

## Cultural Colonization and National Identity

*The student, a man in his sixties and himself a migrant from Britain in the postwar period, asked at the conclusion of my seminar presentation: when did New Zealand become postcolonial?*

*I could tell from the way he asked the question that he wanted me to nominate a date, a year, perhaps, or at least provide an indication of a particular decade.*

*There's Bobbi Sykes's poem, I offered, after a moment of confusion and hesitation:*

*Post colonial . . . .  
Have I missed something?  
. . . Have they gone?!*

W.H. OLIVER once commented that historians discussing the New Zealand past were inclined to 'speak of colonisation as if it occurred only at half a dozen points in a limited period: it [was] over when the Scots came to Dunedin'. Had he been talking to an audience in Christchurch rather than Dunedin, Oliver would no doubt have used the arrival of the Canterbury Association colonists in 1850 as his particular example. He meant, of course, that historians of New Zealand customarily considered colonization to be the series of activities which characterized the period, primarily from 1840 through to the early 1850s, when the first organized European settlements were established in and around Auckland, New Plymouth, Wanganui, and on both sides of Cook Strait, as well as Christchurch and Dunedin; and, certainly, for many historians, the very word colonization was redolent of E.G. Wakefield's theories and the antipodean ventures, often rather speculative ones, that were a consequence of his publications and promotions. Oliver for his part was encouraging historians to use a full range of regional examples when making generalizations about the New Zealand past, and on this occasion he noted that European colonization of other regions in New Zealand went on right through the nineteenth century and was still occurring in the Gisborne East Coast area (he was then preparing a history of that region) in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

With one major recent exception (James Belich in *Making Peoples* regards the whole period from the 1830s to the 1880s as an era of 'organised, progressive and British colonisation'),<sup>3</sup> Oliver's observation is still broadly accepted some 30 years after he first made it: the term colonization, when it is used at all, is

applied by historians to the earliest decades of organized British settlement in New Zealand. Certainly, the ongoing negative consequences for Maori of colonization are more likely to be admitted now than was the case three decades ago; but Pakeha historians do not discuss the possibility that colonization itself may be an ongoing process, or ask very often whether colonization might be construed as something more than organized occupation (or ‘settlement’) of discrete parts of the landscape.<sup>4</sup> It seems likely that this situation is at least in part a result of the preoccupation of certain scholars, especially from around the middle of the twentieth century, with issues of ‘national identity’, with what New Zealand seemed to have become, or was believed to be becoming, rather than with the formative influences which may have continued to configure and constrain the historical process. In the first half of the twentieth century, several historians referred to New Zealand as a nation, usually emphasizing how admirably British it was both in origin and in evolution, and thereby commanding, explicitly or implicitly, its colonial foundations. Later historians, most notably and influentially Keith Sinclair, preferred to think of New Zealand and New Zealanders in the twentieth century as transcending their British origins, outgrowing their colonial beginnings, not just aspiring to but achieving national identity and independence.<sup>5</sup> Within this perspective, with the development of the nation regarded as the primary narrative, the colonial period becomes a precursor to the era of nationhood, and colonization, inaugurating the colonial period, becomes an episode in the early history of the nation.

The progress of the colonial society towards nationhood has been reckoned in various ways by historians, including the articulation of ‘national’ communications systems, the establishment of ‘national’ organizations, communal celebration of sporting and military achievements under New Zealand banners in international arenas, constitutional adjustments which diminish imperial control and increase local autonomy, and, related to the constitutional alterations, extensions of independent government initiatives in matters of trade and defence. Historians have also measured the development of a sense of national identity through evaluations of local literary and artistic activities. While there were many optimistic assertions of nationhood in the cultural productions of writers and painters, and in enthusiastic local applause for their works, from around the 1890s onwards, later opinions were less favourable. In his seminal and highly influential centennial survey, *Letters and Art in New Zealand* (1940), E.H. McCormick did not discern ‘signs . . . of adult nationhood’ in New Zealand literary efforts until the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> McCormick’s verdict was upheld by Keith Sinclair in *A History of New Zealand* (1959).<sup>7</sup> In *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand’s Search for National Identity* (1986), Sinclair considered the works of the literary nationalists of the 1890s an example of ‘premature nationalism’, echoing another of McCormick’s comments. He was especially critical of the ‘innumerable attempts to poeticize Maori myths and legends’ which ‘almost invariably failed’, one of his own efforts included.<sup>8</sup> Thus the historical significance of local works of art and literature came to be judged by their aesthetic success and the extent to which they were perceived to be implicated in the creation of an authentic (or ‘mature’) national identity. Such approaches make for a compact canon, but they exclude from historical consideration the great majority of works produced

in New Zealand and leave contemplation of these works to specialist historians of art and literature.

