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Book Author(s): SHELLEY RICHARDSON

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Introduction

In 1978, when Erik Olssen wrote the essay 'Towards a History of the European Family in New Zealand', he did so believing 'that the history of the family provides the missing link ... between the study of culture and the study of social structure, production and power'.¹ Some 20 years later he observed that 'gender' and 'gendering' had, in the intervening years, 'increasingly supplanted "women" and "family" on the research agenda'.² One aspect of this recent trend towards a gendered approach to history is a focus on masculinity and femininity as relational constructs. It is therefore something of a paradox that, even though the family has been recognised 'as a primary site where gender is constructed', it has not attracted 'greater interest' in New Zealand and, by extension, Australia.³ British historian John Tosh observed that 'once the focus shifted to the structure of gender relations, rather than the experience of one sex, the family could be analysed comprehensively as a system, embracing all levels of power, dependence and intimacy'.⁴ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall produced such a work, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, in 1987.⁵ Historians of Australia and New Zealand have been slow to follow the British historians' lead; the family as a social dynamic has been squeezed to

1 Erik Olssen, 'Families and the Gendering of European New Zealand in the Colonial Period, 1840–80', in Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie (eds), *The Gendered Kiwi*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1999, p. 37; Erik Olssen and Andrée Lévesque, 'Towards a History of the European Family in New Zealand', in Peggy G. Koopman-Boyden (ed.), *Families in New Zealand Society*, Methuen, Wellington, 1978, pp. 1–25.

2 Olssen, 'Families and the Gendering of European New Zealand', p. 37.

3 Olssen, 'Families and the Gendering of European New Zealand', p. 37.

4 John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* [1999], 2nd edn, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007, p. 2.

5 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, Hutchinson, London, 1987.

the margins of historical concern. Even less interest has been shown in the role of the elite middle-class family in shaping Australasian society.

This book sets out to explore middle-class family life in two Australasian cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It does so through the experience of five families constructed in the 1880s and 1890s, within the marriages of male British migrants in professional occupations. It seeks to uncover the understandings and expectations of family that they brought with them from the old world as individuals, and to trace the evolution of these ideas as they endeavoured to turn ideals into reality. The close textual analysis necessary to reveal how family life was envisaged and experienced requires strong archival records and dictates a small sample. Christchurch and Melbourne provide significant sets of family archives that allow such close historical interrogation from within a similar occupational band (lawyers and academics), whose members saw themselves, and were seen by others, as part of the colonial intellectual community.

Put simply, and to prefigure an argument throughout the book, for this generation of professional newcomers, the migrant/colonial experience was empowering. The timeliness of their arrival and the generally favourable economic circumstances of their establishment years brought public prominence and bred confidence. They secured a level of financial security that allowed for a comfortable, though not luxurious lifestyle, supported by a small domestic staff. Success fanned the hopes of starting anew that had accompanied the migration and encouraged a sense of cautious social experiment within their attempts to build a colonial family. Nowhere more apparent than in the education of their children, this desire for change, prefigured within the family, is a central concern of this work. Through a close study of a small slice of professional middle-class experience, it throws light on the range of meanings that were invested in family life in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Australasia.

* * *

A feature of the emergent middle class in the latter part of the nineteenth century was its rapidly expanding professional segment. This expansion rested upon migrant families from provincial British towns and cities, attracted by what they saw as the more congenial

nature of Australasia's urban frontier. Economic and urban historians have noted that new world cities developed a distinctive suburban character.⁶ 'Commercial' cities rather than industrial ones, they typically exhibited a low population density that was widely dispersed and permitted the existence of big homes of a semirural character. Such cities appealed to a segment of provincial middle-class professionals who valued retaining something of the rural lifestyle becoming increasingly difficult to preserve in the old world. No Australasian city matched Melbourne in attractiveness to middle-class families seeking the amenities of the city in a context that had not extinguished the virtues of suburbia. The conduit for British investment in pastoralism, manufacturing and mining in Victoria and beyond, Melbourne became the destination of most of a wave of British migrants, which deposited 40,000 newcomers in the city in 1888 alone.⁷

While 'Marvellous Melbourne' grew too quickly and was already exhibiting many of the evils associated with older British cities in the 1880s, it was still able to satisfy the middle-class suburban dream.⁸ In New Zealand, such families were drawn in large numbers to the Wakefieldian cities, and especially to Christchurch and Dunedin. Whatever the failings of the systematic colonisers, it was the Wakefieldian ideal, with its stress upon concentrated settlement, as much as any compelling economic consideration, that determined the location and the suburban nature of the city of Christchurch as it emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Wakefieldian influence may have been less pronounced in Dunedin, but, as Olssen comments, it shared with 'Marvellous Melbourne' a slower 'transition from pre-industrial community to modern city' that proved fertile ground for the suburban ideal.⁹

6 Lionel Frost, *The New Urban Frontier: Urbanisation and City Building in Australasia and the American West*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1991; Trevor Burnard, 'An Artisanal Town: The Economic Sinews of Christchurch', in John Cookson and Graeme Dunstall (eds), *Southern Capital Christchurch: Towards a City Biography 1850–2000*, Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 2000, pp. 115–37.

7 Stuart Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism: The Lost World of Three Visionaries*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1991, p. 170.

8 See Graeme Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* [1978], 3rd edn, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1981; Bernard Barrett, *The Inner Suburbs: The Evolution of an Industrial Area*, Melbourne, 1971; Sean Glynn, *Urbanisation in Australian History, 1788–1900*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1970.

9 Erik Olssen, *A History of Otago*, John McIndoe, Dunedin, 1984, p. 102.

The Australasian 'commercial city' was not only born suburban, it was born and remained, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a British city.¹⁰ Christchurch can be seen as something of an exemplar. The Wakefieldian settlement had never been heavily masculine in the manner commonly associated with new world pioneering communities. By 1881 its population of 30,000 was demographically mature and ethnically homogeneous. A city of families, 40 per cent of the residents were native born, 63.5 per cent of its 'foreign' component was English born, and more than three-quarters came from England, Scotland or Wales. Moreover, as was typical of the commercial city, Christchurch managed to submerge social tensions in the mutual interdependence of its professional and artisanal elements. The middle-class suburban dream rested upon the existence of a stable and well-paid body of craftsmen able to realise a level of home ownership and independence that allowed them to share in the ideal they helped build. In social terms, this was to produce a city housing landscape with a low level of segregation and thus an environment that satisfied the desire of many of the professional middle class to contain, if not obliterate, the social evils and degradation that marred the cities of the old world.¹¹

Historians on both sides of the Tasman acknowledge the relative ease with which British middle-class professional families, arriving in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, found a niche among the colonial elite. Stuart Macintyre has suggested that in Australian cities, while it was becoming increasingly difficult to enter the 'moneyed circle', wealth was still able to command entry.¹² The professions, as he points out, offered an 'alternative' pathway: doctors and lawyers, followed by architects and engineers, were able to meld readily into the ranks of the elite.¹³ Indeed, 'in a society with little regard for inherited privilege or prestige', such professions 'enjoyed an exaggerated influence'. It was an influence, moreover, that extended

10 Nicholas Brown, 'Born Modern: Antipodean Variations on a Theme', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 48, part 4, 2005, pp. 1139–54.

11 See W. David McIntyre, 'Outwards and Upwards: Building the City', in Cookson and Dunstall (eds), *Southern Capital*, pp. 85–114; Jim McAloon, 'Radical Christchurch', in *Southern Capital*, pp. 162–92; Jim McAloon, 'The Christchurch Elite', in *Southern Capital*, pp. 193–221; Burnard, 'Artisanal Town', in *Southern Capital*, pp. 115–37.

12 Stuart Macintyre, *The Oxford History of Australia, Volume 4, 1901–1942: The Succeeding Age*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p. 51.

