', pp.237-54. As Jock Phillips has pointed out, however, it was a rather ambivalent declaration of intellectual independence which stressed New Zealand's provincial status and concluded that 'To be grouped too exclusively round the parish pump would be stultifying — indeed, disastrous' (p.251).

16 Jock Phillips later made the provocative claim that because he devoted his life to Cook, Beaglehole could not be considered an historian of New Zealand; *New Zealand Listener*, 19 April 1975, and for a more charitable view, 'Of Verandahs and Fish and Chips . . .', NZJH, 24 (October 1990), pp.124-5.

own sake worked within another paradigm first elaborated in 1898, and elaborated with great skill, by William Pember Reeves.¹⁷ That paradigm absorbed certain elements from 'the more English than the English' but stressed the importance of the Maori, the frontier, the wars of the 1860s, and the gold rushes in emancipating the country's British colonists from Old World traditions so as to create an adventurous and democratic society which, in pioneering bold new reforms, had become 'the world's social laboratory'. Four years later Reeves published his monumental proof, *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*.¹⁸ In the 30 years following the appearance of Reeves's books two journalists, Lindsay Buick and James Cowan, spelt out more fully the idea that New Zealand had become a harmonious bi-racial society, further evidence of our democratic and adventurous pioneering.¹⁹ Many historians who came of age before the Second World War managed to hold the two paradigms together, usually by seeing the evolution of the social laboratory and harmonious race relations as evidence of our racial energy and intelligence, our success in perfecting British traditions, and even of an imperial destiny in the Pacific.²⁰

Thus, implicitly, the generation which came of age in the 1920s posed a familiar issue in a new form; they all conceptualized New Zealand's emergent nationality in evolutionary terms, but whereas some stressed the importance of the British heritage, sometimes invoked by metaphors of racial character, others placed more emphasis on the environment and the process of natural selection. Reeves's clever use of the metaphor of pioneering held these two paradigms together. Only J.B. Condliffe of the 1920s generation, an economic historian, focussed mainly on what had happened here. In the inter-war period, however, his belief in the soundness and vigour of the 'systematic colonisers' linked British-ness to social laboratory (he thought poorly of the 1870s immigrants). His classic, *The Making of New Zealand*, ends with 'The Triumph of the Freehold', the family farm, and economic democracy.²¹ For all of that generation, of course, democracy was a passionate commitment, still in danger, and a commitment which unobtrusively asserted New Zealand's British heritage and the importance of civilized values. As the years passed others of that generation assigned more weight to the role of indigenous 'factors' in fashioning a distinctive society.

17 *The Long White Cloud: Ao Tea Roa*, London, 1898 (there have been four subsequent editions and many reprints).

18 2 vols, London, 1902 (also reprinted several times).

19 Both men published extensively on aspects in the history of race relations but their most scholarly works were Buick, *The Treaty of Waitangi or How New Zealand Became a British Colony*, Wellington, 1914, and Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars: a History of the Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period*, 2 vols, Wellington, 1922.

20 See James Macmillan Brown, 'Epilogue', *Cambridge History of New Zealand*, pp.255-7. Angus Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific*, Oxford, 1964, has written a thorough history of this unlikely dream. His ancestral origins in Scotland and Ireland may not be entirely coincidental, for many Scots and Irish immigrants and their children rejected the 'more English than England' paradigm even if they took pride in being British.

21 Sub-titled *A Study of Social and Economic Development*, London, 1930.

I

In 1959, even as Curtin wrote, new voices offered an oblique challenge to the great Fabian's ethnocentric British-ness if not his progressive-evolutionary assumptions. In 1957 Keith Sinclair's *Origins of the Maori Wars*, which drew heavily on nineteenth-century critics of government policy, probed the limitations of Victorian humanitarianism and questioned the moral rectitude of the settlers.²² In 1958 E.J. Tapp, building on Robert McNab's work, tried to shift the focus from Britain in *Early New Zealand: A Dependency of New South Wales 1788-1841*.²³ Sinclair's book had more influence than Tapp's. Waitara became synonymous with the 'Maori Wars' and settler greed for land was presented as the main cause of those wars.²⁴ Then John Miller and Michael Turnbull destroyed the reputation of the New Zealand Company and its presiding genius, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, while exposing settler greed.²⁵ David Herron next cast a baleful eye over the founding immigrants and proceeded to deflate their high regard for themselves.²⁶ Even two provincial histories called in question the New Zealand Company's success in realizing its ideas.²⁷ In 1959 Sinclair's brilliant essay, *A History of New Zealand*, explained New Zealand's developing nationality in terms of the Pacific environment and what had happened in New Zealand. With great flair he also dethroned the view of the previous generation, all of them citizens of New Zealand Company settlements, by making the wars and race relations central. Whalers and sealers, Wakefield and the New Zealand Company, the gold-rushes, and the runholders — those staples of South Island historians and histories — were dismissed from centre stage and some of these topics barely rated a mention.²⁸ Even W.H. Oliver's elegant *Story of New Zealand*, published in 1960, while stressing the English heritage rather than the Pacific environment, acknowledged that the imported heritage had bequeathed us all a legacy of problems, especially in the area of race relations.²⁹

22 In a useful critique of an earlier draft of this paper Keith Sorrenson remarked that 'much of Sinclair's interpretation . . . comes from the critics of Gore Browne over Waitara — Hadfield, Martin, Gorst, Rusden — and filtered through Reeves, for whom Waitara was a blunder worse than a crime'.

23 Melbourne, 1958, and McNab, *Historical Records of New Zealand*, 2 vols, Wellington, 1908, 1914.

24 B.J. Dalton, *War and Politics in New Zealand, 1855-1870*, Sydney, 1967, later argued that the Waikato campaign was more significant but his book failed to supplant Sinclair's.

25 Miller, *Early Victorian New Zealand: A Study of Racial Tension and Social Attitudes*, London, 1958, and Turnbull, *The New Zealand Bubble: The Wakefield Theory in Practice*, Wellington, 1959. Their argument has been repeated by Patricia Burns, *Fatal Success: A History of the New Zealand Company*, Auckland, 1989.

26 Herron, 'Alsatia or Utopia? New Zealand Society and Politics in the Eighteen-fifties', *Landfall*, 13 (1959), pp.324-41. Eric McCormick had anticipated the trend in 'The Happy Colony', *Landfall*, 9 (1955), pp.300-34.

27 McLintock, *Otago*, 1949, and, more muted in its criticism, Sir James Hight and C.R. Straubel (eds), *A History of Canterbury*, Vol. I: To 1854, Christchurch, 1957. Ruth Allan, *Nelson: A History of Early Settlement*, Wellington, 1965, also adopted a critical stance.

28 Sinclair provided a brief summary of his own historiographical achievement in the opening pages to his essay 'New Zealand', in Robin Winks (ed.), *The Historiography of the British Empire-Commonwealth v. Trends, Interpretations, Resources*, Durham, 1966, pp.174-96.

29 I am indebted here to Keith Pickens, 'The Writing of New Zealand History: A Kuhnian Perspective', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, 17 (1977), pp.384-98.