While canonical works do have exceptional influence, and for that reason will always deserve more extensive scholarly treatment than less highly regarded creations, a difficulty of any highly selective discussion of cultural productions is that it is a little like kings-and-battles history, with contextual circumstances and enabling structures almost invisible beyond the spectacular pageants in the foreground. If the 'innumerable attempts to poeticize Maori myths and legends' were not all coincidental, which is improbable, or not primarily recreational activities, which is unlikely, it is reasonable to ask why these attempts were made, and continued to be made, doubtless even beyond Keith Sinclair's own effort in 1941. Sinclair himself hints at an important dimension in his comments that '[t]he early New Zealand nationalists had almost nothing that could be regarded as Pakeha cultural items, so they tried to plunder parts of Maori culture', and that '[t]he aim of the writers was perfectly clear: to take literary possession of the New Zealand experience and the environment'.<sup>9</sup> Words and phrases such as 'plunder' and 'take possession' are often associated with colonizing activities. What picture might emerge if 'national identity' was not the organizing principle of discussion, but, instead, the production of cultural artefacts was considered in a colonization perspective? This article goes on to outline how it might be possible to make sense of a wide range of cultural productions by examining them in the framework of colonization instead of nationhood/national identity/nationalism. The discussion is schematic, designed to highlight structural features, with a minimum of empirical data; and because it is schematic, the emphasis is on sequences rather than precise chronology. While several examples in the discussion refer to the 1890s and the early twentieth century, examples might be drawn from throughout the last century. The processes identified continue in various forms to the present day.

Considered in a very broad sense, the New Zealand past since Europeans first appeared over the horizon is not *sui generis*, but a component of a much wider process, the expansion of European power into the global arena from the fifteenth century onwards. More precisely, what took place in New Zealand after the establishment of British sovereignty in 1840 is an example of a particular kind of European domination of portions of the non-European world, the formation of a settler society through the establishment of a European society in an already inhabited non-European territory. A distinguishing feature of settler societies is that Europeans appropriate not just the wealth of the country, as for example in India, but also most of the lands of the indigenous peoples: that is, the material and cultural base of the original inhabitants is expropriated, by conquest, or by threat of force, or through tortuous 'legal' channels controlled by the colonists for their own advantage. These lands are not occupied temporarily, but are 'settled' permanently by the invaders.

Settler societies are composed initially of very unsettled people, migrants who have, by the very processes of migration, left behind much of what gives the world meaning for human beings, including kin, community and their accustomed landscape. The new world they enter is profoundly and disturbingly

alien, and the colonists set out to make this world normal, from their perspective, through the destruction of what they encounter (which they often called ‘wilderness’), and the substitution of congenial European practices, forms, and phenomena. This does not mean that there are no adaptations by colonists to what confronts them, or that indigenous species and vistas are always considered of no account, or that all settlers find the face of the country repugnant (although it is likely that most colonists will be dismayed by their surrounds at some stage). Rather, it means that migrants seek to transform the new world they are entering into a simulacrum of the old world they have come from — one which re-creates an imagined former Golden Age or an improved version of whatever part of the contemporary metropolitan society they had recently quit. The colonists plant deciduous oak trees, gorse hedges, orchards, flower gardens, vegetable gardens. They sprinkle imported names on the land to replace unknown or unpronounceable indigenous names. They grow crops of wheat and barley. They stock the streams with trout and salmon, the farms with cattle, and hope that the rabbits introduced a short time ago will survive and multiply.<sup>10</sup>

Later generations born into or brought up within the settler society from a very early age develop different attitudes. They have no direct experience of the old world, or very little, as an internalized, remembered frame of reference, so they cannot be shocked by the contrast between old and new to the extent that the migrants once were. Nor, as a consequence, do they feel so obsessively impelled to transform the ‘wilderness’ — much of which in any case has proved to be discouragingly difficult to transform. Conversely, they grow up with, say, cabbage trees as part of their visual experience: they cannot regard such species as alien in the way their migrant parents did or do, however much they are prompted by them to do so; indeed, they may come to think of their spears as friendly and familiar shapes.<sup>11</sup>