13 Macintyre, *Oxford History of Australia, Volume 4*, pp. 51–53.

to the political arena. When the first Federal Parliament assembled in Australia in 1901, a quarter of its members were lawyers, and its first cabinet drew two-thirds of its members from the legal fraternity.¹⁴

The political involvement of the legal fraternity and urban professionals was not as obvious in New Zealand. As W. J. Gardner has put it, the years between 1890 and the mid-1920s constitute the 'classic period of small-farmer predominance' in politics.¹⁵ By his estimate, small-farmer representation stood at 25 per cent in 1893 and reached about 35 per cent in the 1922–5 parliament. If farming was the most common occupation of the parliamentarians, the Liberal Party that controlled the government benches was essentially, as David Hamer described it, 'the party of the towns and especially of the urban frontier'.¹⁶ For newspaper editors and proprietors, businessmen and land agents, all of them joined in town-boosting, politics was an extension of the business of a town; they loomed large in party ranks and played the critical role in the articulation of party policy. City support for their policies was grounded in consensus around the need for closer settlement of country areas as a means of halting the drift of the population to the cities and averting old world evils such as unemployment, destitution and congestion. The search for social harmony held particular appeal for the middle-class professional families in their suburban enclaves, who formed the basis of the Liberal Party's alliance with urban labour.¹⁷ Between 1896 and 1914, the presence of lawyers and solicitors in the House of Representatives had increased markedly from 5 to 13 of its 76 members. At the outbreak of war they were the second largest occupational group and constituted 17 per cent of the New Zealand Parliament.¹⁸

If the New Zealand political environment did not give lawyers quite the parliamentary presence they attained in Australia at the outset of the twentieth century, its ethos was a broadly congenial one. Jim McAloon's definitive study of the wealthy in the Wakefieldian South Island settlements of Canterbury and Otago provides an

14 Macintyre, *Oxford History of Australia, Volume 4*, p. 52.

15 W. J. Gardner, *The Farmer Politician in New Zealand History*, Massey Memorial Lecture 1970, Massey University Occasional Publication No. 3, Palmerston North, 1970, pp. 3–4.

16 David Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals: The Years of Power, 1891–1912*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1988, p. 150.

17 Hamer, *The New Zealand Liberals*, pp. 150–94.

18 *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1915, pp. 343–44.

illustration of the status the middle-class professional family was able to attain in nineteenth-century New Zealand.¹⁹ As he sees it, the original intentions of the systematic colonisers were ‘explicitly elitist’. Their ideal male colonists were to be ‘English, Anglican, educated at Oxford or Cambridge’.²⁰ In the new world they expected to be accorded a status similar to that which they enjoyed at ‘Home’. Such exclusivity was unable to be maintained in the face of colonial realities that demanded different attributes and greater versatility. At first the crucial division in society was that between ‘land purchasers’, designated as ‘colonists’, and ‘labouring emigrants’.²¹ As a category, ‘colonist’ was flexible enough to encompass newcomers but, in McAloon’s view, they and their families provided until 1914, and perhaps until the 1940s, the core of the Canterbury and Otago elites.

Around this landowning circle clustered the professionals, who, in one way or another, were essential to the servicing of a pastoral economy. Its more prominent members were bankers, land agents, financiers and lawyers. Within the city their residences defined ‘enclaves’ that tended to maintain exclusiveness.²² The men who dominated the membership of the city’s most exclusive club were prominent among provincial and then colonial politics, were the gatekeepers of the city’s educational institutions and the powerful voices behind the local press. Some indication of the collective social influence of the group is captured in McAloon’s characterisation of the typical male member of the elite: ‘a lawyer, merchant, bank manager, large-scale farmer or manufacturer, a member of the Christchurch Club, the Provincial Council, the House of Representatives and the A & P Association, a Governor of Canterbury College and a Fellow of Christ’s College—and therefore Anglican’.²³ Like all typologies, McAloon acknowledges a degree of fluidity, a capacity to remake itself as changing social circumstances demanded and, above all, an ability to accommodate those who might not satisfy all requirements.²⁴

19 Jim McAloon, *No Idle Rich: The Wealthy in Canterbury and Otago 1840–1914*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2002.

20 McAloon, ‘The Christchurch Elite’, p. 194.

21 McAloon, ‘The Christchurch Elite’, p. 195.

22 McAloon, ‘The Christchurch Elite’, p. 205.

23 McAloon, ‘The Christchurch Elite’, p. 197.

24 The same fluidity is noted by Erik Olssen and Clyde Griffen with Frank Jones, *An Accidental Utopia? Social Mobility and the Foundations of an Egalitarian Society, 1880–1940*, Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2011, especially pp. 181–82, 192–94.

The extent to which the consolidation of this colonial elite gave birth to a distinctive class structure has been the subject of considerable recent historical debate. While only its broadest outline is relevant here, it is a debate that is critical to the understanding of the elite family, whether rural or urban. It is a debate, moreover, grounded in a historiographical context in which the layering of colonial society was rarely couched in class terms. The dominant view was that the early achievement of male suffrage, a high degree of social mobility and relatively unrestricted access to land produced something very close to an open society. Similarly, relations between capital and labour were moderated by the peculiarities of a colonial environment characterised by a relatively scattered and transient workforce and the small scale of its enterprises that readily allowed workmen to become 'little masters'.²⁵

Miles Fairburn's influential *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* (1989) provides an interpretation of the foundation of modern New Zealand society from 1850 to 1890, in which class all but disappears as a feature of colonial life.²⁶ By his account, in the second half of the nineteenth century, New Zealand spawned a distinctive colonial ideology that enshrined bourgeois individualism.²⁷ At its core was an 'assumption' that independence could be achieved 'outside a social framework' and 'did not depend on collaboration, mutuality [or] collective arrangements'.²⁸ Significantly, the only exception Fairburn allows to this charter of self-reliance is the family.²⁹ It is a critical exception and one that has drawn comment. The family, as McAloon writes, 'was absolutely crucial to bourgeois identity and economic mobilisation'.³⁰ The espousal by self-reliant individuals of their professed ideal, the classless society, did not so much provide evidence of its achievement, argues McAloon, as illustrate 'the class consciousness' of colonial capitalism.³¹ The effective neglect of the colonial professional elite is more pronounced in the New Zealand historical literature than in

25 Jim McAloon, 'Class in Colonial New Zealand: Towards a Historiographical Rehabilitation', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), vol. 38, no. 1, 2004, pp. 3–21.

26 Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850–1900*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1989.

27 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society*, pp. 50–52.

28 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society*, pp. 50–51.

29 Fairburn, *The Ideal Society*, pp. 51, 56–57, 111–12, 163, 198–200.

30 McAloon, 'Class in Colonial New Zealand', p. 13.

31 McAloon, 'Class in Colonial New Zealand', p. 14.

its Australian counterpart.³² Nevertheless, there is no comprehensive history of this group in either New Zealand or Australia, let alone the Australasian region. This study of middle-class urban professional families in New Zealand and Australia between 1880 and 1920 is a small step in the process of filling this gap.

That the debate about the role of class in New Zealand history should turn, in part, on the role of the bourgeois family also underlines the need for deeper analysis of such families in their own right and as a social entity. McAloon's study of the wealthy in Canterbury and Otago provides a starting point and demonstrates the making of a distinct colonial middle class of considerable coherence and longevity. As a group the emergent colonial elites of Otago and Canterbury, McAloon suggests, remained relatively open to newcomers. He presents a range of social markers likely to provide admission to its ranks. Being British mattered; arriving with some capital helped; a professional occupation was useful, as was Anglicanism. Neither individually nor collectively, however, did these attributes guarantee acceptance. Closer exploration of the nature of middle-class family life and the social relationships that developed between elite and would-be elite families offers a perhaps more nuanced way of understanding how this accommodation between newcomers and the colonial establishment was negotiated.³³

It is still possible to write a general history of New Zealand without direct reference to the family as an institution.³⁴ Its discussion tends to be subsumed under feminism, the suffrage campaigns and the demographic and racial concerns that underlay colonial definitions of motherhood. Such an emphasis tells us much about the perceptions of the family in settler societies. To a degree, it is grounded in the separate 'spheres ideology' with its rigidly defined public and private worlds. In heavily male-dominated colonial societies, the boundary between these two worlds readily became, as Macintyre has pointed

32 For example, John Higley, Desley Deacon and Don Smart, with the collaboration of Robert G. Cushing, Gwen Moore and Jan Pakulski, *Elites in Australia*, Routledge and K. Paul, London and Boston, 1979; Desley Deacon, *Managing Gender: The State, the New Middle Class and Women Workers 1830–1930*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989; John Hirst, *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History*, Black Inc. Agenda, Melbourne, 2005, pp. 149–73; Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees: The Upper Class in Victoria*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1991.