Oliver's reflective tone reminded one of whisky and tobacco; Sinclair's tone was that of the impatient boxer. Both were working-class boys, Oliver from Feilding and Sinclair from Point Chevalier. Oliver's PhD had been on Robert Owen but that project had become a study of English millenarian movements; Sinclair did a lot of research in England but took his PhD in New Zealand on the Maori wars. Oliver enjoyed ideas; Sinclair scrutinized them. Oliver had that widespread English dislike for archival sources but enjoyed reflecting on significances; Sinclair liked few things better than a day in the archives finding out what really happened, why it happened, and how it happened.³⁰ We can delight in our good fortune that New Zealand's history attracted two men of such distinctive and different talents yet recognize that both assumed that the New Zealand nation constituted the natural framework and organizing principle for historical research. The exhaustion and disintegration of the British Empire provided the backdrop to this narrowing of focus although older historians, such as Beaglehole, still insisted that New Zealand was but a province. The belief that a nation could be understood in terms of its own internal developments had complex roots but had been fashionable among historians elsewhere for a long time.³¹ The new belief quickly became the new orthodoxy. The idea that the provinces had distinctively different histories — the organizing principle for McLintock's *Otago* — disappeared and the attempt to write histories of Wellington and Auckland aborted.³²

Although the two new general histories enjoyed great influence we should not forget that others had prepared the way. James Rutherford and Willis Airey at Auckland, and Beaglehole at Victoria inspired and encouraged a lot of research in the 1940s and 1950s. However, many, after writing a Master's thesis on a New Zealand topic, went abroad for post-graduate study and specialized in the history of another society.³³ Beaglehole's so-called 'kindergarten' of gifted women — Mary Boyd, Ruth Ross, Frances Porter, Nancy Taylor and Janet Paul — worked for the Centennial Branch and continued to write history.³⁴ Others, notably Angus

30 For Oliver's generous assessment of Sinclair see 'A Destiny at Home', NZJH, 21 (April 1987), pp.9-15.

31 Two assumptions, both derived from nineteenth-century biology, shaped the approach; first, that the nation constitutes an 'organism' or possesses an 'organic unity' and that it develops according to its own internal laws. See Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Science*, London, 1970 (first published in French, of course, in 1966), pp.134-44 and 252-3.

32 Professional historians in both cities had accepted the need for such works and employed young scholars in the 1950s, and even in the early 1960s, on projects.

33 Some, like Trevor Wilson and Richard Shannon, did not return to New Zealand at all, although they retained an interest in New Zealand history. Others, like Sorrenson, became distinguished scholars in another field, in his case African history, but returned home and, in time, became fully engaged in research into New Zealand history. For a brief assessment of Airey's general influence see Robert Chapman and Keith Sinclair (eds), 'Willis Thomas Goodwin Airey', *Studies of a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Auckland, 1963, pp.1-9.

34 Three wrote MA theses on Maori topics and Porter wrote on Chinese immigration before working for the Branch. For Beaglehole's recollections of the Branch see 'New Zealand Scholar', pp. 245-7. The Centennial Branch became the War History Branch which, in turn, became the Historical Branch of Internal Affairs. See A.G. Bagnall, 'Ruth Miriam Ross, 1920-1982', *Alexander Turnbull Library Record*, XVI (May 1983), pp.54-61.

Ross and Neville Phillips, having served in the War, devoted themselves to war histories. History itself, one might remark, scattered the efforts of the generation which came of age in the 1930s and early 1940s but many projects, conceived then, came to fruition over the next thirty years.³⁶

The short histories by Sinclair and Oliver helped to legitimize New Zealand history; Sinclair removed it from its imperial context, and provided a framework for more narrowly conceived research. Because of this new belief that New Zealand could be explained in terms of what happened here both Sinclair and Oliver recognized, in Sinclair's words, that New Zealand needed 'a generation of pedants' to write history. So much was unknown; so many sources un-used. We who belong to the 'generation of pedants' know what happened next. At the University of Auckland Sinclair, who became Professor in 1963, ran an honours seminar on New Zealand history and students wrote theses on the missionaries, settler society, politics in Auckland, and the rise and fall of the New Zealand Liberals.³⁷ When Oliver took up the chair at Massey in 1964, armed with a belief that the provinces (not the cities) would provide the key to understanding New Zealand's society and history, he too attracted students anxious to undertake research, much of it focused on a reinterpretation of the Liberals and social policy in that period. He also encouraged work on the new subject of women's history. Only Angus Ross's research seminar at Otago was comparably productive, but it dealt with New Zealand and the Pacific. For someone of Ross's generation, of course, the development of New Zealand foreign policy was integral to nationhood.³⁸

Where the generation of the 1920s concentrated on New Zealand's Britishness and exalted the founding fathers, even where they had failed to exalt each other, the generation of the 1950s attacked the 'more English than English' paradigm. Scholars of both generations continued to publish in the 1950s and 1960s but the new consensus — that the nation was the natural focus for historical inquiry and that it could be understood in terms of its own history — became dominant.³⁹ The next thrust of research ignored the imperial context, focused on developments in New Zealand, and turned to the Liberal period.

35 Some 48 volumes were published under Editor-in-Chief Sir Howard Kippenberger as the *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945*.

36 The latest, of course, appeared recently; Nancy Taylor, *The Home Front*, 2 vols, Wellington, 1986, and Frances Porter, *Born to New Zealand: A Biography of Jane Maria Atkinson*, Wellington, 1989.

37 He cited some of these theses in 'The Significance of "The Scarecrow Ministry", 1887-1891', in Chapman and Sinclair (eds), *Studies of a Small Democracy*, p.265, n.4.

38 Ross was working on *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, 1964. W.P. Morrell, the Professor at Otago, was also working on his major study of *Britain in the Pacific Islands*, Oxford, 1960, throughout this period, although he and D.O.W. Hall wrote *A History of New Zealand Life*, Christchurch, 1962.

39 One might have expected dissent from Marxists but there were none in History Departments and even so they accepted the same assumptions, if for radically different reasons; e.g. W.B. Sutch, *Colony or Nation? Economic Crises in New Zealand from the 1860s to the 1960s*, Sydney, 1966. For a discussion of left-wing nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s see Rachel Barrowman, *A Popular Vision: The Arts and the Left in New Zealand 1930-1950*, Wellington, 1991.

Annexation and settlement were largely ignored.⁴⁰ The justification for this shift in focus now seems both clear and implausible, at least to some degree, for historians assumed not only that our history could be understood in terms of what had happened here but that the Liberals held the key to New Zealand's character and history. It is probably no coincidence that a revised edition of Condliffe's *Making of New Zealand*, stripped of some unlovely early views on the immigrants of the 1870s, appeared in 1959. The new view, of course, echoed the Reevesian view, which countless contemporary commentators had endorsed, that the key to our history and identity was to be found in our democratic ways and our legislative pioneering.⁴¹ Labour's dramatic triumph in creating the welfare state and incorporating the Maori on the basis of equality only seemed to confirm the essential rightness of that interpretation.

Such was our confidence in the 1950s and 1960s that young scholars seeking post-graduate degrees headed off to England to study Liberalism there, often having cut their scholarly teeth on Liberalism here, or to the United States to find out, as Paul Bourke once wryly chided, why that country lacked such an instrument of civilization as the New Zealand Labour Party. The Liberals, in short, had come to be seen as the predecessors of Labour and both had created modern New Zealand and a distinctive national character. Nobody else much counted in 'The Land of the Long Pink Cloud'. The main debates concerned the role of specific social groups — gold miners, settlers, workers and women — in achieving particular reforms and transforming New Zealand into a model for the world.⁴² Scholars differed over — but did not really debate — the significance of ideas and the relative importance of the colonists' desire for equality and security.⁴³ The majority still believed in Reeves's practical and pragmatic pioneers and showed little interest in discussing larger issues.

The implications of this are well-known and in some respects unfortunate. We have studies of all 'left' parties, many 'left' leaders, and most 'left' organizations, with still more on the way; one has to dig in old theses or McLintock's *Encyclopaedia* to learn much of so-called 'right' parties or their leaders.⁴⁴ Inspired by Namier's distrust of ideas, some historians at Canterbury felt irritated by the consensus about the nature and importance of Liberalism and denied that there had ever been a Liberal Party before the 1890s. Trevor Wilson's two works on the origins of New Zealand Liberalism came under attack, much

40 The traditional foci for New Zealand historians — race relations and the social laboratory — did not satisfy everybody. Victoria University became the roost for some scholars who pursued their own interests, such as Peter Stuart on Wakefield in New Zealand, while Peter Adams, first at Canterbury and then at Oxford, wrote his study of annexation.

