

# The Far Side of the Search for Identity

## RECONSIDERING NEW ZEALAND HISTORY\*



AFTER THE DEATH IN SEPTEMBER 2001 of poet and scholar Allen Curnow, Brian Rudman wrote that within Auckland University in the mid-1960s a kind of subversion was taking place — not the largely imaginary political subversion which engaged the attentions of the Security Intelligence Service, but a subversion of old notions of identity. Students like himself, said Rudman, ‘were being introduced by teachers like Keith Sinclair, Bob Chapman and Allen Curnow to the fact that New Zealand had its own history, its own politics, its own literature, and by extension, a road of its own to take in world events’. Throughout his own schooling, Rudman went on, ‘history had been British kings and queens, and the corn laws and other irrelevancies. Wall maps dominated by the pink of the British Empire still ruled classrooms. As for poetry, it was about hosts of golden British daffodils.’ However, ‘another truth’ was revealed to Rudman at university, ‘A more relevant, New Zealand-centred truth. It was that we were a nation with a history and a will of our own.’<sup>1</sup> Rudman’s account epitomizes the influence of the cultural nationalists upon a generation or more of Pakeha New Zealanders who were active in the arts and literature or supporters of such cultural activities. Indeed, that influence continues to be highly significant today, even in the highest offices of the land, although the ‘New Zealand’ which the earlier cultural nationalists constructed over several decades in the middle of the twentieth century has become much more complex since the 1960s.

As a student at the University of Auckland in the mid-1960s, I too was exposed to these cultural nationalists, most notably to Keith Sinclair, who had recently introduced a New Zealand history course into the undergraduate programme. When he appeared before his students, I recall, there was a buzz of expectation and excitement. His opening comments, witty, colloquial and slightly astringent, were like a string of firecrackers. Against those who questioned the viability, even the possibility, of New Zealand history as a university subject, he insisted New Zealand’s history was significant and worth studying. In a very plausible manner, he delineated the distinctiveness of New Zealand and New Zealanders, characterizing the wooden bungalows with corrugated iron roofs which could be found in cities, suburbs and towns throughout the country, each house set on its own plot of land or section, the fowlhouse for ‘chooks’ somewhere down the back of the garden. He was depicting a New Zealand that, in many respects, I knew myself; and I guess the majority of the students in the room, most of whom were Pakeha, came from similar backgrounds. The only jarring note for me in the Professor’s entertaining performance was his assertion that New Zealand imported its standard of living. Having spent my entire life on a dairy farm before attending university, I believed as an article of faith that exports, not imports, were the *sine qua non* of New Zealand’s existence and that farmers

were the backbone of the country. However, finding out a little later in the course about Julius Vogel's development policies helped me understand the comment about imports and standards of living.

Cultural nationalism seemed then to be a vital element in the country's political and cultural maturation, in making progress beyond colonial origins and imperial apron strings and such terms as 'New Zealand' and 'New Zealand national identity' were used without any sense of strain or difficulty. By and large, they are still employed as if quite transparent. Yet, they are highly problematic terms that ought to be subjected to close scholarly scrutiny. Of course, there is a geographical entity which can be called New Zealand, or Aotearoa, or Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu — at any rate, there is an archipelago in a particular position on planet earth and that archipelago is usually called New Zealand. In almost every other way, 'New Zealand' is a discursive construction, a shorthand device for referring to a multiplicity of places, peoples, products, practices and histories. 'National identity', specifically 'New Zealand identity' or 'New Zealand national identity', is also a discursive construction rather than a collective sensibility that evolves or develops 'naturally'. I have suggested elsewhere that the construction by Pakeha of a New Zealand national identity was not a sign that the colonization phase of history was over, but an important part of the on-going (and still uncompleted) processes of colonization.<sup>2</sup>