These locally born settlers, then, live in a culture and environment which incorporates both introduced and indigenous phenomena, and they seek to understand and appreciate this world, to acquire knowledge of its names and dimensions and rhythms and interrelationships, so that they will be at home in the land where they were born and brought up. For many, this process is unselfconscious; for others, disconcerted by migrant elders’ praise for the introduced and denigration of the indigenous, the matter seems more urgent: in some measure, they want to become ‘native’, to belong to this place.<sup>12</sup> Terry Goldie calls the process ‘indigenization’: ‘[a] peculiar word’, he admits, ‘it suggests the impossible necessity of [settler society people] becoming indigenous’.<sup>13</sup> Indigenization entails knowing about the local world. These would-be natives can learn about the old world from their migrant families and in schools, and they can learn about institutions, customs, laws, objects and species imported from the old world through experience as well as from families and in schools. But gathering more than superficial and ad hoc knowledge of indigenous phenomena is trickier. In traditional societies, older members of families and communities will impart detailed information about people, places, social patterns, behaviours and the natural world to the young: grandmother will identify for a child the bird just startled out of the hedgerow. In a migrant

community, the curious child will not be able to turn to grandmother for identification of the indigenous birds strutting aggressively among a cluster of cabbage trees, or for associated proverbial lore.

These kinds of knowledge could be acquired by settlers from the indigenous people themselves, directly, efficiently and very rapidly, through immersion in their social and signifying systems, but the continued existence of colonial communities would be endangered if more than a few settlers crossed over to the indigenous society. There are usually severe social sanctions (in some colonies there were legal prohibitions) to dissuade colonists from 'going native'. Despite individual exceptions, and leaving aside the activities of surveyors, land purchase agents and other government functionaries who worked closely with Maori, most colonists did not obtain substantial knowledge of indigenous matters — names and properties of flora and fauna, names of landscape features, local climatic patterns, characteristics of local soils — from Maori in person. Nevertheless, much information originally derived from Maori was made available to settlers through printed materials. Print allowed the knowledge-gathering efforts of a handful of Pakeha to be put at the service of the colonial society in general.

Writing and printing were crucial technologies in maintaining and extending the power of the settler society over the indigenous inhabitants. The use of the written and printed word as a sharp instrument of colonization, in such examples as treaties, proclamations, laws and ordinances, and prospectuses of colonizing agencies, is well known. What is at issue here, however, is not the kinds of documents that mark the most notorious aspects of colonization, but books and newspapers and journals and other mechanically reproduced materials with no direct relationship to the more obvious acts of colonization: verse, prose fiction, histories, ethnographies, memoirs and reminiscences, tourist guide books and albums of scenic views, topographical directories, school textbooks and other educational materials; and images (photographs, drawings, reproductions of local works of art) are as important as words.<sup>14</sup> Through printed materials, large amounts of information about New Zealand and its indigenous phenomena were standardized and, with a vigorous newspaper industry and compulsory elementary schooling, efficiently and effectively disseminated throughout colonial society. What community elders could not provide, knowledge of the local, was readily accessible through printed materials.

Of course, not all colonists were keen or even competent readers, and books were expensive. In addition, many locally published books had limited print runs. However, quite a few New Zealand produced books began life as series of articles in local newspapers, which were pleased to have local copy, and thus these texts were available to large numbers of readers relatively cheaply. Graded school readers from around the 1890s onwards incorporated New Zealand materials, even when they were produced in Britain for the New Zealand market, and they were printed and reprinted in considerable quantities, as well as being resold by pupils who were fortunate enough to pass through the standards, or passed on down to younger siblings.<sup>15</sup> The local material in the school readers was often adapted from books produced for adults. From 1907 onwards, 11

issues of the *New Zealand School Journal*, at three different levels, were distributed free to all state elementary pupils each year, and the print runs of these journals ran into the tens of thousands. While some historians have commented on the sizeable imperial (and imperialistic) content, the journals also contained large amounts of locally generated materials on New Zealand subjects, and, as with the graded readers, there were plenty of graphic images of the New Zealand landscape. Since numbers of teachers were migrants, especially the senior staff (by age or qualification), well into the twentieth century, graded readers and journals provided information about New Zealand that many teachers could not supply from personal and academic knowledge. Generous selections of photographs featured in widely circulating weekly publications, including the *Auckland Weekly News*, the *New Zealand Graphic*, also from Auckland, the *Wellington Free Lance*, the *Christchurch Weekly Press*, and the *Otago Witness*. Some of these spreads of images enjoyed long lives as vernacular wallpaper in modest or makeshift residences.