41 e.g. H.D. Lloyd, *Newest England*, New York, 1902; André Seigfried, *Democracy in New Zealand*, London, 1914; and Albert Métin, *Le Socialisme Sans Doctrine*, Paris, 1901.

42 e.g. J.D. Salmond, *Labour's Pioneering Days*, ed. D. Crowley, Auckland, 1950, and, much later, Patricia Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1972.

43 See Leslie Lipson, *The Politics of Equality*, Chicago, 1948, and W.B. Sutch, *The Quest for Security in New Zealand 1840 to 1966*, London, 1966.

44 *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, 3 vols, Wellington, 1966.

of it in theses which studied specific elections in Canterbury.⁴⁵ Within a few years historians had reconceptualized the politics of the period in terms of 'development' and the importance of locality and region.⁴⁶ By the late 1960s, Atkinson had emerged as a 'liberal' and the reputation of many prominent 'Liberals' began to look distinctly sordid.⁴⁷ In the 1970s Oliver began to argue that Liberalism, far from being humane and enlightened, was animated by rather peevish notions of social control. Those students of Angus Ross who had studied Liberal immigration policy would not have been surprised. Historians sceptical of the Reevesian paradigm, with its stress on the democratic will of the people, had no alternative, however, other than the bureaucratic imperative sketched in by Oliver in his 1969 Hocken Lecture.⁴⁸

Oliver's Hocken Lecture had less influence — at least outside Massey — than his celebrated review essay, 'Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern'.⁴⁹ In this he argued that few policy differences existed between the so-called Liberals and their opponents in the 1890 election and skilfully sketched a social system fluid enough to explain the lack of policy differences. Social mobility characterized New Zealand and 'reformers', including the Liberals, did not represent a class but a broadly-based desire to remove obstacles to mobility. Debate soon focused on whether social classes could be said to exist in late nineteenth-century New Zealand and what role they had played in the election of 1890.⁵⁰ The nature of colonial society and the relationship between society and politics attracted considerable attention but, unfortunately, the hard-earned realization that colonial society consisted of regional and local societies was largely forgotten.⁵¹

45 Jim Gardner supervised many of these although Neville Phillips, who specialised in eighteenth-century British political history, was the major local source of Namierite influence. Wilson's titles convey his theme: *The Grey Government, 1877-79: An Episode in the Rise of Liberalism in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1954 and *The Rise of the New Zealand Liberal Party, 1880-90*, Auckland, 1956. For a balanced account of this important historiographical episode see David Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891-1912*, Auckland, 1988, ch. 1.

46 See W.R. Armstrong, 'The Politics of Development: A Study of the Structure of Politics from 1870 to 1890', MA thesis, Victoria University, 1960. Sinclair's influential essay, 'The Significance of "The Scarecrow Ministry", 1887-1891', in *Studies of a Small Democracy*, incisively summarized the new view. The 'Continuous Ministry', which Reeves portrayed as the skilful enemy of 'the people', has only recently been carefully anatomized; see Raewyn Dalziel, 'The "Continuous Ministry" Revisited', NZJH, 21 (April 1987), pp.46-61.

47 e.g. David Hamer's extremely influential 'The Agricultural Company and New Zealand Politics, 1877-1886', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, 10 (1962), pp. 141-64. See too Russell Stone, 'The Maori Lands Question and the Fall of the Grey Government', NZJH, 1 (May 1967), pp.51-74, and 'The Thames Valley and Rotorua Railway Company Ltd., 1882-89: a study of the relationship of business and government in nineteenth-century New Zealand', NZJH, 8 (May 1974), pp.22-43; and Judith Basset, *Sir Harry Atkinson, 1831-1892*, Auckland, 1975.

48 *Towards a New History?*, Dunedin, 1971.

49 See Sinclair, *William Pember Reeves: New Zealand Fabian*, Oxford, 1965, and Oliver, 'Reeves, Sinclair and the Social Pattern', in Peter Munz (ed.), *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969, pp. 163-80.

50 Olssen, 'The "Working Class" in New Zealand', NZJH, 8 (April 1974), pp.460, and Christopher Campbell, 'The "Working Class" and the Liberal Party in 1890', NZJH, 9 (April 1975), pp.41-51.

51 Keith Sinclair and W. F. Mandle, *Open Account: A History of the Bank of New South Wales in New Zealand, 1861-1961*, Wellington, 1961, first demonstrated the importance of regional economies with their own histories.

Scholars worked on a number of fronts but the nature of colonial Liberalism remained the implicit focus. Only John Angus systematically tackled society and politics in one region during the period 1877-1893, but there were no comparable studies for other regions.⁵² The diverse social-political structures in Otago and Southland indicated, however, that propositions about society and politics, even after the 1890 election, could only be true of the colony at an almost meaningless level of generality. Research into the nature of colonial society split, Miles Fairburn increasingly concentrating on pre-1890 society and denying the relevance of local-regional variation while I focused on the development of social class in urban areas post-1890.⁵³ In so far as colonial Liberals remained a focus for scholarly attention they were now viewed from the various perspectives provided by the 'new' social history, but increasingly they were being ignored. Reeves's paradigmatic narrative, which portrayed the Liberals as the culmination of colonial society's evolution, had lost its magnetic hold.

II

Even in the 1960s not everyone worked on the origins of the Liberals and their policies. Race relations attracted attention, as they always had, and young scholars worked on the missionaries, the 'contact period' and the wars. The belief that New Zealanders had created a harmonious bi-racial society, a widespread belief in the 1950s (and one which Reeves had propounded in *The Long White Cloud*), contributed to an interest in the relationship between the two peoples (and the marginalization of other immigrant groups). North American historians made a major contribution. Harrison Wright's *New Zealand 1769-1940* (1959)⁵⁴ made as much impact on historians as David P. Ausubel's *Fern and the Tiki* (1960) did on intellectuals. Wright tried to explain the 'conversion' by shifting attention from God and the missionaries to the Maori while Ausubel attacked the harmonious bi-racial society as a self-serving myth for Pakeha. Two other Americans, Robin Winks and John Williams, also studied race relations.⁵⁵ During these years Judith Binney and John Owens crossed polemical swords about the reasons for the 'conversion'. Binney began her work on Maori history, and Ian Wards argued that the policy of 'moral suasion' and 'Good Governor

52 'City and Country: Change and Continuity: Electoral politics and society in Otago 1877-1893', PhD thesis, University of Otago, 1976.

53 Fairburn wrote several reviews and articles attacking the view that class could be said to exist in mid nineteenth-century New Zealand and elaborating his notion of the 'atomized' or 'bondless' society before publishing his most systematic exposition of his argument in *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900*, Auckland, 1989. For Olssen see 'Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand', in David Pitt (ed.), *Social Class in New Zealand*, Auckland, 1977; *A History of Otago*, Dunedin, 1984, ch. 8; and, with Judi Boyd, 'The Skilled Workers: Journeymen and Masters in Caversham, 1880-1914', NZJH, 22 (October 1988), pp.118-34.

54 Sub-titled *Early Years of Western Contact*, Cambridge, Mass.

55 Winks, 'The Doctrine of Hau Hauism', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 62 (1953), pp.199-236, and Williams, *Politics of the New Zealand Maori: Protest and Co-operation 1891-1909*, Seattle, 1969.