There are also biographical elements to be identified in the growth of cultural nationalism, not least in the case of Keith Sinclair, who discovered, perhaps most clearly when undergoing officer training for the Royal Navy in Britain, that he and his fellow New Zealanders were rather different from the British.<sup>3</sup> 'The Search for Identity', the epilogue to Sinclair's *A History of New Zealand*, can be read as a rejoinder to William Pember Reeves' tentative depiction of 'The New Zealanders' at the end of *The Long White Cloud*.<sup>4</sup> In wartime and in peacetime, New Zealanders, Pakeha and Maori, became aware in their travels that there was some variation in cultural practices among people who spoke the English language; and these travellers at times quite reasonably celebrated the differences and sometimes boasted of their distinctiveness. All this was and is grist to the mill of cultural nationalists. They defined their 'New Zealandness' *vis-à-vis* other peoples. For their part, scholars searched out literary and historical antecedents to account for and emphasize this 'New Zealandness' — provided, indeed, a sense of 'New Zealandicity'. In the hands of some historians, and Keith Sinclair is the most notable example, 'national identity' was, historiographically, a very valuable heuristic device. But it is perhaps time for New Zealand historians to become less parochial and insular and to decentre or even dissolve 'New Zealand' as a subject.

If historians were to decentre 'New Zealand' as a subject, what other explicatory frameworks might they deploy? There have been several important attempts to situate New Zealand's pasts in a regional framework. It is worthwhile remembering that not only did William Pember Reeves write the first satisfactory New Zealand-centred history of these islands, but, four years after *The Long White Cloud*, published *State Experiments in Australia & New Zealand*, which included historical perspectives. And Keith Sinclair himself was a pioneer in researching trans-Tasman topics, eventually editing *Tasman Relations: New*

*Zealand and Australia, 1788–1988*. More recently, Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein Smith, with Marivic Wyndham, have produced for the Blackwell History of the World series *A History of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific*. No doubt there is much more to be done in these sorts of regional frameworks.<sup>5</sup>

Leaving aside the regional possibilities, my first answer to the question about suitable non-national explicatory frameworks is that New Zealand historians might take a world history perspective. ‘World history’ does not mean the history of the whole world, but rather, following the usage of major practitioners, the history, or histories plural, of world systems and most particularly the history of the world economic system, now singular. Ignoring false prophets such as Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee, the key names in writing world history are William McNeill, whose *The Rise of the West*, first published in 1963, is still in print and, for a theoretical approach, the sociologist-historian Immanuel Wallerstein.<sup>6</sup> In the 1970s, Wallerstein argued that the European capitalist world system expanded from about 1500 to include, eventually, the entire world and become the world system.<sup>7</sup> However, in *Before European Hegemony*, by tracing contemporaneous commercial links from the fairs of northern Europe through the Islamic lands and seas to South Asia and Mongol-ruled Central Asia and China, Janet Abu-Lughod identified an earlier world system, dated between about 1250 and 1350.<sup>8</sup> In the 1990s, Andre Gunder Frank, previously an associate of Wallerstein’s and in fact the theorist of the processes of underdevelopment in the capitalist world system which was an important elaboration of Wallerstein’s model, began to argue that Wallerstein’s theory was hopelessly eurocentric, as indeed Karl Marx’s had been also and that capital accumulation and the development of a world economic system had been in progress not for 500 years but for 5000.<sup>9</sup> Frank’s most recent book claims that the world economic system between 1400 and 1800 was not dominated or brought into being by Europe but was China-centred and that Europeans eventually purchased a seat on the world economic train with silver looted from the Americas.<sup>10</sup>

At Waikato University, we instituted a survey course on world history between around 600 CE and about 1800: the latter is now the approximate date favoured by world historians for the beginning of Western Europe’s economic dominance; 618 and 622 CE are the dates for the founding of the T’ang Empire in China and the beginning of the Islamic umma, two eventually extensive geopolitical entities which potentiated intraregional and interregional trade.<sup>11</sup> The course has had some appeal for students whose families are fairly recent migrants from various parts of Asia and prefer a less eurocentric approach to the past than what was available through conventional courses, but the course was also envisaged as a kind of prehistory of New Zealand: a review of how the world economic system had developed and what its features were at the moment New Zealand and New Zealanders became part of the world system. That moment is near the end of the eighteenth century: the first substantial exports from these islands were sealskins and timber in the 1790s. The sealskins were shipped to Canton and the timber went to Calcutta, two great centres of the world system. The ships that called into different ports in New Zealand over the next several decades for provisions, especially pork and potatoes, were also parts of this vast commercial network.<sup>12</sup> Thus, before it was any kind of political and constitutional

entity, or any kind of entity at all except a cartographic one, New Zealand was a series of opportunities for circulating artefacts within the world system and the ports were locations for exchanges of goods and services. Notwithstanding occasional misunderstandings between New Zealanders and visitors, most of the encounters were very profitable for all parties and they were based upon trade in material things.