What kinds of knowledge of New Zealand did printed materials provide? Or, to ask the question in another way: what was the 'New Zealand' that the colonists produced discursively through their various textualizing strategies? Approaching this issue through the strategies of textualization instead of concentrating on particular printed materials provides a broad sense of what the colonists were about. One important strategy was to domesticate the incorrigible wilderness. This was effected in several ways. Many colonists wrote verse, which was intended to evoke or depict particular landscapes, or distinctive 'unspoiled' New Zealand landscape in general; and most local novels included at least short passages designed to conjure up images of archetypical New Zealand terrain, again frequently the unmodified landscape. Knowing and having possession of the local landscape entailed working out what words could be applied to it, so that it could be spoken about. The aesthetic qualities of these works, usually not great, are unimportant. What is significant is that they were produced, even if they were not widely read (and possibly verse in newspapers and magazines, which was sometimes used to fill partly empty columns, was not read at all). More important in taming the wilderness were photographs (sometimes original works of art and drawings of parts of the landscape were also reproduced), both in the weekly newspapers with photographic supplements, like the *Auckland Weekly News*, and in guidebooks; the latter sometimes included prose evocations to complement the pictures.<sup>16</sup> This 'New Zealand' was primarily a limited number of locations and specific subjects, especially mountains, lakes, glaciers, fiords and forests (or 'bush'), presented as 'beautiful', and so described in captions or accompanying descriptive passages. These landscapes were also empty of people, unless campers, trampers and day-trippers, gazing in awe, were included in the frame to provide some scale for a grand panorama, or perhaps to signify Pakeha occupation. Pakeha New Zealanders 'knew' about Mt Cook and the Tasman Glacier, Mitre Peak, the Sutherland Falls, Lake Wakatipu, Lake Taupo, Mt Egmont (as Mt Taranaki was then called), and other scenic wonders without ever visiting these often out-of-the-way places, simply through repeated reproduction of images that became iconic. Knowing them,

they possessed them, in images (as designs on tea towels, as trade marks on various products, as scenes on postage stamps) and in imagination, distinctive, special, familiar and cherished parts of their New Zealand.

But the New Zealand landscape was full of other invisible presences which the colonists found unsettling because they were unknown, to the colonists at any rate: the topographical nomenclature of the indigenous people, the names they used for even the smallest features of the landscape, streams, hills, rocky outcrops, flats at the bends of rivers where small groves of karaka trees were growing, rapids, shingle beds, ridges. Pakeha collected these names, not as the surveyors did for exploration and triangulation, but to gather indigenous knowledge, to become natives by knowing what the natives themselves knew about the land. In newspapers, later in booklets and books, colonists published lists of names, and tried to decode their 'meanings', often by recourse to a Maori language dictionary: it was not just the names they wanted, but understanding. Nevertheless, in published form the names were usually arranged alphabetically, without reference to adjacent associations, and without acknowledging that the names belonged to particular iwi and hapu.<sup>17</sup> Gradually some Pakeha came to realize that not all or even most Maori names were descriptive of the terrain, but had been bestowed to commemorate experiences thereabouts or as mnemonics for episodes in their tribal history, and they sought to acquire the stories within the landscape. The colonists no longer insisted on applying names derived from the European homelands, and, in fact, coined 'Maori' names to apply to new railway stations, post offices, suburbs, streets and schools because they wanted picturesque and distinctive 'indigenous' names for these institutions and locations.<sup>18</sup>

European scientists and collectors, first as visitors and then, later, as colonists, 'discovered' and classified, according to Linnaean rules, New Zealand flora and fauna. The indigenous species were expected to die out, like Maori themselves, displaced by what the colonists imported. Felling, milling, burning (and crushing) vegetation, and killing native birds in addition to destroying their habitats, helped to expedite the displacement process. In time, some species became prized by colonists, sources of pride because of their distinctiveness in shape, plumage and habits, especially certain indigenous birds whose images became well known through the frequent reproduction of the handsome pictures engraved by J.G. Keulemans for Walter Buller's sumptuous books on New Zealand birds, even though the reproductions most people saw were, unlike the coloured originals, in black and white. Many colonists never glimpsed the real-life birds, or viewed them only as stuffed specimens in museum display cases, but they knew about them through published materials. Reference works on fauna supplemented scientific data with natural history, and, very often, résumés of Maori lore and legend associated with the birds were included in textual descriptions. Maori names for species were usually offered as alternatives to English and scientific nomenclature.<sup>19</sup>