Grey' had both been shams.⁵⁶ In 1973 Alan Ward's dense analysis of official policy concluded that 'racial "amalgamation"' had not saved but subjugated the Maori.⁵⁷ Young scholars such as Paul Clark and Ann Parsonson began working on Maori history while anthropologists too began to undertake research into the so-called 'contact period'. The process of acculturation in Maori society attracted most attention. The spread of Christianity, Maori attempts to control the European invasion, the consequences of the wars, the on-going struggle over land and major incidents in that struggle, such as Parihaka, all attracted scholarly attention.⁵⁸ Historians left Maori religious beliefs well alone, a comment on the discipline rather than the Maori, for the discipline here, as elsewhere, was sceptical of the influence of ideas and beliefs. Judith Binney and a few historians in Maori Studies departments have begun trying to remedy the deficiency.⁵⁹ James Belich's brilliant study of the *New Zealand Wars* is interesting in this respect for he resolutely ignores the Maori-ness of the Maori. As Jenny Murray pointed out in a perceptive review, one must still turn to Cowan's *The New Zealand Wars* (1922) to gain any sense of the Maori cultural context.⁶⁰ Claudia Orange's seminal study of *The Treaty of Waitangi* (1987) does not escape the problem, and Hazel Riseborough's *Days of Darkness* is the most striking example with its deliberate refusal to attempt to interpret Maori perceptions at all.⁶¹

The profession's preference for socio-economic explanations in part explains the neglect of Maori religion and culture but a reaction against an older view, which portrayed the Maori as moving from 'savagery' to 'civilization', contributed. Paul Clark's study of '*Hau Hau*', for instance, tackled an important aspect of Pai Marire but concentrated on proving the rationality and peacefulness of Hauhau beliefs, thus disproving the long-standing view of the movement as irrational, savage, and violent. Belich's recent study of Titokowaru illustrates the

56 Owens, 'Christianity and the Maoris to 1840', NZJH, (2 May 1968), pp.18-40, and Binney's reply, *ibid.*, 3 (October 1969), pp.143-65. Both have continued to refine and modify their positions and the debate still attracts contributors. For Maori history see Binney's 'Papahurihia: some thoughts on interpretation', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* (JPS), 75 (1966), pp.321-31, and Wards, *The Shadow of the Land: A Study of British Policy and Racial Conflict in New Zealand 1832-1852*, Wellington, 1968.

57 *A Show of Justice: Racial "Amalgamation" in Nineteenth Century New Zealand*, Auckland, 1973.

58 Clark, '*Hau Hau*: Pai Marire Search for Maori Identity', Auckland, 1975, and Parsonson, 'The Expansion of a Competitive Society: a study in nineteenth century Maori history', NZJH, 14 (May 1980), pp.45-60, and 'The Pursuit of Mana', in W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams, *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981, pp.140-67.

59 Binney's interest in the subject can be traced back to her article on Papahurihia. See too her recent work on 'The Ringatu Traditions of Predictive History', *Journal of Pacific History*, 23 (October 1988), pp.167-74, and 'Ancestral Voices: Maori Prophet Leaders', in Keith Sinclair (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, Auckland, 1990, pp.153-84. See also Kerry Howe, 'The Maori Response to Christianity in the Thames-Waikato Area, 1833-1840', NZJH, 7 (May 1973), pp.28-46; Bronwyn Elsmore, *Like Them that Dream: The Maori and the Old Testament*, Tauranga, 1985, and *Mana From Heaven: A Century of Maori Prophets in New Zealand*, Tauranga, 1989; and Buddy Mikaere, *Te Maiharoa and the Promised Land*, Auckland, 1988.

60 *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland, 1986 and, for Murray's review, *Historical News*, May 1988, pp.13-15.

61 Sub-titled, *Taranaki, 1878-1884*, Wellington, 1989.

point more clearly still, for we are left with a pallid military leader and strategist who might, but for his name, be Pakeha.⁶² It seems, ironically, as if the price for escaping an earlier Eurocentrism has been, in part, to portray the nineteenth-century Maori as brown Britons and abandon any attempt to describe the nature of the extraordinary changes that the Maori made between 1769 and 1900. This double-bind, of course, reflects our doubt about European civilization, a doubt which this century's events have fed. Although the settlers' confidence in their role as instruments of civilization has long since collapsed, the doubt has generated no new paradigm. Keith Sorrenson has attempted to problematize the complex issues inherent in the civilization/savagery paradigm and to probe the roots of 'Some Pakeha Myths and Legends' about the Maori.⁶³ In doing this he has helped to clear the ground for scholarly inquiry into the Maori on their own terms although, one fears, the result may be to de-Maorify the nineteenth-century Maori and to leave their beliefs and values unexplored.

To some extent the concept of acculturation, which privileges a materialist explanation, has led us to ignore the Maori-ness of the Maori and the nature of cultural change in the nineteenth century. Acculturation also implies a diachronic method, yet until recently little historical work was done on the structure of 'traditional' Maori society. Over the past decade that has changed and there have been some useful discussions of rank and property and such concepts as tribe and hapu.⁶⁴ It is not clear, of course, whether the juxtaposition of 'traditional' and 'acculturated' has much more going for it than the earlier one of 'archaic' and 'classical' (not to mention savage and civilized). Maori and Pakeha — both conceptualized tribally — have also lent themselves to diachronic analysis. Most of the work done on Maori and race relations could be portrayed as a study in the acculturation of the Maori. As John Owens has pointed out, models of acculturation tend to be schematic, linear, and didactic.⁶⁵ By and large historians have been familiar with the fashionable models but have not given slavish loyalty. Yet we too have assumed that the influences all flowed in one direction, that European invasion profoundly altered Maori even though we have established the extent to which the Maori controlled, and kept trying to control the process. Atholl Anderson's brilliant lecture, *Race Against Time*, a study of inter-marriage in Murihiku before 1840, reveals that the Ngai Tahu gradually disappeared as a genetic entity but raises the possibility that, as a cultural entity, they absorbed a remarkably high proportion of the pre-1840 invaders. At a more

62 *I Shall Not Die: Titokowaru's War New Zealand, 1868-9*, Wellington, 1989.

63 'How to Civilize Savages: Some Answers from Nineteenth Century New Zealand', NZJH, 9 (1975), pp.97-110, and *Maori Origins and Migrations: The Genesis of Some Pakeha Myths and Legends*, Auckland, 1979.

64 For instance, Peter Cleave, 'Tribal and State-like Formations in New Zealand Maori Society 1750-1900', JPS, 92 (March 1983), pp.51-92; Brent Layton, 'Alienation Rights in Traditional Maori Society: a Reconsideration', JPS, 93 (December 1984), pp.423-40; and Atholl Anderson, 'Towards an Explanation of Protohistoric Social Organisations and Settlement Patterns amongst the Southern Ngai Tahu', *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology*, 2 (1980).

65 See his comment on Kwen Fee Lian, 'Interpreting Maori History: a case for a historical sociology', JPS, 96 (December 1987), pp.445-72, in *ibid.*, 97 (December 1988), pp.441-6, and, for Lian's reply, *ibid.*, pp.447-8.

fundamental level, however, Anderson is less concerned with the possibility of genes and cultural influences moving in both directions than in the way in which this process then destroys each destination/source 'beyond typological recognition'. The simple Maori-Pakeha typology not only conflates distinct hapu, iwi and ethnic-racial groups into rather crude generalized types but obscures the historical diversity of the bi-racial experience.⁶⁶

Diversity and complexity may well have been more important than our rather simple and unreflective typologies allow. It would be useful to have fine-grained studies of Maori and Pakeha children growing up in bi-racial areas. What passed from Maori to Pakeha along with the rising 'eh'? Michael King's *Being Pakeha* reminds us that even children in urban areas this century could be exposed to Maori experience.⁶⁷ Frances Porter's marvellous biography of Jane Maria Atkinson is one of the few books to deal with this possibility.⁶⁸ The high levels of transience among nineteenth-century Pakeha hold open the possibility that a high proportion of immigrants may have been in contact with Maori for some part of their lives. Many adults, like Henry Lawson, the Australian apostle of democracy for whites only, doubtless recoiled.⁶⁹ The experience of children may have differed. Preliminary findings from Jeanine Graham's study of children and childhood at the turn of the century suggests that this may have been so.⁷⁰

The Maori renaissance of the 1980s, a renaissance to some degree empowered by the work of Pakeha historians, has made these topics important. Our knowledge of 'traditional' society, 'conversion', the Treaty of Waitangi, the wars, the alienation of land from Maori to Pakeha (a process in which the Liberals played a most strenuously active part), and more recently Maori religion have proved that Maori society and culture did not disintegrate and that the Maori remained major actors on the nineteenth-century stage and in many areas dominant. Nor can settler society, at least in the North Island, be understood alone; the two distinct histories can only be understood both on their own terms and together, but they must now be studied in the distinct localities where Maori and Pakeha inter-married, worked together, and even attended the same schools and churches.