33 McAloon, *No Idle Rich*; McAloon, 'The Christchurch Elite'.

34 Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2005.

out, a gender boundary.³⁵ So pervasive were the evils of the new world male frontiers that women, it was argued, needed to be protected from them and this was best achieved within the private sphere, where they could cultivate the 'higher morality of their sex'.³⁶ Colonial feminists of the late nineteenth century generally chose to build their suffrage campaigns around this assertion of difference. This 'private sphere feminism' accepted, for the most part, the segregation of the sexes and sought to raise the status and authority of women within the family. From this base, they were able to set their sights upon the public sphere. If this involved a conscious strategy, then historians of women's suffrage acknowledge a correlation between women's mobilisation as moral reformers and the achievement of the vote.³⁷

Historians of women's suffrage in Australasia have stressed—and perhaps exaggerated—the middle-class nature of first-wave feminism.³⁸ Its leading advocates are frequently presented as part 'new woman' and part 'colonial helpmeet', thus exhibiting both public and private

35 Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism*, p. 203.

36 Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism*, p. 203–4.

37 Raewyn Dalziel, 'The Colonial Helpmeet: Women's Role and the Vote in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *NZJH*, vol. 11, no. 2, October 1977, pp. 112–23; Phillida Bunkle, 'The Origins of the Woman's Movement in New Zealand: The Women's Christian Temperance Union 1885–1895', in Phillida Bunkle and Beryl Hughes (eds), *Women in New Zealand Society*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980, pp. 52–76; Patricia Grimshaw, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand Society*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1972; Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 102–5; Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia: A Gift or a Struggle?*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and Melbourne, 1992; Judith A. Allen, *Rose Scott: Vision and Revision in Feminism*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994; Susan Magarey, *Unbridling the Tongues of Women: A Biography of Catherine Helen Spence*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1985; Marilyn Lake, 'The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context', in Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley and Susan Sheridan (eds), *Debutante Nations: Feminism Contests the Nineties*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pp. 1–15; Katie Spearritt, 'New Dawns: First Wave Feminism 1880–1914', in Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation*, Harcourt Brace Jovanich, Sydney, 1992, pp. 325–49.

38 Melanie Nolan and Caroline Daley, 'International Feminist Perspectives on Suffrage: An Introduction'; Patricia Grimshaw, 'Women's Suffrage in New Zealand Revisited: Writing from the Margins'; Susan Magarey, 'Why Didn't They Want to be Members of Parliament? Suffragists in South Australia'; Nancy F. Cott, 'Early Twentieth-Century Feminism in Political Context: A Comparative Look at Germany and the United States'; Ellen Carol DuBois, 'Woman Suffrage Around the World: Three Phases of Suffrage Internationalism', all in Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan (eds), *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, and Pluto Press, Annandale, 1994, pp. 7, 30–33, 72, 236–38, 260–65; Eric Olssen, 'Working Gender, Gendering Work', in Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law (eds), *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1939*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, pp. 44–49.

sphere feminism.³⁹ Such a depiction draws attention to the role of the middle-class urban family as arguably the crucible in which ‘women’s rights’ were redefined in ‘men’s countries’.⁴⁰ The achievement of women’s suffrage becomes less a by-product of colonial politics, in which the votes of women provided a conservative bulwark against the encroachment of class and party, and rather more a creative achievement of ‘colonial liberalism’. Macintyre’s *A Colonial Liberalism* provides an interpretation of the phenomenon, in its Australian context, that moves beyond the dismissive implications of ‘colonial’—‘derivative, imitative and deficient’—and suggests that new world circumstances proved liberating.⁴¹ European liberalism defined itself against the past. By contrast, in the colonies of settlement, ‘where there were few traditional forms and no established ruling class’, liberalism ‘was deprived of its natural enemy ... shed its oppositional connotations and became a constructive endeavour’.⁴² This more dynamic interpretation, with its stress upon a more open future, reinforces the need to observe more closely the constructions that the swelling ranks of the urban middle-class families put upon that future. And, by 1894, with the enfranchisement of women in New Zealand and in some Australian states, that future came to encompass an increased emphasis upon family.

* * *

Thus the broad historical framework within which the Australian and New Zealand historiography has been constructed has neglected the role of family in general, and particularly, in the case of New Zealand, the growing significance of an emergent professional elite between 1880 and 1920. In the absence of such research, to date the Australasian colonial middle-class family has largely been seen as a derivative of its British parent. The dominant characteristics of the British upper middle-class family, as set out by historians, may be summarised briefly: a patriarchal institution presided over by a ‘remote’ father and ‘decorous’ mother, mimicking, as much as it was financially able, the lifestyle of the aristocracy. Its day-to-day functioning relied upon the labour of servants. Children were very largely left in the care of others

39 Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein Smith with Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000, pp. 204–8.

40 Denoon et al., *A History of Australia*, p. 204.

41 Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism*, p. 11.

42 Macintyre, *A Colonial Liberalism*, p. 12.

and such closer association between mother and child as occurred flowed from the belief that the family stood apart from the real world, and that the nurturing of children involved necessarily a degree of feminisation of the household. It was to remove young boys from the feminising influence of the family that their sons were sent to public schools. Indeed, the expansion of this aristocratic institution and the spread of its ideals in mid-nineteenth-century Britain rested upon the endorsement of an aspirant middle class increasingly keen to secure the prospects of their sons. Whatever the motivation, the popularity of the public school amongst the middle classes became an entrenched feature of family life, at least for boys.⁴³

British historians have suggested that this characterisation of the stereotypical middle-class family is both too one-dimensional and unduly influenced by what has been called the 'misery memoir'.⁴⁴ Unhappy childhoods, recalled by a few prominent and atypical members of this upper middle class, have come to stand for a majority experience. The reality was more varied and the product of deeper historical forces than mere imitation. Viewed in the broadest of historical senses, the family has been seen as undergoing something of a transformation throughout the nineteenth century as factory and city began to replace farm and countryside as the mainspring of economic life. The separation of work and home that followed recast family dynamics. The father-dominated functional family gave way to a mother-dominated sentimental family. Thus were the seeds of the cult of domesticity sown. Its elaboration marked a retreat from the productive and public sphere to the personal and private. The family thus becomes a sanctuary from the amoral world of men and action.

43 M. Jeanne Peterson, *Family Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989, pp. ix–x, 33; John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800–1964*, Hutchinson, London, 1984; J. R. de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*, Millington, London, 1977; Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Public School Phenomenon 597–1977*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977; Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1972.

44 The 'misery memoir' is a relatively recent term for a biographical genre that recounts childhood trauma. Examples from the Victorian period include Samuel Butler's posthumously published *The Way of All Flesh*, Grant Richards, London, 1903; James Anthony Froude's autobiographical fragment reproduced in W. H. Dunn, *James Anthony Froude: A Biography, vol. 1: 1818–1856*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1961; John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* [1873], Curran V. Shields (ed.), Liberal Arts Press, 1957; and Virginia Woolf's autobiographical writings. See also Peterson, *Family, Love and Work*, p. 33, for a discussion of this trend.

It was a sanctuary, moreover, in which the mother assumed the mantle of moral guardian charged with realising the reformation of the public sphere through her children.

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's seminal work, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (1987), provides the fullest elaboration of this transformation of family life.⁴⁵ Their thesis is essentially that late eighteenth-century England witnessed a 'historic break' in the evolution of the family: 'something significant changed ... and a realigned gender order emerged, more characteristic of modern times, associated with the development of modern capitalism and urbanisation'.⁴⁶ By their account 'separate spheres' became 'the common-sense' response of the middle class as they negotiated the circumstances of time and place.⁴⁷ The narrative may be read, as Davidoff and Hall note, as tracing the 'triumph of "separate spheres"', the confinement of women to the domestic sphere and their exclusion from the public world'.⁴⁸ They reject such a reading and describe *Family Fortunes* as being shaped by a 'multifaceted notion of causation and change' that balances the role of the ideological and material change.⁴⁹ Between 1780 and 1850, they suggest 'enterprise, family, home, masculinity and femininity were re-drawn, negotiated, reformed and reinstalled' in ways that 'transform[ed] patterns of life in families and households amongst the "middling sorts"'.⁵⁰

The separation of home and work, whose origins and significance Davidoff has probed, was a process that was nearing its full flowering just as Australasian cities were beginning to take shape. Historians of colonial Australia and New Zealand have seen the new world middle-class family essentially as a version of its old world parent.⁵¹ At first the colonial experience delayed the separation of home and work. The high cost of manufactured imports meant the middle-class family shed its productive function more slowly than it did its British

45 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* [1987], revised edn, Routledge, London, 2002.