This was also the case with indigenous vegetation. The wealth of data provided by writers often included information derived from Maori, rarely acquired directly from Maori by authors but drawn from earlier printed works.<sup>20</sup> While

the backblocks settlers fired hundreds of hectares of forest, Leonard Cockayne's *The Cultivation of New Zealand Plants* (1923) was printed in an edition of 5000 copies: one chapter recommended 'Native Plants for School Grounds and Children's Gardens'.<sup>21</sup> In *Plants of New Zealand*, a book of several hundred pages, lavishly illustrated with black and white photographs, first published in 1906 and in its seventh edition by 1964, Robert Laing and Ellen Blackwell mixed scientific information with enthusiastic descriptions of the aesthetic qualities of indigenous vegetation. At a certain time each year, they noted, the matai tree, called by many settlers black pine, presented 'a brilliant appearance. Where the bark peels off in circular flakes, bright scarlet or crimson patches appear below, and a tree thus scaled is a beautiful object.' Where possible, Laing and Blackwell included quotations from verse which featured indigenous flora, attempting, as Laing said in another publication, to weave 'into our traditions and memories a strong affection for the wild flowers of our native land'. Laing and Blackwell suggested that manuka was 'the colonial counterpart of the English broom and gorse . . . One of the loveliest sights of the land is a great valley at Christmas-time, clad with *Leptospermum* [manuka] in full flower. From a distance of a mile or two, the country seems to be spread with a sheet of snow, so profusely does the plant flower.' (Most farmers, by contrast, called manuka 'tea-tree' and regarded it as a pest.) Laing and Blackwell added comments about Maori uses of plants or Maori legends for many entries.<sup>22</sup>

Another writer, Alan Mulgan, who set about utilizing Maori words for flora quite self-consciously to show how they could be incorporated in verse, left an account of his deliberations.

In reading English literature we have to make an unending series of adjustments in season, landscape, and social habit. In writing we have to adapt our inherited instrument of language to our own life, our land and its ways of thought and speech. Consider the lovely sound of English place names; for example 'Evenlode' and 'Windrush'. The very sound of those names gives us pleasure. Words, however, are more than sounds; they have meanings and associations. It stands to reason that 'Evenlode' and 'Windrush' mean more to an Englishman steeped in the beauty of his country-side than to a New Zealander, especially if he has never seen England. May we not, however, find music in our own names? When I was in my fifties I brought this idea into a poem called 'Aldebaran'. I wrote that as we went through life we New Zealanders were accompanied by two sets of words, English and Maori. I set down a string of English words 'Windrush', 'hawthorn', 'rosemary', 'loose-strife', and so on, and then mixed them with Maori.

Meadowsweet, primrose, Hebrides;  
 Kowhai, Sirius, Moana, Miro;  
 Aldebaran, Wainui, Miro;  
 Konini, konini, rosemary, riro.

My idea is that as the years pass, provided we do not butcher pronunciation unmercifully, Maori words will gradually creep into our minds and hearts and become an integral part of our inner life.<sup>23</sup>

Maori themselves and their cultures were textualized by Pakeha, so that the colonists could ‘know’ the people they were displacing. It is not too much to say that the colonists produced (or invented) ‘the Maori’, making them picturesque, quaint, largely ahistorical, and, through printed materials, manageable. The Maori population seemed to be in decline until the end of the nineteenth century, according to census figures; later censuses indicated increases, but Pakeha continued to believe that extinction was but a short distance away in the future. Salvage ethnologists, a tiny number of Pakeha adepts who had access to Maori through facility in their language, collected data on what was assumed to be, and was in publications presented as, traditional culture, about to disappear forever along with the people. Lore denominated esoteric by Maori was published, in translation, by Pakeha, thereby making it freely available to any curious enquirer.<sup>24</sup> Their material culture was taxonomized, their myths and legends turned into history, with genealogies converted into chronological markers, their religious beliefs and rituals classified according to current European anthropological fashions, their legends loosened from landscape and tribe to become ‘New Zealand’ legends, retold in Victorian styles, and even turned into ‘fairy tales’ for Pakeha children. ‘Is it to be supposed that a Maori can tell a story better than a European?’ asked James Izett in the Preface to his appalling renditions of *Maori Lore* (1904), published by the Government Printer.<sup>25</sup> Staged photographs in studios and in the field were ‘read’ as taken from life, like reproductions of certain documentary paintings: while few Pakeha children would have seen the original of C.F. Goldie and L.J. Steele’s vast canvas depicting *The Arrival of the Maori in New Zealand* (1898), few can have avoided seeing the picture in school textbooks or issues of the *School Journal*.