My call for a more local focus is not meant to imply that there is no place for general statements about Maori and Pakeha societies and their inter-relationships. What it is meant to suggest is that we have plenty of general statements but lack any clear sense of the degree of variation. This might seem to the more surprising given that the production of local histories and provincial histories remained a major industry throughout the post-war decades, especially in Otago and Canterbury, although professionals wrote few of the former and doubted the intellectual legitimacy of both. In 1955, *Historical Studies* reported that 79 district histories had appeared in the previous seven years, 'by far the largest

66 Hocken Lecture, 1990, *Race Against Time: The Early Maori-Pakeha Families and the Development of the Mixed-Race Population in Southern New Zealand*, Dunedin, 1991.

67 Sub-titled *An Encounter with New Zealand and the Maori Renaissance*, Auckland, 1985.

68 *Born to New Zealand*, pp.160, 225 and the discussion of Arthur's interests.

69 W.H. Pearson, *Henry Lawson Among the Maori*, Canberra, 1968.

70 Hocken Lecture, 1991, forthcoming.

category of historical writing for the period'.⁷¹ As Sinclair later pointed out, 'Most of them have been inspired by a local or ancestral piety and written by amateurs'.⁷² Even A.H. McLintock's *History of Otago* (1949), the most ambitious one-volume provincial history, centred its argument on Otago's contribution to the formulation of Liberal land and social legislation.

Until quite recently historians tended to think in terms of broad processes, going on uniformly across the entire country, which could be illustrated by research into any area (the prisoners of pre-Darwinian evolutionary theory). The best local history illustrated national themes while, by the same token, intensive research into the primary sources in one region frequently persuaded historians — sometimes no doubt at the prompting of publishers worried about market size — to claim that their conclusions were valid for the nation. Nga Puhī or Atiawa represented Maori; runholders in South Canterbury represented runholders everywhere; the debate over land policy in one province represented the debate throughout the colony. Some of the academics involved in writing the histories of Canterbury and Otago recognized the fallacy, but too often they simply argued that the only true reality was local and that, for instance, if no evidence of class conflict existed in Cheviot then nobody could legitimately use the concept of class anywhere.⁷³ Many local histories, such as W.H. Scotter's *Run, Estate and Farm* (1948) or Jock Sherrard's *Kaikoura* (1966), ignored the towns to focus on the progress from great estates and runs to the freehold family farm. The idea that New Zealand was Amuri writ large was as implausible as its opposite. Both propositions reflected a central assumption of national history; that the nation's development was a single story best conceptualized in terms of uniform evolutionary progress.

The proliferation of local histories and the nature of Maori society — a fiction or myth whose construction had been ignored — might have alerted that generation to the fragmented nature of New Zealand society, especially in the nineteenth century. Even the construction of the concept of tribe — a unit of analysis that most historians use but never analyze — has never been studied carefully. The historiography of that entire subject still consists of a footnote in Binney's *Legacy of Guilt* and a recent book by Jeff Sissons, Pat Hohepa, and Wiremu Wi Hongi.⁷⁴ Pakeha history could be used to illustrate the same point (especially if we include all non-Maori immigrants as Pakeha). Gujarati, Punjabi, Cantonese, Jewish, Lebanese, and Dalmatian immigrants are usually mentioned in general histories, when mentioned at all, to indict the racism of the larger society rather than explore the niches it allowed for difference. As John

71 7 (November 1955), pp.112-17.

72 In Robin Winks (ed.), *The Historiography of the British Empire-Commonwealth*, v. *Trends, Interpretations, Resources*, Durham, NC, 1966, p.174.

73 The reference is, of course, to Jim Gardner, the indefatigable champion of local history who has done more to raise the standard of local history than anyone else. His most important study, *The Amuri: A County History*, Culverden, 1956, did ignore, however, the shearers and shed-hands.

74 *The Legacy of Guilt*, p.58, n.6, and *The Puriri Trees are Laughing: A Political History of the Ngāpuhi in the Inland Bay of Islands*, Auckland, 1987. H. Angela Ballara, 'The Origins of the Ngāti Kāhūngunu', PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1991 is probably the first to address the question directly, but her thesis was not yet available at the time of writing.

Pocock reminded us some years ago, local variations in environment and culture had been of importance to migrants of Anglo-Celtic origin when the major waves departed from Britain for the South Seas.⁷⁵ Within New Zealand local differences were also important. Most people lived out their lives in local environments and thought of themselves in local or provincial terms. Even the search for the origins of the rising Liberals had simply underlined the on-going importance of regional and local divisions.

III

The belief in the uniform nature of change, no less than the idea that the nation's history could be explained in terms of what happened here, received a powerful fillip from the 'new social history' even as it narrowed the focus of attention to 'society'. The focus on society and the new enthusiasm for sociological explanation constituted a revolution, however, and deeply affected the 'generation of pedants'. The 'new social history' and its multiplying sub-genres, such as women's history and labour history, urban and cultural history, business history and econometrics, aspired to understand the experience not of elites but of 'ordinary people' in their everyday lives, many of them previously neglected, while making explanation more rigorous.⁷⁶ In this small country most of these genres boasted only one or two academic practitioners but post-graduate students merrily researched topics as diverse as 'larrikinism', criminality, insanity, and divorce. Deviance was in vogue and students queued to study it. Church attendance, membership of sports clubs, and almost any voluntary organization which had bequeathed a set of archives or published a journal also attracted attention. The best of this work tried to create a sociologically-informed history. Much of it, thanks to the fact that so many New Zealand historians had done post-graduate degrees in the histories of other societies, had a comparative dimension.

Yet here as elsewhere there were implications, not least the tendency to create hermetically sealed sub-specialities. It also became hard to find students willing to do research on traditional topics such as politics or settlement. Intellectual history, such as it was, took a beating, especially after the separation of Politics and Political Philosophy from History Departments. And despite the rise of the 'new social history' the Reevesian paradigm continued to influence what was studied and to ensure that we neglected topics central to New Zealand society, such as gambling and horse-racing, or even rugby, not to mention courtship and marriage patterns, gardening, egalitarianism, and our enthusiasm for forming committees and teams. Nor have we paid much attention to land use, farming, or the sustained assault upon the bush, not to mention the invasion of plants, animals, bacteria and viruses. Geographers have largely been left with these important areas of study.⁷⁷

75 'British History: A Plea for a New Subject', NZJH, 8 (April 1974), pp.3-21.

76 This is a succinct summary of a complex process and some sub-genres, notably labour history, had long histories. They were, however, transformed in the 1960s.

77 See for instance A.H. Clarke, *The Invasion of New Zealand by Peoples, Plants, and Animals*, New Brunswick, 1949, and Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe 900-1900*, Cambridge, 1986, ch.10.