46 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xvi.

47 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xvi.

48 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xvi.

49 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xvi.

50 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xvi.

51 Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male: A History*, Penguin, Auckland, 1987, pp. 51, 221–22; Olssen, 'Families and the Gendering of European New Zealand', pp. 37–62.

parent. In New Zealand the spread of the small-scale dairy farm, after the advent of refrigeration in the late nineteenth century, brought a reliance upon the unpaid labour of a wife and children and thus gave rise to a sharp and enduring difference in the dynamics of urban and rural families. But between 1880 and 1920, the centre of gravity of the colonial population was shifting towards the town and city.⁵² It was there that the bourgeois family and its associated cult of domesticity took shape. Its elaboration took its cue from Britain, was influenced by British books and magazines and reinforced by the preferences of successive waves of middle-class British migrants.⁵³ Historians have demonstrated how a range of social concerns about racial purity, a falling birth rate and drunkenness, grounded in the preoccupations of the urban middle class, enhanced the place of the family in colonial society throughout Australasia.⁵⁴

The growing significance of the middle-class, professional, urban family within Australasia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been linked also to a strengthening of the imperial connection. James Belich has argued that in New Zealand the process produced a 'recolonisation' of society.⁵⁵ With the advent of refrigeration of meat, butter and cheese, New Zealand became a 'wet dairy frontier' rather than a 'dry' pastoral one.⁵⁶ As a virtual British cow-yard, New Zealand was tied 'to London, the centre of the British Empire, as effectively as [by] a bridge'.⁵⁷ It made the most of the tightening economic ties by projecting itself as reproducing only 'best British'. Such an environment was a congenial if not a privileged one for middle-class newcomers from Britain. Their arrival, in increasing numbers and with a preference for the city, has encouraged historians to depict them as active agents in the process of 'recolonisation' in social, cultural and political terms. In filling such a role, they confirmed their decision to leave an 'impaired' Britain and embraced their new home as a 'better Britain'.

52 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 97–102; Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, pp. 221–22.

53 Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, pp. 221–22.

54 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 89–90, 93–95, 99–108, 119–22.

55 James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Allen Lane, Auckland, 2001, pp. 11–12, 29–31.

56 Denoon et al., *A History of Australia*, p. 227.

57 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 96–97.

Belich's 'recolonisation' thesis carries with it an implied loosening of the Australasian connection. New Zealand is seen as seeking to be not only a 'better Britain', but also 'more' British than Australia.⁵⁸ Such an implication draws some of its weight from the stronger radical-nationalist upsurge in Australia, especially evident in literature and art, but also associated with the precocious development of the labour movement and the emergence of labour parties. Whatever the comparative merit of the 'recolonisation' thesis and its implications, our understanding of the attitudes taken by middle-class, professional families to imperial concerns has largely been deduced from political narratives, the activities of influential interest groups, and the biographies and memoirs of male notables. There remain few detailed family studies that might allow us to explore more fully the attitudes, interests and preoccupations of a segment of society whose dynamics are only now beginning to be understood, despite being afforded greater historical acknowledgement.

Recent critiques of the 'recolonisation' theory offer alternative ways of reading the role played by the middle-class professional family. Philippa Mein Smith has suggested that the development of closer economic links with Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries need not be seen as some sort of retreat from progressive and less dependent colonialism back into the shelter of the imperial cocoon. She rejects the primacy 'recolonisation' gives 'to Britain and British ties', and presents economic change—the transition from 'dry' pastoral economy to a 'wet' dairying one—as deliberative and underpinned by ideas and policies that were Australasian in origin.⁵⁹ In her view, the shift was consistent with a commitment to state development that was distinctively Australasian, grounded in nineteenth-century colonial experience and evident in the twentieth century.⁶⁰ Such an interpretation, with its stress on continuity and persistence, allows for a more nuanced interpretation of where newcomers of middle-class, British background fitted into a society in transition. The question now becomes not whether such families were, wittingly or unwittingly, agents of an intensifying imperialism, but where they stood on a continuum in which nationalism and imperialism were not necessarily antithetical but sometimes complementary viewpoints that

58 Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp. 46–52; Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, p. 97.

59 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 96–98.

60 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, p.97.

straddled the native born–migrant divide. Such a focus emphasises the commonalities between the Australian and New Zealand experiences rather than the differences.

Mein Smith's argument, which draws upon Paul Kelly's contested notion of a 'settlement', has implications for interpretations of the middle-class professional family.⁶¹ Designed to mediate the effects of shifts in the world economy, the shared features of the compact—white Australasia, arbitration, protection, 'state paternalism' and 'imperial benevolence'—constituted, Mein Smith suggests, the basic ingredients of a peculiarly antipodean democratic citizenship.⁶² The elaboration of this social contract was carried out against a background of social unrest, seen by many contemporaries as a contest between labour and capital that endangered the 'better Britain' central to the middle-class ideal. How recently arrived British migrants, in the midst of establishing their families in the suburban fringes of cities as different as Melbourne and Christchurch, viewed these accommodations and what, if any, role they played in the elaboration of them remains to be established. What does seem clear, however, is that the process was a defining one in the history of Australasian liberalism and, as such, provides a window on the social and political aspirations of the antipodean middle classes.

That the argument supporting the Australasian character of the 'social compacts' negotiated on both sides of the Tasman derives much of its impetus from the New Zealand experience is unsurprising. It has a rich historiographical pedigree that can be traced back to William Pember Reeves. One of the political victors in the 1890 New Zealand general election, Reeves had described the verdict of the electors as the triumph of the 'masses' over the 'classes' and a prelude to dramatic change. Within little more than a decade he had produced two historical works—*The Long White Cloud* (1898) and the two volumes of *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* (1902)—

61 Paul Kelly, in *The End of Certainty: Power, Politics and Business in Australia*, argues that from 1908 until the 1980s, Australian politics was dominated by an agreement or 'settlement' that included White Australia, Industry Protection, Wage Arbitration, State Paternalism and Imperial Benevolence. Critiques have challenged the degree to which this settlement was unchanging and pointed to the renovation of the settlement in the 1940s. See Tim Rowse, *Nugget Coombs: A Reforming Life* [2002], 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2005, pp. 357–61; Paul Kelly, *The End of Certainty: Power, Politics and Business in Australia* [1992], revised edn, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1994.

62 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, p. 95.

that cast a long historical shadow. The first laid the foundation for a nationalist and radical interpretation of nineteenth-century New Zealand political history and anticipated what has come to be called the 'born modern' thesis. The second brought together the core Australasian legislative changes that formed the basis of what is now described as a 'social compact'. Both books were written in London while Reeves was Agent-General and are presented by Mein Smith as playing a part in persuading British investors to accept the continuing imperial relationship that was necessary to underwrite the economic transformation and its associated social and political accommodations.⁶³

A consistent thread throughout this discussion has been the attractiveness of Australasian cities to the middle-class British family. They came to be seen as constituting something of a social laboratory, in which the family and the role of women within it might be allowed to develop in ways that were less hindered by custom and tradition. As newcomers, their arrival in the new world has been lightly explored. As emigrants, their departure from Britain has begun to attract the attention of feminist historians. Looking, as it were, from the other end of the telescope, they have asked whether the imperial expansion that made migration possible also opened up an 'opportunity for women to experience adventure, employment, status and influence'.⁶⁴ Was it the case that the suburban cities 'on the margins of Empire' were liberating for women? Such research rejects the stereotype of middle-class bourgeois womanhood held to prevail from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1950s as being at odds with the reality of most urban 'middling sort of women' in both the new world and the old. Moreover, in a variety of new world settings, the suburban cities have been judged more flexible for women both inside and outside the family than those of the old world.⁶⁵

Nonetheless, it remains true that the balance of the argument for flexibility is tilted very much on the side of women outside of the family. 'The public', as Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have

63 Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 95–97.