In such ways, a world history approach provides perspectives for reconceptualizing the histories that may be written about changes and continuities in these islands. The most obvious points are that structures are more important than events; that the geography of trade is more significant than nation-state boundaries, or many natural boundaries, for that matter; and that material culture, including its production, circulation, and consumption, is the proper primary focus for macrohistorical investigation, rather than ideologies and national identities and imperial loyalties. The world system is about production and consumption and exchange, not simply in limited economic terms, but also in social and cultural terms. It is through trade that peoples meet, whether actually or vicariously and within and between and through these contacts ideas, values and attitudes are exchanged and adjusted along with the goods. Though a very materialist perspective on the world, it does not ignore non-material aspects of life.

This approach challenges many customary ways of perceiving histories, including what is usually regarded as the history of New Zealand. The geographical focus is not fixed but varies over time: just as the world system operates through an archipelago of urban centres rather than through nation-states, so what becomes important for historians to identify in New Zealand is the linkages of local centres to the world system archipelago, the changes in these linkages and the consequences of changes. An excellent example is the 1951 waterfront dispute, usually seen as a New Zealand-centred event or series of events, revolving around political and industrial personalities, with some input from overseas ideologies and around local institutions — the two major political parties, the Federation of Labour, the Trades Union Congress, the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union. In her book, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915–1951*, Anna Green shows that the dispute, or struggle, was, at bottom, the responsibility of the British shipowners.<sup>13</sup> She did not set out to take a world history approach, but the point is that investigation from wider perspectives may transform understandings of many supposedly locally-centred events, enabling us to see the extent to which they are responses to, and within, larger systems.

A world history perspective will mean that a good many precise dates that have customarily loomed large in New Zealand history books will be less significant. Quite a number of conventional quasichronological terms could also be jettisoned, including 'colonial period' and 'postwar', together with insupportable distinctions between 'nineteenth-century New Zealand' and 'twentieth-century New Zealand' and decadism, such as 'the 1920s', 'the 1930s' and almost reified in recent years, 'the 1950s'. National politics, or 'high politics', have been privileged by historians who have themselves sometimes been politicians *manqués*, or perhaps were tempted by the ready accessibility of documentary

materials which record political activities in some detail. This is not to suggest that all political activities and decisions in New Zealand are insignificant, rather that many parliamentary and party-political situations hitherto lovingly detailed by historians are insufficiently important to find a place in macrohistories of the future. It will be fun to stand on the beach and watch Kondratieff waves washing away the sandcastles! On the other hand, decisions of governments to tighten or loosen the availability of credit, to place restrictions on imports, or to make imports more readily available are likely to be significant 'events', though even in these circumstances, governments are reacting to, or interacting with, short-term, medium-term and long-term economic cycles.

This does not mean that New Zealand historians should return to the rather disembodied kinds of analysis and reportage to be found in such economic history classics as J.B. Condliffe's *New Zealand in the Making* and C.G.F. Simkin's *The Instability of a Dependent Economy*.<sup>14</sup> Those works and others since, concentrate on trade figures, highlighting changes in the balance of payments between exports and imports (and 'invisibles'), providing production aggregates for major industries, measuring levels of employment. Instead, as intimated above, material culture is the appropriate primary focus for macrohistorical investigation: the histories of what New Zealanders have consumed, histories of the availability of goods and histories of the means to acquire goods, either cash or credit. And here is where I return to that phrase of Keith Sinclair's that so startled me in 1965 and has stayed with me ever since, his comment that New Zealand imported its standard of living. Just so: few people in New Zealand have wanted to live at subsistence level, even if some at various stages were obliged through difficult circumstances to try and make do temporarily with what was to hand. What people living in New Zealand (all people living in New Zealand) have wanted and to a greater or lesser extent have enjoyed are the goods available to communities that are connected to the world economic system. Even when local production of goods has been promoted and encouraged, at times subsidized, such goods, based upon designs and technologies developed elsewhere in the world system, are seen as substitutes for the 'real thing', with the homemade product often scorned as second best and third-rate. As goods from international markets become available, often very cheaply because of the wretched conditions endured by primary producers and the appalling wages paid to industrial workers elsewhere in the world, not only are local industries restructured out of existence, but homecrafts — for example, embroidery, knitting, sewing — decline. People want goods from elsewhere, preferably with designer labels, not what is homegrown. That has always been the case since New Zealand and New Zealanders became connected to the world economic system. Certainly, there is pride at times about making do when products from overseas are scarce or simply unavailable and these making-do activities have been teased out into comforting myths about the inventiveness of New Zealanders with number eight wire and other materials; but the very idea of making do indicates a substitution — surrogate or stand-by for the meantime — that is, until the proper items can be imported or fabricated out of imported materials.