The Reevesian paradigm also helped to ensure our continuing neglect of the immigrants who came here from Britain. We know more about every racial minority than we do about the major flows of migrants from Britain.⁷⁸ It was as if the now corroded belief in 'the more English than England' paradigm involved a curious lack of interest in the nature and sources of the immigrants, as though the 'superior stock' and the land had been destined for each other.⁷⁹ Even Rollo Arnold's major study, so rich in detail, fails to study immigration as process but sets out to prove that the immigrants of the 1870s were not shiftless and feckless 'townies' but pious and industrious villagers with their own vision of the England they wished to re-create. In brief, Arnold seemed to argue, the Vogel immigrants were as worthy of the new land as the 'systematic colonizers'. As Rod Phillips pointed out, Arnold made 'no use of statistics and even less use of precise statistical terminology'.⁸⁰ The second major work on immigration published in recent years, Charlotte Macdonald's *Women of Good Character*, traces single women who migrated here in the 1850s and 1860s with meticulous methodological care, but is more concerned finally with the transplantation of the sexual double standard around the world.⁸¹ Although both these works attract attention to immigrants and to migration as a process the old paradigms have not been directly challenged let alone supplanted. We also know little, and it seems care less, about flows of capital from Britain.

To some extent one might conclude that the new social history — which has deep roots in American and German historiography — has been subverted here into a celebration of the Reevesian paradigm. Like nineteenth-century botanists and zoologists we delight in the variety and diversity of historical specimens as if to reassure ourselves that our single-minded attempt to create a *British* society had not cost us (or the Maori) anything. The major collaborative historical works underline the point. McLintock's crowning work, *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966), despite comparatively few entries on women and a lot on expatriates whose achievements had brought us honour, positively rejoiced in the variety of the people who had settled here and the creation of a lively democratic society and polity. *New Zealand's Heritage*, which appeared in 1971-72, enthused over the richness of our past and the unknown wealth of illustrative material which existed. The sub-title anchors the entire project, *The Making of*

78 See K.W. Thomson and A.D. Trlin (eds), *Immigrants in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, 1970; Bickleen Fong Ng, *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation*, Hong Kong, 1959; Stewart Greif, *The Overseas Chinese in New Zealand*, Singapore, 1974; J.W. Leckie, 'They Sleep Standing Up: Gujaratis in New Zealand to 1945', PhD, University of Otago, 1981, and W.H. McLeod, *Punjabis in New Zealand*, Amritsar, 1986. It is noteworthy that so many of these scholarly works have been published elsewhere.

79 A South African student of imperial history, J. S. Marais, studied immigration in the 1840s but mainly to clarify the New Zealand Company's role; *The Colonization of New Zealand*, Oxford, 1927.

80 *The Farthest Promised Land. English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s*, Wellington, 1981, and Phillips's review, *Comment: New Series*, 16 (August 1982).

81 *A Woman of Good Character*, Wellington, 1989. R.M. Dalziel, *The Origins of New Zealand Diplomacy: The Agent-General in London, 1870-1905*, Wellington, 1975, is the best study of the organization of migration while John Morris, 'The Assisted Immigrants to New Zealand, 1871-1879: a statistical study', MA, University of Auckland, 1973, remains the best study of that topic.

a Nation. Even the first volume of the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* builds on this heritage although attempting to redress the previous neglect of women, Maori, and ordinary folk.⁸² In this respect it did quite well. *The Book of New Zealand Women*, another lexicographical triumph, also celebrates diversity. Although democratic principles shaped all of these projects the principle of nationality, understandably, has operated as a controlling device for selecting subjects and the final productions are monuments to national pride. Used sensibly, however, these reference works can also assist to explode inherited boundaries and taxonomies.

It is ironic that such major projects are coming to fruition now for the 'new social history' has called into question the idea that the nation constitutes the natural focus for understanding the past. The idea of narrative has also become problematic. Perhaps historians have always shared the view that nothing is as simple as it seems, but the fragmentation of the discipline and epistemological angst have intensified it. We also believe — it is part of the mood of our times — that the important outcomes will usually be unintended and the intended outcomes unrealized. Our faith in Progress, Truth, and Reason have all taken a beating this century, especially since World War I. Herbert Butterfield first forced historians to confront these issues when he wrote his elegant critique of Whig history, a critique that made it more difficult to find a form for a general history of a nation and, indirectly, undermined the Reevesian paradigm.⁸³ Other influences converged to heighten the sense that a general history was an unsatisfactory undertaking; the fragmentation of the discipline into sub-disciplines was both symptomatic and contributory. Historians lacked — and still lack — a body of theory acceptable to most which posits connections between such diverse phenomena as child-rearing, fertility rates, and fashion let alone scrums and unions, economic change and politics.

Fragmentation helps explain why no academic historian attempted to write the country's history for a generation. Committees of various sizes have tackled the task. In the mid-1970s, when Bridget Williams, then at Oxford University Press, decided to organize a collaborative history, the most ambitious multi-authored project since the *Cambridge History* was launched under Oliver's editorship. Whereas the *Cambridge History* had been conceived and written as part of an imperial project, the *Oxford History* stood alone and focused on the development of New Zealand.⁸⁴ As some reviewers noted, the volume was introspective in content and tone and assumed that New Zealand could be understood in terms of what had happened here. The Reevesian paradigm also exerted a subtle influence: the chapters dealing with post-1935/38 brought the Maori and Pakeha together, although nobody pretended that harmony prevailed;

82 ed., W.H. Oliver, Wellington, 1990.

83 *The Whig Interpretation of History*, London, 1931. An essay could be written on the points made in this paragraph and instead of supplying the customary documentation may I refer the reader to journals such as *History and Theory* and Lynn Hunt, 'Introduction: History, Culture, and Text', in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989, pp.1-24.

84 *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Wellington, 1981.

the final chapter suggested that 'a precarious maturity' had been achieved; the triumph of the Liberal-Labour tradition still featured largely; and the chapters on cultural-intellectual life adopted an almost Beagleholian note of contempt for New Zealand's provincial/lower-middle class insularity.⁸⁵ The prominence given to social history and the decision to devote chapters to Maori history and race relations, although the division proved less tidy in practice, clearly distinguished the Oxford from the earlier Cambridge *History*. A new vision had not been hatched, however, and the *Oxford Illustrated History* (1990) indicates that we are still waiting.

Not that everyone agrees on the need for a new vision. Historians around the Western world have been persuaded that the discipline is in crisis. Various ideas about how to write a general history have been proposed, some more Whiggish than others, but no consensus has emerged.⁸⁶ Not all historians have thought the discipline in crisis. Across the Tasman, indeed, several historians have attempted general histories and Manning Clark has done it in six volumes which purport to trace the rise of Australian civilization.⁸⁷ A younger practitioner, Graeme Davison, one of the 'slice-generation' which experimented with the archaeological cross-section, doubted that the discipline was in crisis but thought that we needed 'a sociologically conscious kind [of narrative] in which a story is related in order to illustrate persisting features of a society rather than to trace the slow, organic evolution of the nation-state'.⁸⁸ One can agree with the sentiment without claiming that we have made much progress. The desire for a sociologically-informed history, no less than the desire of many historians to contribute to the development of sociological theory, has helped re-shape the discipline in the past 20 years. Miles Fairburn's recent book, *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies*, most vigorously reflects and advances this hope.

Fairburn's book has already attracted a lot of attention, much of it critical.⁸⁹ In the context of my argument, however, the book has much of interest. First, it represents a bold attempt to construct an indigenous historical sociology which is, appropriately, more concerned with organizing principles than with explaining change. Second, where previously historiographical attention had been guided by the Reevesian paradigm, Fairburn refuses to view colonial society (1850-90) as a prelude to the Liberal era but takes it on its own terms, concentrating on what the immigrants hoped to create and the society that they did create. The familiar staples of sociological analysis — class, gender, status, ethnicity — are replaced by violence, drunkenness, loneliness, and 'bondlessness'. Where the received wisdom portrayed our Pakeha ancestors as industrious,

85 The first version of the chapter dealing with cultural and intellectual history since 1945 was so critical that it was not used and the editor stepped into the breach.

86 This theme has been echoed by many prominent historians over the past 20 years; see for instance Bernard Bailyn, 'The Challenge of Modern Historiography', *American Historical Review*, 87 (February 1982), pp.1-24.

