

location and reception in mind. The archive too – as for many of his precursors and contemporaries – comes in for further analysis as a site of critical analysis as much as a source of evidence.

Finally, in contributions from 2010 and 2011, Ballantyne neatly but belatedly discovers ‘Place’, something that cultural geographers and urban historians amongst others have long known. ‘Thinking Local’ opens with a bold (and by now repetitive) assertion that national histories have overdetermined understandings of New Zealand’s past, a point made just as succinctly a decade before him, for example, by David Hamer’s *New Towns in the New World*, which amongst other things was critical of national historical writing, and reoriented a view of New Zealand’s history away from its apparently inevitable evolution into a nation state towards a much more fluid and contingent reading of colonial systems. Ballantyne’s survey of community formation and association life in Victorian-era Gore is nonetheless convincing as an assertion of the utility of factoring local specificity into the reckoning of networked worlds.

There is no doubt that Ballantyne is established as a key exponent of a new vision in colonial history, and this collection places him at the centre of an intellectual web that has strengthened the scholarship of racial formations and cross-cultural interactions in vital ways. The essay collection can be a slippery genre: too easily self-referential, overstating its aims to critical originality, and unnecessarily prolix and repetitive. By the middle of the book (and the concomitant decade in which these essays were written) historians of New Zealand had perhaps become accustomed to Tony Ballantyne telling them what to do. Miles Fairburn, Greg Denning, James Belich and Jock Phillips are all sideswiped in Ballantyne’s attempt to drive a new model of New Zealand’s past. But the past, Ballantyne rightly reminds us, is complicated, messy, interrogative and argumentative. Like the partial histories of biculturalism that he sets in his sights – or indeed any history – Ballantyne is himself liable to ‘emphasise certain themes and actors at the expense of others’ (p.55). But the boldness of his vision is to unshackle histories of colonialism from the problems of the present as an ultimate challenge to the historian and the citizen, both of whom are easily seduced by the partiality of national imaginaries.

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Making a New Land: Environmental Histories of New Zealand. New Edition. Edited by Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2013. 396pp. NZ price: \$50. ISBN: 9781877578526.

In a climate-changing world, environmental history is taking a central role in debates about global warming, anthropogenic change and the future of sustainability. Tom Griffiths argued that environmental history was ‘still sub-consciously emerging’

when reviewing the first edition of this book, *Environmental Histories of New Zealand* (2003). Its successor, *Making a New Land*, reflects the growing maturity and confidence of this important subdiscipline. Rather than simply updating the original, Pawson and Brooking have produced an expanded edition that retains all that was great about the first and adds fresh material to entice a new readership. Approximately one-third of the book is original, including an epilogue, with many of the chapters overhauled. As a book widely used by students and senior scholars alike, the material has a renewed relevance in current debates. A good example of this is the updated chapter by Nicola Wheen about environmental law, where the Manapouri controversy is offered as a case study in the changing legislative achievements since World War Two. The book retains the disciplinary intersections of the first with the inclusion of research from history, geography, archaeology, law and ecology. The new chapters collectively bring a cultural approach into conversation with these other areas of study, enriching the volume and extending its appeal.

The cultural role of empire is used by James Beattie to illuminate the histories of domestic plant transfers. New Zealand was part of the usual botanical exchange networks that extended across the globe through botanic gardens. Joseph Banks imagined the imperial centre at Kew as a clearing house for colonial pursuits, but Beattie shows how Australia and New Zealand both entered such networks and made these connections local. Beattie also draws our attention to the importance of understanding transfers within the Chinese community. Thinking about market gardens as places that also facilitated domestic plantings brings a new and exciting point of view to the histories of plant transfers.

In her chapter, Katie Pickles brings a fresh view to environmental history by drawing on the sensory modes of experiencing the environment. Her postcolonial focus on the sensory brings into sharp relief the disjuncture between emotional responses and the kinds of policies generated for communities experiencing major disasters like earthquakes. To Australians, for whom the need to understand disastrous floods, fires and drought is paramount, Pickles provides a shift to both the local and the cultural that is both insightful and provocative.

Michael Stevens provides a masterful account of the conflicting and troubled intersections between Māori people of Ngāi Tahu and environmental governance. He evocatively portrays the painful and slow changes in the policy arena that once meant Māori voices were ignored and excluded. In the recent past, governance structures, such as planning committees, have begun to take into account other kinds of relationships and stewardship by including indigenous members. Such change is not without its challenges, of course. Stevens skilfully demonstrates this conflict in the Ngāi Tahu management. He juxtaposes the dispute to stop industrial dairying with the introduction of small-scale dairies on old forestry lands as a vital source of livelihood for local people.

'Mastering the Land' by Andreas Aagard Christensen takes the reader on a different kind of epistemological journey. He argues for refocusing scholarship away from the differences between Māori and Pākehā approaches to the environment. Instead, he puts forward the case that both cultures have at their heart a desire to master the

environments of New Zealand, albeit within very different frameworks. Christensen analyzes the counterpoint between oral (narratives, intergenerational storytelling, metaphor) and written (maps, documents, written archives) spatial traditions to contrast these two ways of mastering. He argues that each of these methods codified the land in particular ways, with the colonizers using maps as part of the process of violent dispossession. New Zealand history, in these terms, is a history of spaces, where knowledge and practice translate to changed environments.

The epilogue rounds out the new material. Pawson and Brooking provide a conclusion, but also map out some key themes for further research. Here we find a hidden gem. Included in the epilogue is a pedagogically useful section called 'doing environmental history'. The editors must have faced a quandary in deciding where to place this piece. Although it allows for methodological reflection after the completion of chapters, it risks being overlooked. Pawson and Brooking outline the value of interdisciplinarity, diverse perspectives, spatial scales and, to my mind the fundamental distinguishing method for this sub-discipline, that of reading 'nature's own archive'. New Zealand's stories are richly told in this important volume, showing over and over again the value of critical thinking about the environment.

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Lan Yuan 蘭園: A Garden of Distant Longing. By James Beattie and Duncan Campbell, images Wynston Cooper, poetry Sue Wootton. Dunedin Chinese Gardens Trust and Shanghai Museum, Dunedin, 2013. 112pp. NZ price: \$29.99. ISBN: 9780473257996.

Lan Yuan, A Garden of Distant Longing describes the inception and construction of Dunedin's Chinese Garden. The idea for a garden grew out of the desire for a permanent memorial to honour the contribution of early Chinese settlers to the province of Otago. Its realization was intimately linked to the sister-city status of Dunedin and Shanghai, a link that saw the project benefit from specialist advice from the prestigious Shanghai Museum and access to Chinese expertise and architectural knowledge. The garden's structures were prefabricated in Suzhou in accordance with traditional building techniques, and at 'friendly' discounted prices. Most of its distinctive perforated grey rocks were obtained from Lake Tai, near Suzhou. Although, after years of botanical contact, a majority of the Chinese plants could be sourced in New Zealand, most originated in Jiangnan, the region south of the Yangtze and thus the broad area from which the first settlers came.

This book comprises a record of a remarkable joint cultural endeavour. It also represents something of a fusion itself. Its text, seamlessly composed by James Beattie and Duncan Campbell, is illustrated with Wynston Cooper's sumptuous photographs and enhanced by Sue Wootton's evocative poems, composed in couplets after the