Cast as ‘Other’, Maori were exoticized (and sometimes eroticized) in their own country. Any settler, including some who quite literally knew individual Maori, could ‘know’ about Maori by visiting a library and consulting carefully shelved volumes. Buyers of books could purchase Maori as a commodity, and own their images as objects. A Tuhoe kaumatua commented in the 1970s: ‘the number of . . . Pakeha people, who know better than I do how I am to be a Maori just amazes me’.<sup>26</sup> Some of the Pakeha who gave John Rangihau advice on being Maori might have been children in the 1930s and 1940s when the history textbook for standard 3 pupils was *Our Nation’s Story*. Students were encouraged to ‘Make a brown paper book. Give it a suitable name, such as “My Book of the Maoris”. In it put pictures of the bush, fish, trees and anything else you think suitable.’ Another suggestion was that they make lists headed ‘Maori Games’ and ‘My Games’; yet another: ‘Imagine you are a sentinel . . . Tell the story of an attack on the pa; or if you are a girl, tell the story of how your mother cooked food in the hangi.’ This was in effect ‘playing Maori’, like Americans ‘playing Indian’.<sup>27</sup> Contemporary Maori, as opposed to ‘the ancient Maori’, were textualized too, but usually in books of racist ‘jokes’ and in cartoons which made them figures of fun. That was another (textual) way Pakeha might ‘know’ (and manage) Maori.<sup>28</sup>

While ‘traditional’ Maori were frozen in ahistorical time through books (and in museums), Maori in the period since initial contact with Europeans were given important parts to play in historical accounts compiled by Pakeha, and in colonists’ memoirs and reminiscences. Such accounts purport to be more or less truthful accounts of what really happened in the past to individuals and communities, based either upon unimpeachable documentary records, which may be quoted or reproduced in extenso to indicate their authenticity, or upon the reliable recollections of colonists. They tell straightforward (sometimes simplistic) stories, with varying amounts of corroborative detail; indeed, many of them tell the same plain story, notwithstanding variations in place and time and personnel, recounting in moral or providential or racial terms — but with a proper respect for chronology — the circumstances under which settlers came to be dominant and the indigenous peoples subordinate, and making this outcome seem natural, conclusive and definitive. All these histories share an essential characteristic, beyond the similarities in the story contours: they propose the settler presence to be unproblematic, and they problematize the ‘Other’.

In contriving to invert the world as it really is, by presenting the settlers as legitimate inheritors and rendering the indigenous peoples as marginal, these historical accounts, scholarly and ‘unscholarly’ alike, are not simply memorializations of what is supposed to have happened in the past, but are actual sites of (textual) colonization. As Terry Goldie points out in *Fear and Temptation*, ‘[e]ach reference in *The Bulletin*, the nationalistic nineteenth-century Australian magazine, to the white Australian as “native” or “indigenous” is a comment on indigenization, regardless of the absence of Aborigines in those references’.<sup>29</sup> Uncritical comments about the assertion or evolution of a national identity for Pakeha New Zealanders, made in histories published in the 1890s or in histories published in the 1980s, are in a similar case, whether Maori are explicitly mentioned or not. Those histories which propose national identity/nationhood/nationalism as the normative narrative, which consider national identity to be a natural, even organic growth rather than an ideological construction, and which conceal how national identity is fabricated within the broader processes of colonization, are themselves colonizing texts, not ‘representations’ of the past but *practices* with real and continuing consequences.

Thus, much of what has been called literary nationalism, and sometimes dismissed as ‘premature’, is not in fact nationalism, but an important component of colonization, a complex series of activities which might be termed cultural colonization — not the colonization of culture but colonization through various cultural practices, particularly those involving writing and printing.<sup>30</sup> Cultural colonization is but one element of New Zealand cultural history, but it is a significant one, and it deserves detailed attention from historians. That will mean contextual and symptomatic reading of a great deal of material customarily regarded as not meriting analysis or as essentially ephemeral, retrieving items (verse, fiction, reminiscences, drawings, photographs) from newspapers, trying to find copies of graded school readers and issues of the *School Journal* (in general, these kinds of materials have been collected less assiduously by librarians than, say, complete runs of *Landfall*), sampling many slim volumes

of indifferent verse, ploughing through chronicles of districts and schools and parishes dense with names of (mostly male) local worthies. Nevertheless, this empirical labour is necessary to ensure that cultural colonization is not deployed reductively. That work will make better sense, too, when New Zealand historians are able to illustrate and exemplify the multiplicity of identities which people in settler societies present within the kaleidoscope of daily life, adjusting gender roles, ethnicity, sexuality and ‘nationality’ day by day, and even hour by hour, as they are constituted and reconstituted in different social situations. ‘National identity’ is just one of many masks colonists wear.