Of course, goods have never been so plentiful in the past as they are nowadays — to those who have money, anyway. But the relative abundance or scarcity of goods (and in the past, and for the lower classes and under classes, they were

often, or always, very scarce) is not the major issue: what is crucial is that an imported material culture has always been central to the lives of all but a handful of New Zealanders in the last 200 years; that the lives of individuals, households, families, wider kin groups and communities have been organized around the acquisition of goods; and that class, gender and ethnic relationships have taken shape around the processes of consuming these goods. 'The development of consumerism', Peter Stearns has recently written, 'represents one of the great changes in human experience, literally around the world, over the past two or three centuries'. He comments that new types of marketing and advertising are also important and then adds: 'But it is the shift in behaviour and personal expectations that is really intriguing'.<sup>15</sup> The subtitle of Stearns's book, *The Global Transformation of Desire*, serves as a reminder that the acquisition and consumption of goods involves human feelings, emotions, decisions and actions — desire, pleasure, comfort, anticipation. In such a perspective, all manner of subjects that have been seen, or treated, as marginal by historians become highly significant. Why do so many histories of New Zealand ignore department stores? And why do we have more histories of New Zealand universities than of department stores? Where are the histories of shopping and advertising?

A macrohistorical approach which links cultural, social, political and economic circumstances in this archipelago to the world economic system and focuses on material culture, including consumption, will situate centrally subjects and topics which are sometimes treated in a token manner, or which leave unreconstructed historians disconcerted — in particular, topics involving women and Maori. Some historians, having chosen to privilege paid workers, industrial production and institutionalized politics, find it difficult to integrate many of women's experiences into their expository structures. Mary Louise Roberts says, very straightforwardly, that in modern Western societies, where 'virtually no area of life . . . remains uncommodified, and in which commodities play an ever-increasing role in shaping social identity and cultural meaning, we can hardly afford to continue our historical neglect of consumerism. Scholars of women and gender, in particular, ignore the topic at their own risk.'<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, local inter-ethnic encounters between first peoples and colonizers have often been placed in separate historical narratives, fenced off from accounts of economic development involving the demographically dominant ethnic group. The world system is an appropriate context for bringing together the separate narratives, as can be discerned from Eric R. Wolf's well-known study, employing Marxian and Wallersteinian perspectives, *Europe and the People Without History*.<sup>17</sup> Although North Atlantic European and Euramerican societies are usually nominated by historians as venues for the initial consumer revolution, James Axtell, a prominent ethnohistorian, makes a reasonable case for calling the acquisition of European goods by Native Americans on the eastern seaboard of North America 'The First Consumer Revolution'. He places this consumer revolution in the seventeenth century, before what is usually identified as the beginnings of the consumer revolution in England, Scotland and the North American colonies in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> A similar consumer revolution involving local residents seems to have taken place in New Zealand, beginning with the first European visitors: it was the desire for new goods which

led iwi to alter and extend agricultural practices. Indeed, a focus on production and consumption will allow historians to develop iwi-based narratives rather than generalize about 'Maori'. This approach need not be limited to the period before the establishment of British sovereignty, but might follow right through to the present day, when iwi-centred development and enterprise is highly visible.<sup>19</sup>