64 Stephanie Jessica Wyse, 'Gender, Wealth and Margins of Empire: Women's Economic Opportunity in New Zealand Cities, c.1890–1950', PhD thesis, King's College London, University of London, 2008, p. 13.

65 Wyse, 'Gender, Wealth and Margins of Empire', pp. 11–20, 21–64.

written, 'was not really public and private not really private'.⁶⁶ Both were 'constructs with specific meaning' that needed to 'be understood as products of a particular historical time'.⁶⁷ The particularities of married women in middle-class, migrant professional families in Australasian cities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remain less than fully revealed. To some extent, the economic activities of some professional households—most notably those of doctors and lawyers—may be seen as constituting a family 'enterprise', in which 'public' and 'private' sometimes overlapped. Significantly, it was from within the middle-class enclaves that the suffrage movement gathered momentum in the late 1880s. The philanthropic and charitable groups that grew alongside the franchise organisations and exhibited a high degree of shared membership with them similarly offered married middle-class women a greater public presence.

These tendencies within the middle-class suburbs of the new world were scarcely foreign to the middle-class migrant women arriving in the new world in the 1880s. Indeed, the possibility that the colonies might offer greater opportunity for their fuller development serves to underline the degree to which the 'family' envisaged by migrant couples may be seen as an extension of old world families they were leaving behind. The precise role and meaning of 'family' in the establishment of its colonial branch needs elaboration in 'old world' and 'new world' terms. Similarly, despite the element of distancing implicit in the act of migration, the evidence of a persistent British connection remains visible in the life of the colonial family. The persistence of this influence, and whether it was exerted or sought, requires placing in the particular and changing circumstances of family in both the old and new worlds.

The 'family connection' could take a variety of forms and was, as likely as not, to link the new world couple more closely to the family of the wife as the husband. The most obvious was money. As a marriage gift, continuing remittance or inheritance, British capital helped sustain colonial middle-class families and secure a place in their new society. Just as common as direct financial contribution was the dispatch of manufactured goods, objects not available in the colonies, such as musical instruments (most notably the piano), furniture, artworks,

66 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. 33.

67 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. 33.

or more practical household and sporting goods. Assistance from 'Home' might also take the form of advice and counsel, whether proffered or sought. The education of children—especially that of boys—was frequently the subject of correspondence with family members in the old world. Would a colonial education suffice? If it was judged inferior and a son despatched 'Home' to attend public school or university, it was 'family' in Britain that made it possible by providing a home away from home during holidays. Moreover, family provided the network of households that made the trip 'Home' by the new world couple and their children more realisable.

Standing somewhere on the colonial–transnational continuum, such relationships are rooted in the conundrum in which the act of migration is typically wrapped. The precise mix of 'push' and 'pull' factors that exercised the minds of any professional, married couple contemplating migration can only be known at the individual level. Of few middle-class professionals, however, could it be suggested that lack of economic opportunity was itself a sufficient explanation for the decision to migrate.⁶⁸ Neither are there many instances where the decision to marry and leave for the new world is accompanied by an elaborated appraisal of the society being left behind and the one about to be embraced. Something of these private musings make their way into personal diaries (mostly the record of women). Such public airings as they receive tend to be the work of men and are most commonly part of farewell speeches given by departing, newly-wed husbands. Encased in the conventions of the day they reveal little. On occasions, however, the considered views of a couple on the eve of migration are given public expression in forms that confront directly the meanings that infuse their conception of 'family', and indicate its importance to their decision to marry and move to the edge of the Empire.⁶⁹

Historians have frequently described British nineteenth-century middle-class migrants as constituting an 'uneasy' segment of society. The uneasiness is said to come in a variety of forms and reflects a variety of concerns, many of them deeply religious or moral in nature. Davidoff and Hall present a picture of an 'intensely religious

68 See Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600*, Hambledon, London, 2004, ch. 9.

69 Alison Drummond (ed.), *Married and Gone to New Zealand: Being Extracts From the Writings of Women Pioneers*, Paul's Book Arcade and Oxford University Press, Hamilton and London, 1960.

provincial middle class', whose men and women 'placed themselves in opposition to an indolent and dissolute aristocracy, and a potentially subversive working class'.⁷⁰ They endorse E. P. Thompson's notion of classes defining themselves in their expressed antagonism for other classes and present a gendered concept of class.⁷¹ As they see it, 'One of the most compelling strands ... of this middle class was the commitment to an imperative moral code within a revised domestic world, a precursor to the Heavenly Home'.⁷² In this way, they argue, 'the religious idiom' became a middle class 'cultural norm'.⁷³ The home and family became the critical site for the construction of redefined concepts of 'manliness' and 'femininity', which became 'key categories' in a new moral order.

Davidoff and Hall see these developments as providing a bridge to the domestic or familial feminism of the second half of the twentieth century: 'The mid-century common-sense division into a public world of politics and market activity assigned to men and the private sphere now contained in the suburban villa set the framework for the feminism of John Stuart Mill.'⁷⁴ To the extent that the middle-class professional families who made their way to the suburban cities of the new world in the 1880s were influenced by these changing currents of opinion, they may be seen as carrying its essence in their ideological and cultural baggage. Historians of the suffrage campaigns in both Australia and New Zealand have analysed the public manifestations of these ideas in the debates that preceded the enfranchisement of women and in the social movements that were associated with it. What is less well known is whether these ideas survived the journey to the new world. What role, if any, did the feminism of John Stuart Mill play in the decision to marry and go to the antipodes? To what degree and in what ways can these ideas be shown to influence the construction of the colonial middle-class family?

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70 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xviii.

71 E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968.

72 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xviii.

73 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. xviii.

74 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. 454.

In its exploration of how the Australasian fragment of the British professional middle class adapted to its colonial framework, this book stands on the shoulders of an emergent literature about the late nineteenth-century family. It is a literature which, as we have seen, builds upon the path-breaking and closely textured work of Davidoff and Hall's *Family Fortunes*. They demonstrated how the notion of the privatised family developed within the domestic sphere where, as wives and mothers, women came to assume an idealised status. By showing how this gendered ideal was shaped as much by women as by men, they describe the ways in which men and women negotiated the circumstances of their changing environment. In particular, they argue that the middle-class conception of the home as a retreat from the evils of industrial society was grounded in the two major intellectual influences—the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment. In apparently contradictory but often complementary ways, the religiosity and emphasis upon the Bible of the Reformation and the rationality of the Enlightenment informed middle-class views of the family. Above all else, Davidoff and Hall demonstrated that the family was a social construct that was being constantly made and remade, as class and gender both accommodated and fashioned the world that men, women and children occupied.

Davidoff and Hall's pioneering work drew upon and has been extended by demographic research that points to significant changes in family size throughout the nineteenth century.⁷⁵ Such studies characterise the nineteenth century as one which witnessed the death of the 'long family' and the shrinking of the interlocking web of 'cousinage' that had previously enabled individuals to live out their lives almost completely within the confines of family. The middle class, it has been demonstrated, led the shift towards the smaller family and their pre-eminence has been described as the rational response to a changing society. As part of an emergent meritocracy, their family fortunes

75 Simon Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860–1940*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996; Angeliqne Janssens (ed.), *Gendering the Fertility Decline in the Western World*, Peter Lang, Bern, 2007; Mark Rothery, 'The Reproductive Behaviour of the English Landed Gentry in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2009, pp. 674–94; Eilidh Garrett, Alice Reid, Kevin Schurer and Simon Szreter, *Changing Family Size in England and Wales: Place, Class and Demography 1891–1911*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001; Michael Anderson, 'The Social Implications of Demographic Change', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750–1950*, vol. 2, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 1–70; Wally Seccombe, 'Starting to Stop: Working-Class Fertility Decline in Britain', *Past and Present*, no. 126, 1990, pp. 151–88.

depended upon an ability to provide children with the educational opportunities that would enable them to assume a place within it. It was a response that provided the framework for the emergence of the privatised family held to be the ideal of the nineteenth-century British bourgeoisie.