87 John Iremonger suggested to me that this may reflect the fact that Australian historiography is in some sort of time lag and that Clark's undertaking is comparable to Macaulay's or Taine's.

88 Review Article: What Happened to History', *Historical Studies*, 20 (1982-3), p.296.

89 See NZJH, 25 (October 1991).

democratic and practical, Fairburn portrays them as rootless and feckless. Richard Hill's enormous study of *The History of Policing in New Zealand* constitutes a parallel proof.⁹⁰

Progress, development and community building — long the organizing principles of both amateur and professional accounts of settler society in the nineteenth century — have been banished. Fairburn's atomized society is but an inverted image of Wakefield's dream of a new and more perfect England, an ironic warning of the folly of aspiring to a new and more perfect state. The tone of some responses indicates that Fairburn has challenged our sense of *amour propre*, has frontally assaulted the Wakefieldian dream which Reeves built into his historical narrative and which, even yet, is part of our sense of national identity. Be that as it may, his argument is organized on two assumptions: that New Zealand can be understood in terms of what happened here and that regional and local variations were of no importance.⁹¹ Fairburn's comparative framework, which one might have expected to play a larger role, is also poorly developed, but such criticisms cannot obscure his signal triumph in attempting to understand colonial society on its own terms and in bringing key elements of the Reevesian paradigm into the light.

IV

Yet at this point in time, when we seem to be either in or moving into the space between two *epistemes* (to use Foucault's term), the major paradigms of sociological knowledge appear highly problematic.⁹² Intellectual history, triumphantly declared dead by the more gung-ho social historians 15 years ago and at that time even a matter of apology among its practitioners, has repeated the trick of Lazarus. The rise of feminist theory, new forms of literary criticism, the crisis in Marxist materialism, and a new interest in language as a socially constructed system have — to switch from Foucault to Clausewitz — outflanked the camp of the sociologically-informed. The materialist reductionism which shaped much social history, not to mention sociology, has come under increasing attack.⁹³ To date many social historians here seem but dimly aware of this. My historian's instincts make me sceptical of any claim to have found a new key to all problems, whether the key be a discipline, such as linguistics, or a method, such as deconstruction. Scholarly imperialisms, like other forms of that species, force closure and invite disruption.

That said, however, it no longer makes much sense to assume that historical sociology alone holds the key to understanding human society or historical

90 Sub-titled *Policing the Colonial Frontier: The Theory and Practice of Coercive Social and Racial Control in New Zealand, 1767-1867*, Wellington, 1986, and *The Colonial Frontier Tamed: New Zealand Policing in Transition, 1867-1886*, Wellington, 1989.

91 Fairburn and Stephen Haslett have addressed this issue directly in 'Did Wellington Province from the 1850s to 1930 Have a Distinctive Social Pattern?', in David Hamer and Roberta Nicholls, eds, *The Making of Wellington 1800-1914*, Wellington, 1990, pp.255-84.

92 The concept is used evocatively in *The Order of Things*.

93 For a useful over-view see Hunt's essay in *The New Cultural History*; Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York, 1988; and David Harlan, 'Intellectual History and the Return of Literature', *American Historical Review*, 94 (1989), pp.581-609.

change. I suspect that Fairburn has understood something profoundly important about colonial society but that his commitment to construct a narrowly sociological proof has misled him.⁹⁴ Ethnography or literary theory might have helped him to make his argument more convincing. To illustrate: many nineteenth-century Britons thought of colonization as both the possibility of creating a new civilization and of failing by descending into savagery. These two possibilities obsessed Wakefield and the 'systematic colonizers' and constituted themselves, in the one movement, as a source of excitement and terror. It was as if history had suddenly proffered a space or void, an emptiness as yet unnamed. Atholl Anderson's work on the moa attempts to map the significance of that most *Prodigious Bird* in the mind of the colonists, a bird which colonists often saw at the border between civilization and wilderness.⁹⁵ The possibility of descent into savagery sometimes wore a Maori mask, especially in the 1860s when the Hauhau obsessed the Europeans, but not necessarily. Only by excavating the tropes of nineteenth-century language can we start re-constructing the immigrant's psychic and mental maps and relating them to the new landscapes. When we have finished, I suspect, Reeves's skilful paradigm will no longer shape our historiographical interests but take its place as a significant part of the colonization of New Zealand by predominantly British Europeans.

Paul Carter's book, *The Road to Botany Bay*, shows one method. In discussing exploration and the names given by Cook to various bits of the Pacific, Carter complains that hitherto historians have failed to understand exploration as history but have dwelt on 'the fruits of travel'. 'Cook's voyages are treated as historical facts to be located chronologically in the history of Pacific exploration . . . [but] there is little attempt to interpret what Cook's names themselves refer to'. He then points out that historians ignore anything which resists classification as cause-and-effect and infer from resistance historical insignificance.⁹⁶ A brief vignette — which resists any cause-and-effect classification and thus declares itself without historical significance — illustrates the point nicely. Mabel and Effie, two young Presbyterian Deaconesses, took their two Bible Classes for a climb and a picnic up Flagstaff. 'We had an exciting adventure. Unconsciously we camped for tea beside the residence of Ben Rudge, the Terror of Flagstaff. He is mad about allowing no one at all near his property, & as we were on the road opp his trees he came & put out our fire, raging quite like a maniac . . . He was quite like a wild man of the woods, with strange wild eyes, hair, & clothes. He lives a hermit's life . . . & has been much tormented by larrikins.'⁹⁷ Historians might once have considered this an anecdote of little interest to any but a biographer, but the colony's nineteenth-century landscapes provided niches for

94 Given his skill at handling this sort of approach the narrowly sociological character of *The Ideal Society* must remain a mystery; see, for instance, his marvellous essay 'Vagrants, Folk Devils and Nineteenth Century New Zealand as a Bondless Society', *Historical Studies*, 21 (1) (1984-5), pp.495-511.

95 The beast without: the moa as a colonial frontier myth in New Zealand', in Roy Willis (ed.), *Signifying Animals: Human Meaning in the Natural World*, London, 1990, pp.236-45.

96 Sub-titled *An Essay in Spatial History*, London, 1988, p.4.

97 Mabel Cartwright, 'Diary', [early April 1908], author's collection.

countless figures similar to 'the Terror of Flagstaff'. Mabel Cartwright's diary entry can be seen as evidence of a cultural phenomenon — like all those moa sightings — which might lend itself to ethnographic or literary analysis. Or it might be seen as part of a discourse which maps a range of possibilities.⁹⁸

V

The burden of these reflections can be put quite quickly; we have yet to understand the phenomenon of migration and the central characteristics of this New World society in the nineteenth century. No one method or body of theory holds the key to all riddles. Those historians of the 1920s, with their emphasis on politics and the imperial system, not to mention their recognition of contingency, personality, and moral choice, still provide a useful perspective. In some respects we are returning to look again at the British-ness of Pakeha New Zealand and the way in which the very language we use for historical analysis was constructed from older materials between Cook's first landfall here and the mid-Victorian period.⁹⁹ The specific contexts — social, cultural, political, economic and intellectual — from which people extricated themselves and the value systems they brought with them also demand attention. We still need a good biography of Wakefield and his 'systematic colonizers' because they spearheaded much of the first wave and established the dominant social pattern for five of the six New Zealand colonies. They also armed the colonists with an idea of what they were doing, an idea now defeated but not dead. Wakefield's ideas about colonization and new societies demand more subtle analysis than they received from the debunking revisionists of the 1950s.