Nor should cultural colonization be read as another ‘fatal impact’ metaphor that effaces Maori agency. It is an approach to examining and accounting for the form and content of some Pakeha cultural activities. Questions about Maori collaboration and the uses Maori may have made of Pakeha cultural productions are other important issues that remain part of the total context.<sup>31</sup>

Reworking New Zealand cultural history from the perspective of colonization rather than confining it within the (en)closure of national identity should not be seen as such an impossibly large task that it seems pointless to begin. Some 30 years ago, when Ruth Ross published her important article on the Treaty of Waitangi, historians could not have foreseen the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal, the extension of its jurisdiction, and the massive historiographical, intellectual, political, and, potentially, economic consequences that have resulted. Which scholars now think that issues of raupatu/confiscation, land alienation and land acquisition are dead and gone, ‘just history’, so to speak?<sup>32</sup> And what about Maori sovereignty debates? Perhaps historical writings dealing with cultural matters that do not take postcolonial perspectives and problematize the presence of Pakeha run the risk of being considered as parts of the colonizing process. Colonization is not just an early morning fog that dissipates mid-morning as the bright sun of national identity comes out.

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## NOTES

1 This incident is not apochryphal. The full poem is in Bobbi Sykes, *Eclipse*, St Lucia, Qld, 1996, p.16 (first ellipsis mine, second ellipsis in original). For their comments on drafts for this article, I wish to thank the following: Catharine Coleborne, Jeanine Graham, Anna Green, Fiona Hamilton, Bronwyn Labrum, Kirstie Ross.

2 W.H. Oliver, *Towards A New History?*, Dunedin, 1971, p.25.

3 James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland, 1996, p.280.

4 Again, James Belich is the most notable exception, with his concept of 'recolonization': Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, 2001. 'Recolonization' does not seem to me to be incompatible with the concept of cultural colonization developed in the present article.

5 Keith Sinclair, *The Native Born: The Origins of New Zealand Nationalism*, Palmerston North, 1986; Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959, pp.295–301; Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington, 1986.

6 E.H. McCormick, *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, Wellington, 1940, p.170.

7 Sinclair, *History*, pp.191–6, 269–73.

8 Sinclair, *Destiny Apart*, pp.46, 50, 268 note 19; McCormick, p.124; Sinclair, *Native Born*, p.10.

9 Sinclair, *Native Born*, p.10; Sinclair, *Destiny Apart*, p.54.

10 Ideology and ecology neatly summarized in E.M. Bourke, *A Little History of New Zealand Progressive From Discovery to 1880 For Children*, 2nd ed., Melbourne, 1882, p.94. See also the excellent essay by Katherine Raine, 'Domesticating the Land', in Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum, eds, *Fragments: New Zealand Social & Cultural History*, Auckland, 2000, pp.76–96.

11 On this, see Philip Simpson, *Dancing Leaves: The Story of New Zealand's Cabbage Tree*, *Ti Kouka*, Christchurch, 2000, pp.171–236.

12 See, for example, Alan Mulgan, *The Making of a New Zealander*, Wellington, 1958, pp.11–12, 28–33.

13 Terry Goldie, *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literatures*, Quebec, 1989, p.13.

14 For art, not further discussed in this essay, see Francis Pound, 'The Land, the Light, and Nationalist Myth in New Zealand Art', in Jock Phillips, ed., *Te Whenua Te Iwi: The Land and The People*, Wellington, 1987, pp.48–60; Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Maori 1840–1914*, Auckland, 1992. For crafts, see Ann Calhoun, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in New Zealand 1870–1940: Women Make their Mark*, Auckland, 2000, pp.17, 25–29, 72–75, 112, 118. For other logos and images, see Richard Wolfe, *Kiwi: More-Than-a-Bird*, Auckland, 1991; Richard Wolfe, *Well Made New Zealand: A Century of Trade Marks*, Auckland, 1987, pp.24–51. See also the brilliant essay by Anna K.C. Petersen, 'The European Use of Maori Art in New Zealand Homes c. 1890–1914', in Barbara Brookes, ed., *At Home in New Zealand: Houses History People*, Wellington, 2000, pp.57–72.

15 See Hugh Price, *School Text Books Published in New Zealand to 1960*, Palmerston North, 1992; C.M. McGeorge, 'The Use of School-Books as a Source for the History of Education 1878–1914', *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* (NZJES), 14, 2 (1979), pp.138–51; McGeorge, 'Learning About God's Own Country', NZJES, 18, 1 (1983), pp.3–12.