Whatever the rationality of its origins, it is only in recent years that the dynamics of the middle-class family that took shape in the second half of the nineteenth century have been subjected to closer analysis. By showing that the making of this family was as much the work of women as men, Davidoff and Hall opened the way for closer scrutiny of how in practice 'separate spheres' operated. Historians have identified how, to the extent they relied upon their intellectual labour rather than inherited wealth or family patronage to sustain their place in society, middle-class professionals were obliged by economic reality to see marriage and career as a form of family enterprise. Studies of politicians, academics, members of diplomatic service, and the Protestant ministry have revealed what Hanna Papanek has called 'two-person single career' marriages, in which the wife is expected to participate in her husband's career without direct acknowledgement or remuneration.⁷⁶ Such arrangements were often based upon an understanding that fulfilling these functions helped 'to oil the social machinery', and in this sense they merged with whatever wider sense of partnership or family enterprise that existed within individual marriages.⁷⁷

If Davidoff and Hall's *Family Fortunes* placed the family on the historical agenda, the more recent emergence of studies of masculinities has put the middle-class father back in the family.⁷⁸ The most influential of the theoretical approaches sustaining such studies has been the notion

76 Hanna Papanek, 'Men, Women and Work: Reflections on the Two-Person Career', *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 78, part 4, 1973, pp. 852–72; Deacon, *Managing Gender*, pp. 13–14.

77 Deacon, *Managing Gender*, p. 13.

78 For examples see John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*, Person Longman, London, 2005; Phillips, *A Man's Country?*; Megan Doolittle, "'Missing Fathers': Assembling a History of Fatherhood in Mid-Nineteenth Century England', PhD thesis, University of Essex, 1996; Claudia Nelson, *Invisible Men: Fatherhood in Victorian Periodicals, 1850–1910*, University of Georgia Press, Athens, GA, 1995; Shawn Johansen, *Family Men: Middle-Class Fatherhood in Early Industrialising America*, Routledge, New York, 2001.

of 'hegemonic masculinity'.⁷⁹ The term has been used in a variety of ways: as a convenient shorthand for the male attributes that were most widely approved within a given society; to suggest that what is being described is the masculinity of a ruling or dominant class and the gendered face of class; to encompass notions of social control and suggest that the rationale of hegemonic masculinity is the maintenance of male authority over women. In this latter sense, it influenced the history of gender and sustained the notion of the patriarchal family, in which male authority was not necessarily accompanied by minimal involvement in family life beyond that directly related to its material well-being.

Moreover, in his recent study of the concepts of masculinity that prevailed within the English middle class of the nineteenth century, John Tosh has demonstrated that commitment to family and positive engagement with developing the potential of children was central to community understandings of manly behaviour and essential to the maintenance of gentlemanly status. Critical to these assessments was a judgement of a father's success in preparing his children to fill a useful role within society. The education of sons was examined more rigorously, but the neglect of a daughter's education might also diminish a man's standing. Thus, Tosh's exploration of the shifts that occurred in nineteenth-century definitions of masculinity suggests that separate spheres were not so separate and that the private and public worlds of the middle class were in constant dialogue. His findings underline the need for a more textured approach to the role of the father within the family and have implications for the persistence of patriarchy as a useful theoretical category in the discussion of the middle-class family. His work strengthens what individual case studies have suggested: namely that middle-class fathers came in a variety of forms, from the stereotypical remote patriarch to the involved parent. Indeed, he makes a compelling case for a need to see middle-class fathers of the late nineteenth century as the first generation of males to grapple with a new social order that cast them in the role of sole breadwinner and also required them to be attentive to the individual needs of family.⁸⁰

79 Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870–1920*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, Victoria, 2001, pp. 4–8; R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1987, p. 183; R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995, p. 77.

80 Tosh, *A Man's Place*, passim.

Such, then, is the broad historiographical context in which the mid-Victorian middle-class professional family has been placed. Somewhat less attention has been given to the decision of members of this segment of British society to migrate. Studies of the rise of the professional class have charted its numerical growth, noted fluctuations in demand for particular professions, observed that the Empire and particularly its settler societies proved increasingly attractive as they matured beyond the pioneering phase and attempted to assess whether those who migrated were the misfits or failures of the old world, or its most adventurous, ambitious or alienated fragment. Such macro studies provide a broad contextual explanation, but do not provide the level of particularity necessary to link migration to developing concepts of the family, apart from the general observation that migration offered better prospects for the professional classes during a time when industrial expansion allowed something like a British world economy to develop.⁸¹

While migration histories concentrate in the main upon the more numerous urban working class, rural labourers or artisans, they provide a range of perspectives on the role played by family in the migratory process that has general relevance. Family is commonly portrayed as the 'lynchpin' of migration, providing the personal links that encourage and reinforce the decision to migrate. It is sometimes the setting in which utopian notions envisaging migration as transformative, in personal or collective terms, take root. The family is also characterised as a foundational form of migrant identity and in this sense has been portrayed as constituting a form of networking. To historians attempting to see the expansion of the British Empire as a form of globalisation, the middle-class family becomes a part of the 'software of empire', agents of 'Britishness' and part of a global chain of kith and kin that generated within and between colonies personal friendships and professional connections. Historians have come to

81 Daniel Duman, *The English and Colonial Bars in the Nineteenth Century*, Croom Helm, London, 1983; K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846–1886*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998; W. J. Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England*, Weidenfield and Nicolson, London, 1966; Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia 1788 to the Present*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2000; Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children*.

see these linkages as enlarging 'Britishness' in a web-like fashion that adds a dimension to the previous conceptions that saw it as being defined along a core-periphery axis.⁸²

The act of migration impacted in a variety of ways upon the dynamics of family life. If the death of the 'long family' in nineteenth-century Britain eroded the possibility of a life lived entirely within the extended family, migration threw individual families back on their own devices. Historians have identified two compensatory and complementary responses, greater reliance upon each other and an increased willingness to reach out in search of kindred spirits. Such engagements outside the personal domestic environment, whether between families in the private sphere, or more publicly within ethnic enclaves or professional associations, inside religious congregations, cultural organisations or sporting groups, underline the sense of isolation that enveloped migrant families and the importance of developing networks and friendships. 'Bowling alone', to borrow Robert Putnam's title, offered a fraught pathway to acceptance in a new society, one more likely to ensnare couples who were not natural joiners and women confined by the demands of childrearing to the domestic sphere.⁸³

82 Gary Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People and Capital in the British World, c 1850–1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010, p. 106; Belich, *Paradise Reforged*; W. D. Borrie, *The European Peopling of Australasia: A Demographic History 1788–1988*, Demography Program, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1994; Louis Hartz, *The Founding of New Societies*, Harcourt, Brace & World, New York, 1964; Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*; James Jupp, *The English in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004; O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*; Brad Patterson (ed.), *The Irish in New Zealand: Historical Contexts & Perspectives*, Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, 2002; Brad Patterson (ed.), *Ulster-New Zealand Migration and Cultural Transfers*, Four Courts Press, Dublin and Portland, 2006; Lyndon Fraser, *Castles of Gold: A History of New Zealand's West Coast Irish*, Otago University Press, Otago, 2007; Lyndon Fraser, *A Distant Shore: Irish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2000; Lyndon Fraser and Katie Pickles (eds), *Shifting Centres: Women and Migration in New Zealand History*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2002; Donald Harman Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860–1950*, Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1990; Jim Hewitson, *Far Off in Sunlight Places: Sites of the Scots in Australia and New Zealand*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, and Canongate, Edinburgh, 1998; David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1995; Angela McCarthy (ed.), *A Global Clan: Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities since the Eighteenth Century*, Tauris Academic Studies, London and New York, 2006; Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland 1800–1945*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2008.

83 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Simon & Schuster, New York and London, 2000.