New Zealanders have at times been very self-conscious about their geographic isolation, in terms of distances to other major areas of land. However, while it is the case that air travel in the last 30 years has in certain senses brought the rest of the world 'closer' to New Zealand, the country's isolation has probably been overemphasized by poets and other commentators, to the extent that the frequency and firmness of links to the rest of the world have been underestimated. '[D]istance looks our way', wrote Charles Brasch, who took several long journeys by sea; and that memorable phrase was used as the title for a book of essays exploring the effects of remoteness on New Zealand, edited by Keith Sinclair, in 1961.<sup>20</sup> But the seas about these islands are not barriers: they are highways and along those highways ships have carried and still carry the products circulating in the world economic system. The boat trip to Britain, the favoured destination, took 40 days at the beginning of the twentieth century; San Francisco took four weeks; Sydney was only four days away. Moreover, in terms of availability of goods, New Zealanders were not isolated from the world but, through shipping, connected to it, regularly and reliably, even before steamships and even during World War II's shipping shortages and wartime dangers. Once connected to the world system New Zealand and all New Zealanders stayed connected.

What is more, the connections mean that the differences between New Zealanders and other peoples are not really very great. Certainly, locally born New Zealanders have a patois that is distinguishable from the accents and dialects of other Anglophone communities and there are signs and symbols that have a local resonance, many of them drawn from the landscape and from indigenous flora and fauna, or derived from aspects of Maori culture. There are also many local rituals, some involving sporting activities, which are peculiar to this society. Nonetheless, questions might be raised about whether these distinguishing marks have been amplified out of proportion to their importance and whether they are simply superficial signs, banal markers like logos and letterheads to distinguish one company (or university) from another. The differences between New Zealanders and other peoples are perhaps variations rather than indications of a separate trajectory. Notwithstanding his scholarly celebrations of New Zealand national identity, Keith Sinclair does not seem to have held an especially narrow view on these matters. 'The Search for Identity' epilogue to the Pelican *History* begins by emphasizing New Zealand's geographical and cultural position in the Pacific and Sinclair suggests (probably alluding to the Polynesian triangle figured by anthropologists) that 'New Zealanders belong to a branch of New World civilization the main centres of which are Sydney, San Francisco and Auckland — the Pacific Triangle'.<sup>21</sup>

I turn now from the macrohistorical perspective to suggest a second answer to the question about what explicatory frameworks historians might use if they eschewed 'New Zealand' as a subject: they could write microhistories. The most celebrated works of microhistory are Carlo Ginzberg's *The Cheese and the Worms*, a difficult but very rewarding, if contentious, exploration of

popular belief and the impact of literacy in sixteenth-century Italy; and Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre*.<sup>22</sup> Microhistories usually focus upon relatively obscure or 'ordinary' people and their often extraordinary experiences, teasing out from shreds of evidence what their tribulations indicate about the attitudes, beliefs, mentality and values of communities or classes or local institutions. There are some very good examples by New Zealand historians. Miles Fairburn presents *Nearly Out of Heart and Hope* as an exercise in microhistory.<sup>23</sup> Fairburn's protagonist, James Cox, is unusual not so much for his very humdrum experiences as for the amount of documentary material he left behind: not mere shreds of evidence but a regular daily journal maintained through several decades. Excellent recent examples of microhistory in New Zealand include Bronwyn Dalley's chapter on 'The Cultural Remains of Elsie Walker' and her accounts of the travails and trials of Phoebe Veitch and Sarah Flanagan.<sup>24</sup> Microhistories may be about communities as well as individuals and their families and households: Caroline Daley's fine study of gender in Taradale is in many senses a microhistory and it also includes numerous interesting and instructive vignettes of individual experiences.<sup>25</sup> I feel much more comfortable about the characterizations of life in Taradale than I do about generalizations which purport to represent New Zealand as a whole. Whether Taradale is 'typical' is beside the point.