Nobody any longer thinks that Louis Hartz's claim that the entire character of each New World society can be explained by the timing of first settlement and the nature of the colonizing fragment, but the idea has its uses.¹⁰⁰ Each of the four waves from Britain — 1840s, 1860s, 1870s, and the one beginning in the 1890s — differed. A sizeable proportion of two waves had lived in Australia and many had been born there. Scots and Irish also figured largely in two waves. Each wave also brought its own hopes and expectations, its own sense of why it had left Britain or Australia, and its own ideas of the ideal society. The belief in New Zealand's British-ness, or, in that deceitful but revealing synecdoche, Englishness, as a definition of the new society's character and destiny, arrived with the 'systematic colonizers' but has been too long ignored, no doubt in part because of the distinctive form that nationalism has taken over the past generation. We need to study the voyage out, homesickness, repatriation and the contents of their trunks. We especially need an archaeology of their psyches and minds. Nor should we continue to neglect internal migration, for in the last decades of the

98 The Remittance man, a recurring figure in older accounts of the nineteenth century who has long since disappeared from the literature, would also repay analysis.

99 The idea has been prompted by Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, rev. ed., Sydney, 1984, and Foucault, *The Order of Things*.

100 *The Liberal Tradition in America*, New York, 1955, and *The Founding of New Societies*, New York, 1964.

nineteenth century thousands of South Islanders went to the North Island.¹⁰¹ The ground has been well mapped. John Pocock has provided us with a marvellous cultural-ethnic map of Britain and others, notably Raewyn Dalziel, have started on the task.¹⁰²

It is time, in brief, to recognize that the core propositions in the Reevesian paradigm — Englishness, an adventuresome and democratic people, the social laboratory, and harmonious race relations — were constructed by the colonists for their own ends. We need an intellectual history that explains their origin and their success, although I would caution now against the easy assumption that those propositions had no relationship to any social reality. Guilt provides no useful guide. It is also time to realize that Reeves's paradigm, forcibly enlarged by Sinclair's insistence on the centrality of race relations, guided much of the work of 'the generation of pedants'. We need now to focus on the detail of establishing new families and communities and their relationships with the tangata whenua. We need to understand the inner processes involved in forming tribes and inter-tribal confederations. And we need to stop focusing only on armed conflict — fascinating although recent studies have been.¹⁰³ This is not merely a cry to study the nineteenth-century Maori on their own terms rather than those dictated by late twentieth-century preoccupations; it is also a cry for historians to look at relationships in the local contexts in which they took place. Inter-marriage and the creation of bi-racial settlements demand attention; so does the creation of patterns of segregation. Histories of Kaikohe, Otaki, and Te Kuiti, if they paid attention to Maori and Pakeha, men, women and children, could illuminate the way in which both Maori and settlers constructed societies. In undertaking such a demanding task historians also need to become sensitive not only to social and political behaviour but to the construction of racial typologies and the role they played in one another's minds.

This list of tasks and methodological imperatives is not intended to slight what has been achieved. Although we need another generation of pedants the amount of excellent historical research produced in the last generation is little short of astonishing, especially given the numbers on the ground and the heavy teaching loads that many carry.¹⁰⁴ We have begun to escape the two paradigms identified at the start of this paper and the assumptions of the national paradigm, like those of historical sociology, have become problematic. New Zealand's history cannot be explained only in terms of what happened here. In weighing the importance of indigenous developments we need to concentrate on the period from about 1820 to 1880 but bear in mind that the colony belonged to the Empire,

101 Brosnan, 'Net Interprovincial Migration 1886-1966', a paper presented to the Conference of the New Zealand Demographic Society, Christchurch, 1985.

102 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth: Why Did it Occur?', NZJH, 20 (April 1986), pp.3-26. David H. Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, New York, 1989, may provide an interesting example of what such a history might look like. I am grateful to Dr Raewyn Dalziel for drawing this book to my attention.

103 Keith Sinclair, *Kinds of Peace: Maori People After the Wars*, Auckland, 1991, has started (although I have not yet read his book).

104 The role of *The New Zealand Journal of History* and the University of Auckland Press were of great importance. It should be noted that Sinclair edited the former and served on the latter.

the New World, and Australasia, and that immigrants came here from those places. We also need to remember that any new history of New Zealand has to be capable of acknowledging that New Zealand has many histories. We have recovered the knowledge that not only did Maori and Pakeha have separate histories, as well as a history of their on-going relationship, but that even this complicating notion is too simple, for both those histories contained a multitude of others, centred on iwi and hapu, shaped largely by the country's geography and history. The word Maori, historically constructed and analytically indispensable, also invites distortion.

The same pattern is there in the history of Pakeha settlement. In writing *A History of Otago*¹⁰⁵ I quickly identified some 20 sub-regions, most of them with different histories, which at best could be reduced to seven larger sub-regions (such as North and South Otago). Each had a distinctive geography and clear geographic boundaries, a different economy, a different socio-ethnic mix, and a distinctive culture. Sometimes, near despair, I wondered whether the complexity of a society and its culture, even its economy for most of the nineteenth century, invariably stands in inverse relation to its size. I also wondered to what extent the land and its resources had shaped Maori society and were shaping Pakeha society. Thanks to the vigorous tradition of local history, we know a lot about the different localities and regions, especially the South Island ones, and their distinctive characters. We also know that the history of the two islands is quite dissimilar, especially in the nineteenth century. We lack histories of Auckland and Wellington provinces, and need them, I think, to complete our map of possible variations and to provide a context for more local histories.¹⁰⁶ For it was in divers local contexts that 'the old battle-axes who settled the country, and their scared husbands', debated their various hopes and dreams, swapped notes about their fears, and began creating a new culture and a new society, began having children and raising them.¹⁰⁷ Those children also need to be studied (Portia Robinson's *Hatch and Brood of Time* provides a useful model).¹⁰⁸ Our method, while defining the conditions any history must meet, also needs to accept the possibility that it is the complexity, not to mention the ways in which those complex differences were negotiated, that most deeply shaped our nineteenth-century history. Local history — historiographically conscious, sociologically informed, alert to 'the new cultural history', and involved in 'a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structures' — offers a new perspective.¹⁰⁹

105 Dunedin, 1984.

106 Russell Stone, *Makers of Fortune: a Colonial Business Community and its Fall*, Auckland, 1973, and his two-volume biography of John Logan Campbell, has laid an impressive foundation for a history of European Auckland in the nineteenth century while Hamer and Nichols (eds), *The Making of Wellington*, have made a valuable contribution to that project.

107 The quotation is from Janet Frame, *Intensive Care*, Wellington, 1971, p.269.

108 Sub-titled, *A Study of the First Generation of Native-born White Australians 1788-1888*, Melbourne, 1985.

109 The quotation is from Clifford Geertz, 'On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', *American Scientist*, 63 (1975), p.52.

In the process of attempting to deepen our understanding of nineteenth-century New Zealand society and culture we must not ignore the on-going importance of politics and power. Nor should we, like Wakefield, concentrate so much on the ideal society (or its deconstruction) that we forget the economy and the ways in which people tried to make their livings. The rise of social history, with its preference for explaining social phenomena sociologically, may have contributed to the neglect of economic history over the past generation although the equally resounding neglect of immigration suggests that more complex cultural processes are at work. There is plenty of room for yet another generation of pedants to investigate resource use, farming, and the workings of the markets in land, money, labour, and commodities. It has long been recognized that our economic destiny was always dependent and vulnerable, but the patterns of that dependence require analysis for they helped enclose the range of possible societies that the colonists could create. Although the idea that society and culture were dependent variables, and that the economy alone operated as an independent variable, has long been discredited, it is a mistake to allow the methods of different disciplines falsely to fragment the past. A study of transience, for example, which is not related to the nature of the economy and even the mode (or modes) of production, is likely to be singularly unrevealing. In the present climate, a climate which has done much to drain the vitality from the Reevesian paradigm, it is unlikely that we will have enough pedants to tackle such a large agenda. As we do what we can, however, we need to remember that society, culture, economy, politics, and even intellect are inter-related in complex ways, even though distinctive disciplines have been created to analyze each, and that they are also no more than signs of our desire to understand ourselves and the world we have inherited.

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