The interaction of ideas and material change fundamental to the reconstruction of the family in the nineteenth century has been given further impetus by classical scholars. They have shown how understandings of antiquity shaped the world view of the educated classes and provided a frame of reference that was instantly recognisable amongst the generations of British professionals who established themselves and their families in the maturing settler societies. Amongst the more influential precepts to be absorbed from the ancients was the notion that the educated classes were morally obliged to cultivate the whole person—mind as well as body—in a quest for excellence that would benefit the civic community. It was but a short step, and one that the writings of John Stuart Mill helped many of the educated middle class to take, to attach this obligation to the family and harness it to the quest for social progress.⁸⁴

This high-minded conception of the family as an instrument of social change flourished alongside the evolution of girls' education and the emergence of the women's movement. The middle-class family was at the forefront of these developments and early historical accounts of their role stress radical intent and feminist purpose.⁸⁵ Historians now find ambiguity of purpose and a sometimes hesitant commitment to change expressed in a school curriculum that yielded its old forms only slowly and a cautious attitude to the careers of their daughters.⁸⁶

Alongside these trends there have been a number of significant shifts in the way historians look at the relational aspects of family life. These shifts are neither linear in their development nor strongly present

84 Leigh Dale, *The English Men: Professing Literature in Australian Universities*, Association for the Study of Australian Literature, Canberra, 1997; Frank M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*, Yale University Press, New Haven and Connecticut, 1981; Eugenio F. Biagini, 'Introduction: Citizenship, Liberty and Community', in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, pp. 6–9; Biagini, 'Liberalism and Direct Democracy: John Stuart Mill and the Model of Ancient Athens', in Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community*, pp. 23–44.

85 For example, Edith Searle Grossmann, *Life of Helen Macmillan Brown: The First Woman to Graduate with Honours in a British University*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, 1905.

86 Marjorie Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and Melbourne, 1996, pp. 6, 64–90, 94–95, 126–29, 190–93, 210–13; Alison McKinnon, *The New Women: Adelaide's Early Women Graduates*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986, pp. 15–16; Dorothy Page, 'The First Lady Graduates: Women with Degrees from Otago University, 1885–1900', in Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald and Margaret Tennant, (eds), *Women in History 2: Essays on Women in New Zealand*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1992, pp. 98–128.

in their Australasian setting. It is possible to identify two broad and often overlapping approaches: studies of women's lives within notable families and studies that employ the techniques of collective history to explore a single theme or themes within one family or across a range of families.⁸⁷ The former has produced a range of popular narratives that focus upon the individual lives of women within prominent families.⁸⁸ They add to our knowledge of how these families work, and women's roles within them, but the exploration of the relational aspect of family life is a secondary concern. Typically, within the more themed exploration of women's lives amongst the middle class, the dynamics of family life have assumed greater prominence. Both approaches build their studies upon the close examination of the literary remains of individual lives.

These trends are more weakly present in published historical writing about the middle-class family in Australasia. In both Australia and New Zealand the narrative story of pioneer families dominates the early biographical landscape.⁸⁹ The lives of urban middle-class families of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, unless glimpsed fleetingly in the pages of biographies of male politicians, remain largely hidden from view. Something of the newer approaches is present in studies of Australian artistic and literary families such as Brenda Niall's *The Boyds: A Family Biography*, Joanna Mendelssohn's *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family* and Lionel

87 Barbara Caine, *Destined to be Wives: The Sisters of Beatrice Webb*, Clarendon Press, Oxford and New York, 1986; Peterson, *Family, Love and Work*; Judith Flanders, *A Circle of Sisters: Alice Kipling, Georgiana Burne-Jones, Agnes Poynter and Louisa Baldwin*, Viking, London, 2001; Barbara Caine, *Bombay to Bloomsbury: A Biography of the Strachey Family*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005; Martin Pugh, *The Pankhursts: The History of One Radical Family*, Allen Lane, London, 2001; Sheila Fletcher, *Victorian Girls: Lord Lyttelton's Daughters*, Hambledon Press, London, 1997.

88 For example, Mary S. Lovell, *The Mitford Girls: The Biography of an Extraordinary Family*, Little, Brown and Company, London, 2001; Anne de Courcy, *The Viceroy's Daughters: The Lives of the Curzon Sisters*, Wiedenfield & Nicolson, London, 2000; James Fox, *Five Sisters: The Langhorns of Virginia*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2000; Jeremy Lewis, *Shades of Greene: One Generation of an English Family*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2010.

89 For examples see, John Deans, *Pioneers on Port Cooper Plains: The Deans Family of Riccarton and Homebush*, Simpson and Williams, Christchurch, 1964; Martha Murdoch, *They Built for Tomorrow: The Story of the Blair Family*, Otago Daily Times Ltd, Dunedin, 1970; Janet Holm, *Nothing but Grass and Wind: The Rutherfords of Canterbury*, Hazard Press, Christchurch, 1992; Gordon Ogilvie, *Pioneers of the Plains: The Deans of Canterbury*, Shoal Bay Press, Christchurch, 1996; Marnie Bassett, *The Hentys: An Australian Colonial Tapestry*, Oxford University Press, London, 1954; Mary Durack, *Kings in Grass Castles*, Lloyd O'Neil, Melbourne, 1974; Margaret Kerr, *Colonial Dynasty: The Chambers Family of South Australia*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1980.

Lindsay: An Artist and his Family, and John Rickard's avowedly experimental study of the Deakin family.⁹⁰ In *Maud and Amber*, Ruth Fry traces two generations of feminism through the lives of the wife and daughter of the Liberal politician and historian, William Pember Reeves. Paradoxically, we know more of the workings of the New Zealand artisan family than we do of the middle-class professional one. Margaret Lovell-Smith's *Plain Living High Thinking* is an intimate account of the inner dynamics of a Christchurch family's life that traces the relationships within it and explores the prominent role its women (and men) played in the wider suffrage campaigns. Melanie Nolan uses the techniques of collective biography to explore the range of life experiences within a single Christchurch railway family.⁹¹

The application of these new trends is perhaps more explicitly present in several recent doctoral studies. In her work on English immigrants to eastern Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century, Janet Doust made extensive use of the papers of a single family (supplemented by several other less comprehensive family records) to build up analytical case studies of the motives that prompted family migration.⁹² Helen Pfeil's study mined similar sources to construct a broad analysis of parent-child relationships—from birth to adolescence—within the upper middle-class family of eastern Australia between 1840 and 1900.⁹³ Both studies use the individual case study within the framework of a collective biography as the most effective way of uncovering the relationships, attitudes and values that form the private basis of family life.

90 Brenda Niall, *The Boyds: A Family Biography*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2002; Joanna Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay: An Artist and His Family*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1988; Joanna Mendelssohn, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family*, Angus and Robertson, Pymble, 1996; John Rickard, *A Family Romance: The Deakins at Home*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, Victoria, 1996.

91 Ruth Fry, *Maud and Amber: A New Zealand Mother and Daughter and the Women's Cause, 1865–1981*, Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 1992; Margaret Lovell-Smith, *Plain Living High Thinking: The Family Story of Jennie and Will Lovell-Smith*, Pedmore Press, Christchurch, 1994; Melanie Nolan, *Kin: A Collective Biography of a Working-Class New Zealand Family*, Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 2005.

92 Janet Doust, 'English Migrants to Eastern Australia 1815–1860', PhD thesis, The Australian National University, 2004.

93 Helen Pfeil, 'Raising Colonial Families: The Upper-Middle-Class in Eastern Australia, 1840–1900', PhD thesis, The Australian National University, 2009.

The field of family history is 'vast and porous' and the boundaries between it and other forms of history necessarily blurred.⁹⁴ Historian Cynthia Comacchio sees this 'messiness' as a reflection of the messiness of family life itself and the fact that 'family reaches into virtually every corner of human existence'.⁹⁵ *Family Experiments* demonstrates the broad reach of what might be termed the history of the family, in its thematic focus upon gender, education, migration and social reform. It endeavours to draw attention to the role of the professional middle-class family in the evolution from the 1890s of a relatively comprehensive state welfare system that placed the family at its centre. It suggests that the professional middle class played an instrumental role in defining and initiating the relationship between the family and the particular form of colonial liberalism that nurtured these developments. As a collective biography based on personal papers, diaries and correspondence, *Family Experiments* might be considered a history 'from within' that traces the threads that link—at some times more strongly than others—the private world of the family with the remaking of Australasian society at a time of significant transformation.⁹⁶ Comacchio has argued that 'families make history at least as much as the inverse is true'.⁹⁷ It is the central contention of *Family Experiments* that the peculiar circumstances of antipodean society of the late nineteenth century enhanced the role of the middle-class professional family as agents of social change.