The extensive possibilities of microhistorical accounts are neatly exemplified by the essayists in an impressive collection entitled *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*.<sup>26</sup> These studies are not biographies, though they contain many biographical elements. Instead, they explore the ways in which 'selves' were constituted in particular social, geographical and ethnic (and interethnic) settings, tracing, as far as the evidence allows, and in some cases the evidence is not voluminous, the complex dialectics between person and society. We should be careful not to confuse biographical enquiry and exercises in microhistory. Jill Lepore has recently drawn useful distinctions between biography and microhistory by suggesting that microhistory is based upon the assumption that 'however singular a person's life may be, the value of examining it lies in how it serves as an allegory for the culture as a whole'; and that microhistorians 'address themselves to solving small mysteries about a person's life as a means to exploring the culture'.<sup>27</sup>

The microhistory approach might well be related to or converge with the macrohistorical focus, or framework, discussed above, by being concerned *inter alia* with material culture, especially the consumption of goods. One of the essays in *Through a Glass Darkly* is 'Hannah Barnard's Cupboard: Female Property and Identity in Eighteenth-Century New England', by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. It investigates how and why Hannah Barnard owned a beautifully decorated cupboard, which included her name in the ornamentation, discusses other surviving cupboards and chests and their uses and owners, specifies what further consumer goods and 'movables' Hannah Barnard, her husband, her kinsfolk, her neighbours and her contemporaries owned and traces how they acquired them and how the goods were disposed of, including what was bequeathed and to whom. In her discussion, Ulrich raises important general questions about women's rights to property and about gender and kin relations.<sup>28</sup> It should be

possible to develop similar accounts of the accumulation and dispersal of family, household and personal possessions for New Zealanders.

There is no shortage of relevant sources: wills, inventories, other legal documents, commercial and financial records, photographs, printed reminiscences, oral testimonies; it is probable that there are many notebooks and the like which record personal and household expenditures. It does not matter if the notebooks and other household or personal records are discontinuous, or even mere fragments: the point of the exercise is not to provide statistical series, but to illustrate examples of expenditure and consumption. In fact, in *Nearly Out of Heart and Hope*, Miles Fairburn makes some very interesting observations upon James Cox's earnings and spendings from incomplete data.<sup>29</sup> Through such microhistorical investigations, it will be possible to particularize patterns of consumption indicated in macrohistorical accounts, to plot changing patterns of taste and fashion, to discover how people made decisions on whether to invest or to save or to indulge in conspicuous consumption, which possessions signalled conspicuous consumption and whether and when these decisions varied by gender, by class, by ethnicity, by geographical location and by type of community — rural, town, suburb, city. Such studies would add significant detail and fresh dimensions to recent innovative essays by Danielle Sprecher, Frazer Andrewes and Fiona McKergow.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, certain criminal cases which reached the courts and are as a consequence reported in detail in the newspapers, include or even arise out of disputes between individuals and within families over the purchase or ownership of goods. Microhistorical accounts may reveal that tensions in domestic relationships that resulted in violence or homicide often grew from arguments about expenditure. I suspect that if historians explore these tragedies, much will be learned about gender roles and changing consumption expectations. Ian Cross's novel *The God Boy*, published a year before Sinclair's *Pelican History* and hailed along with works by Janet Frame and Sylvia Ashton-Warner as marking a new level of achievement in New Zealand fiction writing, evokes the straitened circumstances of a household, the incompatibility of the boy's parents and the relentless toil of his mother. She eventually feels driven to murder the boy's feckless and faithless father after he has wilfully purchased an expensive new bicycle as a present for the boy.<sup>31</sup> In how many families, real rather than fictional ones, did quarrels and clashes develop from disputes over expenditure and consumption?

In *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search For National Identity*, near the beginning of the last chapter, Keith Sinclair wrote: 'A national identity is not a permanent and static possession; rather, the nation has from time to time to be reinvented. Indeed, the idea of the nation is changing all the time.'<sup>32</sup> While he allowed the reinvention of nation, then, he did not think beyond the idea of nation — which is not too surprising, given his background, his era and his own active complicity in the invention of a discrete New Zealand. However, in the first sentence of that final chapter of *A Destiny Apart*, a study that ends around 1940, he authorized 'Readers over forty' to 'roll their own final chapters to [the] book'. I would like to take up that invitation to add something to *A Destiny Apart*, but instead of rolling my own final chapters, I want to suggest that New

Zealand historians might move very deliberately and self-consciously beyond historical accounts which focus on 'New Zealand' and 'national identity' and instead deploy other analytic frameworks. In particular, they should, through the construction of macrohistories of production, trade and consumption, explore the convergences of experiences in these parts of the world with experiences of peoples in other parts of the world, emphasizing the exchanges and accumulations and redistributions of material culture. Secondly, they should compose microhistories of individuals, households and neighbourhoods, probing especially matters involving expenditure and the acquisition of goods and how these activities were bound up with relationships and values. It is time scholars in these lands were less preoccupied with asserting national identity and divining 'New Zealand's place in the world' and paid much more attention to the world's place in New Zealand.