16 For example, B.E. Baughan, *Glimpses of New Zealand Scenery*, Christchurch, 1922; C.N. Bayertz, *Guide to New Zealand: The Most Wonderful Scenic Country in the World. The Home of the Maori. The Angler's and Deerstalker's Paradise*, Wellington, 1912.

17 For example, A.W. Reed, *Maori Place Names And Their Meanings*, Wellington, 1950.

18 Johannes Andersen, *Maori Place-Names Also Personal Names and Names of Colours, Weapons, and Natural Objects*, Wellington, 1942, pp.406, 440. For examples of breaking Maori place names into syllables/words and then 'translating' to provide a meaning, see W.H.S. Roberts, *Maori Nomenclature*, Dunedin, 1912.

19 Ross Galbreath, *Walter Buller: The Reluctant Conservationist*, Wellington, 1989, pp.166, 268; F.W. Hutton and James Drummond, *Animals of New Zealand: An Account of the Colony's Air-Breathing Vertebrates*, Christchurch, 1904; Drummond and Hutton, *Nature in New Zealand*,

Christchurch, 1902; Mona Gordon, *Children of Tane: Bird Life in New Zealand*, London and Christchurch, 1938.

20 Mona Gordon, *The Garden of Tane*, Wellington, 1944; Arnold Wall and Lucy M. Cranwell, *The Botany of Auckland*, 2nd ed., Auckland, 1943.

21 L. Cockayne, *The Cultivation of New Zealand Plants*, Christchurch, 1923, ch.11.

22 R.M. Laing and E.W. Blackwell, *Plants of New Zealand*, 3rd ed., Christchurch, 1927, pp.66, 276; Laing, *New Zealand Wild Flowers*, Christchurch, 1907, p.2.

23 Mulgan, p.128.

24 See M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Maori Origins and Migrations: The Genesis of Some Pakeha Myths and Legends*, Auckland, 1979; Sorrenson, *Manifest Duty: The Polynesian Society Over 100 Years*, Auckland, 1992.

25 James Izett, *Maori Lore: The Traditions of the Maori People With the More Important of Their Legends*, Wellington, 1904, p.v.

26 John Rangihau, 'Being Maori', in Michael King, ed., *Te Ao Hurihuri: The World Moves On: Aspects of Maoritanga*, Wellington, 1975, p.232.

27 *Our Nation's Story: A Course of British history . . . Standard III*, Christchurch, c.1930, pp.13, 21, 29. Brown paper was then the only paper available in schools that could be cut to size; it was the wrapping paper customarily used by grocers and other retailers. Perhaps one of these brown paper books still survives somewhere. The New Zealand Collection of the University of Waikato Library has a black-leaved album designed for mounting photographs and/or postcards, titled 'Maori Sketches', in which is pasted various images of and texts on traditional Maori, plus two handwritten sections, 'Maoris' and 'Maori Art', a clipping from *National Education* dated 1 July 1947 p.203, a few postcards, a section labelled 'Maori Children Sketches', mostly children in demeaningly 'humorous' poses. The item is shelved at NZC DU423.A1M317. 'Playing Maori' was perhaps not infrequent in state schools: see, for example, the small book of playlets written or compiled by a lecturer at Christchurch Training (i.e. Teachers') College: Janet McLeod, *Little Plays From Maori Legend*, Christchurch, 1934.

28 For example, Pat Lawlor, *Maori Tales: A Collection of 100 Stories*, Sydney, 1926; A.A. Grace, *Hone Tiki Dialogues*, Wellington, 1910.

29 Goldie, p.14.

30 Cultural colonization is internal to a society; colonialism is the policy of a metropolitan power — thus the term 'cultural colonialism' used by Kenneth Coutts-Smith is a different (but of course related) phenomenon: Coutts-Smith, 'Some General Observations on the Problem of Cultural Colonialism', in Susan Hiller, ed., *The Myth of Primitivism: Perspectives on Art*, London, 1991, pp.14–31. In an essay first published in 1981, Ernest J. Wilson III writes: 'The Black community [in the USA] has been subjected to a kind of internal Orientalism'. Wilson, 'Orientalism: A Black Perspective', in A.L. McPhie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader*, New York, 2000, p.243.

31 On this general issue, see Arif Dirlik, *Postmodernity's Histories: The Past As Legacy and Project*, Lanham, MD, 2000, pp.203–28.

32 For an interesting discussion of the implications of settlers/Pakeha 'asserting native status', see Michèle D. Dominy, *Calling the Station Home: Place and Identity in New Zealand's High Country*, Lanham, MD, 2001, ch.7.