* * *

Within this framework, *Family Experiments* explores the nature of the family, in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, amongst an Australasian urban professional class in which first generation British migrants are a dominant force. It takes the form of a thematic, collective biography to reveal the experience of five families. Its central concerns are: to discover the understandings of family that such migrants possessed on the eve of their departure for

94 Esme Cleall, Laura Ishiguru and Emily J. Manktelow, 'Imperial Relations: Histories of Family in the British Empire', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 14, no. 1, Spring 2013.

95 Cynthia Comacchio, "'The History of Us': Social Science, History, and the Relations of Family in Canada', *Labour/ Le Travail: Journal of Canadian Labour Studies*, vol. 46, Fall 2000, p. 170.

96 Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Shame and Privacy in Modern Britain*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2013, p. 5; Alison Light, *Common People: The History of an English Family*, Penguin Random House, UK, 2015.

97 Comacchio, "'The History of Us'", p. 213.

the new world; to explore what role, if any, these understandings played in their decision to leave Britain; to trace the process by which they established their families within the emergent professional class of the new world cities of Melbourne and Christchurch; to explore the nature of the individual marriages that lay at the centre of these newly constituted colonial families; to examine how, as parents, they constructed the childhoods of their sons and daughters and what expectations they had of them; and, finally, to assess what influence, if any, such families exerted in shaping community attitudes towards the family.

Responses to these questions have, to some degree, been structured around the family that provides the most explicit statement of intent, and has left the most comprehensive record of its life—the Wildings. For Julia Anthony, the daughter of a Manchester textile manufacturer turned Hereford newspaper proprietor, councillor and long-serving mayor, and Frederick Wilding, lawyer, son of a surgeon, prominent athlete and active member of the local Liberal Association, the decision to marry and go to New Zealand in 1879 came after extensive deliberation. Central to their thinking was a well-articulated conception of the family spelt out by Julia in a series of articles she contributed to the *Hereford Times*. In essence, she presents to her readers the family as the crucible in which all future social progress would be achieved. The family possessed the potential to liberate both men and women. Its goal for both sexes should be the encouragement of ‘useful citizenship’ in which the choice for women to enter the public sphere should be freely available. Hers was, as Davidoff and Hall might put it, the feminism of John Stuart Mill, though she did not share his belief ‘in a natural division of labour and of spheres’.⁹⁸ Thus Julia Wilding’s familial feminism set itself apart from the genteel femininity that Penny Russell has analysed in a finely textured study of women’s lives within the colonial gentry. If a ‘wish of distinction’ produced ‘genteel performance’, the quest for usefulness produced vigorous engagement.⁹⁹ Julia’s efforts to put precept into practice, faithfully if not exhaustively recorded from within a familial framework, offer a vantage point from which to construct a composite picture of middle-class professional family life that is more complex and varied.

98 Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes* [2002 edn], p. 454.

99 Penny Russell, *A Wish of Distinction: Colonial Gentility and Femininity*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1994.

In selecting the families for this study an attempt has been made to confront questions of typicality and representativeness. As the table following this introduction makes clear, all five families have a British migrant as their male head of household; two came from Scotland, two from Ireland and one from England. In two cases marriage preceded migration and the two decisions formed part of a considered appraisal of family prospects. In all cases the families that form the basis of this book were constructed in the new world, three in Melbourne, Australia, and two in Christchurch, New Zealand. In occupational terms the families spread across two broad categories—the small colonial academic world that was taking root as an offshoot of its British parent and a legal profession that grew as colonial cities matured. Both occupations conferred status, but, as professionals operating within the private rather the public sphere, lawyers stood to become more obvious beneficiaries of expanding colonial economies. Both occupations were held to signify membership of the intellectual community and were fertile breeding grounds for the development of networks of men and women with enthusiasms and ideas.

Thematic collective biographies of the family have commonly ranged over larger numbers of families, sometimes as many as 60.¹⁰⁰ The preference for the more closely textured, qualitative case study of five families is founded in the contention that the dynamics of family life are best revealed in the more intimate exchanges of daily life. The historian is here constrained by the nature of the family records that remain. The professional classes of the late nineteenth century were steeped in the literary tradition of their age and, if some were more assiduous maintainers of family papers than others, have had much to say in diaries, letters and memoirs about their domestic or private lives and their network of friends and acquaintances. While there is unevenness between family records and within the records of an individual family, the lives observed here are richly present in the

100 John Tosh's *A Man's Place* draws on the papers of 60 families, though explores seven in-depth. Pat Jalland explores the lives of women in more than 50 families in *Women, Marriage and Politics 1860–1914*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986. Helen Pfeil's thesis 'Raising Colonial Families' deals with 13 families. On the theory of collective biography, see, for example, Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p. 199; Jalland, *Women, Marriage and Politics*, pp. 1–5; Nolan, *Kin*, pp. 16–17, 23–33; Alison Booth, *How to Make It as a Woman: Collective Biographical History from Victoria to the Present*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2004, pp. 4, 9–21; Diana K. Jones, 'Researching Groups of Lives: A Collective Biographical Perspective on the Protestant Ethic Debate', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2001, pp. 325–46; Lawrence Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus*, vol. 100, no. 1, 1971, pp. 46–79.

written word. It is a written word that is selective, subjective and in varying ways a literary occasion.¹⁰¹ It nonetheless provides a text from which we may recover something of the fabric of family life amongst Australasia's professional class of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The process of interrogating these primary documents of family life has benefited in some cases from published biographies of individual family members. While not primarily concerned with relationships either within or between families, they have often provided useful insights and frameworks for the understanding of more private experience.¹⁰² Moreover, although five families are a relatively small sample, there are enough differences as well as similarities between the migrants' backgrounds to suggest that these few may be indicative of the many.¹⁰³

This book is developed within three sections. The first—Departures—locates each individual (or couple) within their family, professional and social contexts and attempts to explore their attitudes and assumptions about family and their broader philosophies, evident as they envisaged their lives in the new world. It is organised in two chapters that group together two married couples, Frederick and Julia Wilding and Orme and Mary Masson, and three young men, Henry Higgins, Alexander Leeper and John Macmillan Brown. This grouping embodies a fundamental difference: couples for whom marriage and migration are intimately related envisage family in idealistic and optimistic terms; individuals, (whether their migration experience is encased within a family group, such as Henry Higgins) or as part of a quest for professional advancement, dwell more upon social or personal realities and think in ways that reflect a mixture of hopeful idealism and cautious expectation.

101 Katie Holmes, *Spaces in her Day: Australian Women's Diaries of the 1920s and 1930s*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1995, p. xiii; Harriet Blodgett, *Centuries of Female Days: Englishwomen's Private Diaries*, Allan Sutton, Gloucester, 1989, pp. 39–57, 181–93; Margo Culley, "I Look at Me": Self as a Subject in the Diaries of American Women', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 17, parts 3 and 4, 1989; Nolan, *Kin*, pp. 16–17, 23–33.

102 Margaret Lovell-Smith, *Easily the Best: The Life of Helen Connon (1857–1903)*, Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 2004; John Poynter, *Doubts and Certainties: A Life of Alexander Leeper*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1997; John Rickard, *H.B. Higgins: The Rebel as Judge*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984; Len Weickhardt, *Masson of Melbourne: The Life and Times of David Orme Masson, 1886–1923*, Royal Australian Chemical Institute, Parkville, Melbourne, 1989. R. J. W. Selleck's, *Finding Home: The Masson Family*, Australian Scholarly Press, Melbourne, 2013, was published after the bulk of *Family Experiments* was written.

103 Nolan, *Kin*, pp. 23–33.

The second section—Arrival and Establishment—groups the newcomers according to occupation: lawyers and academics. It attempts to uncover the processes by which they made their way within an emergent professional society and realised the family lives they envisaged. The third section—Marriage and Aspirations—focuses upon the dynamics of family life. Organised thematically, it begins with a chapter that traces the nature of the individual marriages within which varying concepts of family evolved and devotes three chapters to an examination of the nurture of children that gave expression to these ideals. Here we observe, in the intense preoccupation with the education of their daughters and sons, the full flowering of family idealism. The fact that two of the three chapters are devoted to daughters reflects the importance these families attached to gender equality in education and provides an opportunity to examine their perceptions of the roles their educated daughters might play in the achievement of the better society.