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## NOTES

\*An earlier version of this paper was delivered as the Sir Keith Sinclair Memorial Lecture for 2001 at the University of Auckland on 17 October 2001. I wish to thank Catharine Coleborne for discussions about world history in Oceanian contexts; Jeanine Graham for her observations on microhistorical perspectives; Kerry Howe for a word of encouragement; and Caroline Daley for her support and editorial expertise.

1 *New Zealand Herald*, 26 September 2001, p.A15.

2 P.J. Gibbons, 'A Note on Writing, Identity, and Colonisation in Aotearoa', *Sites*, 13 (1986), p.35; Peter Gibbons, 'Non-fiction', Terry Sturm, ed., *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, Auckland, 1991, pp.25–104; 'Cultural Colonization and National Identity', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 36, 1 (2002), pp.5–17.

3 Keith Sinclair, *Halfway Round the Harbour: An Autobiography*, Auckland, 1993, pp.98–9.

4 Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1959, pp.295–301; William Pember Reeves, *The Long White Cloud: Ao Tea Roa*, London, 1898, pp.398–414.

5 William Pember Reeves, *State Experiments in Australia & New Zealand*, 2 vols, London, 1902; Keith Sinclair, ed., *Tasman Relations: New Zealand and Australia, 1788–1988*, Auckland, 1987; Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein-Smith with Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and The Pacific*, Oxford, 2000. See also Paul D'Arcy, 'Torn Apart By Proximity: The Problems and Benefits of Comparative History for Australia, New Zealand, and The Pacific', *World History Bulletin*, 17, 2 (2001), pp.19–27.

6 William H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community, With A Retrospective Essay*, Chicago, 1991.

7 Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, 1974, pp.347–57.

8 Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350*, New York, 1989, pp.3–20, 32–7.

9 Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, 'The 5,000-Year World System: An Interdisciplinary Introduction', in Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills, eds, *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?*, London, 1993, pp.3–44.

10 Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley, 1998.

11 For 'about 1800', see Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton, NJ, 2000, pp.3–107; Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century*, volume III, *The Perspective of the World*, Sian Reynolds, trans., Berkeley, 1984 (first published in 1979 as *Le Temps du Monde*), pp.533–35; for 618 and 622, see K.N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History From the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge, 1985, pp.34–60; Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean From the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge, 1990, pp.40–1.

12 See, for example, E.J. Tapp, *Early New Zealand: A Dependency of New South Wales, 1788–1841*, Melbourne, 1958, pp.7–23. Some of the timber, in the form of spars, also went to Canton: Robert McNab, *From Tasman to Marsden: A History of Northern New Zealand From 1642 to 1818*, Dunedin, 1914, pp.89–90.

13 Anna Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915–1951*, Dunedin, 2001, pp.21, 29–30, 152–3.

14 J.B. Condliffe, *New Zealand in the Making: A Survey of Economic Development*, London, [1930]; C.G.F. Simkin, *The Instability of a Dependent Economy: Economic Fluctuations in New Zealand, 1840–1914*, [London], 1951.

15 Peter N. Stearns, *Consumerism in World History: The Global Transformation of Desire*, London, 2001, p.137.

16 Mary Louise Roberts, 'Gender, Consumption, and Commodity Culture', *American Historical Review*, 103, 3 (1998), p.821.

17 Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Berkeley, 1982.

18 James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America*, New York, 2001, pp.104–20.

19 See, for example, Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa*, Armonk, NY, 1997.

20 Keith Sinclair, ed., *Distance Looks Our Way: The Effects of Remoteness on New Zealand*,

[Hamilton], 1961. Charles Brasch's phrase is from his poem 'The Islands (ii)', three lines of which are quoted as an epigraph in *ibid.*, p.[vi], while these lines and two others are quoted in the contributions by Keith Sinclair and C.K. Stead to the same symposium, pp.39, 95.

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