

'Show Us These Islands and Ourselves ... Give us a Home in Thought'

BEAGLEHOLE MEMORIAL LECTURE, 1987*

DURING the last half century, the sense that New Zealanders have of their own identity has become increasingly a subject for our writers and scholars to explore. John Beaglehole wrestled with it in his Margaret Condliffe Memorial Lecture, given at Canterbury University College in 1954.¹ A generation later, when discussions of our national identity have taken some unexpected turnings, that lecture is a suitable point of departure for one dedicated to his memory. Beaglehole called his lecture *The New Zealand Scholar*. His exemplar was Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose address, 'The American Scholar', given to students of Harvard College in April 1837, now spoke, he believed, to the New Zealand condition. Emerson defined the scholar as 'the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *MAN THINKING*'. 'We have listened too long', Emerson said, 'to the courtly muses of Europe. We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. . . . It is remarkable', he said, 'that our people have their intellectual culture from one country and their duties from another'. Emerson's address was hailed by Oliver Wendell Holmes as 'America's, or at least New England's intellectual Declaration of Independence'. Some of it had, John Beaglehole believed, 'a contemporary importance' for New Zealanders. Taking his own experience as a case-study, he examined the inner process by which he had himself come to terms with his own sense of identity as a New Zealander.

He began with a disclaimer. He had not 'thought out any violently new conclusion'. In his disarming way he said: 'I think we should think as New Zealanders; but, to be candid, I am for a start not certain what that means, and I am not quite certain that Emerson can tell me'. He then explored the

1 J. C. Beaglehole, *The New Zealand Scholar*, Margaret Condliffe Memorial Lecture, 21 April 1954, Christchurch, p.24. Unless otherwise acknowledged, all quotations in this paper are from *The New Zealand Scholar*.

*This paper was first presented at the conference of the New Zealand Historical Association, held at Massey University, Palmerston North, in February 1987. It has been slightly abridged for publication.

transition from the state of mind of expatriates, such as Frances Hodgkins and Katherine Mansfield, 'who wanted more life' and could find it only in the metropolis, to the slow and far from easy emergence of his own conviction that he could 'feel at home' in New Zealand. How, in his own case, did that transition occur? He had immersed himself in the life and culture of the metropolis, London. As with other expatriates of the time, he thought that 'to go home was to go into exile', to be condemned to 'the death of the mind'. Even after his appointment to Victoria University College, he was interested in New Zealand only insofar as he had to be. Then, against his inclination, he 'became involved in . . . the preparations for celebrating the New Zealand centennial'. He began by regarding 'the whole thing as an indulgence in a series of fatuities, all of them depraved, from which a sensible person ought to be exempt. [He] ended by undergoing a process of conversion, slow and awkward, into a conscious New Zealander'.

Only a reading of *The New Zealand Scholar* will give the flavour of that conversion, that change of consciousness. Essentially, however, Beaglehole found himself working on a series of publications celebrating the first hundred years since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and he came under the influence of a small band of dedicated New Zealanders who believed in the intrinsic importance of the task. Pride of place he gave to (Sir) Joseph Heenan, Secretary of Internal Affairs, whose vision, drive, and administrative abilities fostered 'the Centennial Branch . . . into a sort of editorial historical-typographical-literary-public relations office that can certainly never have had parallel in the country'. Most of the men and women of the Centennial Branch were younger than Beaglehole. Some of them he had taught. From his association with them on the centennial publications, he learnt, he said, a number of lessons and, he hoped, some wisdom. In his modest way, he had this to say about them. 'They had standards of research, a professional expertise, a scholar's conscience that, I noticed, left me staggering rather uncertainly behind them, as if I were an amiable amateur. But that was not all: they took for granted that the matter of New Zealand was worth looking into, after a hundred years, and they had not, most of them, had my opportunities of developing an intellectual snobbery'.

Beaglehole and his colleagues in the Centennial Branch soon became aware of the 'blank spaces in [their] knowledge, the personal hiatuses, the need for biographies and autobiographies'. They ruminated on the might-have-beens of our history. They 'deplored the shortness of those hundred years, the fact that we were, spiritually, still so close to the frontier'. They planned for the continuation of their work beyond the centennial. There must be 'archives, books, collections of documents'. Beaglehole charitably draws a veil over the largely anticlimactic life of the Historical Branch after the war. 'If only', he commented, 'Joe Heenan and Peter Fraser were the pattern of our public servants and politicians! If only in their spheres of life, and in Parliament Buildings and Treasury, the signs of the cultural

renaissance were a bit more rife!' Consecrated words, if I may borrow one of his own phrases.

All, however, was by no means lost. Speaking in 1954 Beaglehole discerned in himself and in the work of others a growing recognition of what it meant to be living in these islands and to be responding to that shared experience. There was a dawning national consciousness. 'We already have', he believed, 'a basis for rather more effectual dreaming than we had, say fifty, or even twenty, years ago'. 'We are hungry', he said, quoting a passage which he mistakenly attributed to Robin Hyde, 'for the words that will show us these islands and ourselves; that shall give us a home in thought'.² Was not that cry, he asked, 'for us, the equivalent of Emerson's "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds"'? What had been achieved so far might 'not be a harvest' but at least it was 'a seedbed'; and he thought he saw 'some seeds sprout'.

What then, Beaglehole asked, had the scholar to do with this? A very great deal. To begin with, it was important not to define the term too exclusively. 'Let us agree', he said, 'that the scholar is "man thinking"'. But thinking is not just indulgence in professional learning, in the university, for instance. The scholar who takes up into himself all the ability of the time, all the contributions of the past, all the hopes of the future, who speaks with his own mind, is also the creative artist in whatever medium. 'For me', he continued, 'Frances Hodgkins, T. A. McCormack, John Weeks are man thinking; Frank Sargeson, Douglas Lilburn are man thinking; trebly important for us, as our links with creativeness'. New Zealand scholars, thus conceived, were producing their own reports on experience. They were working in the idioms of the Western tradition and they were beginning to make their own unique contributions to it.

2 On page 12 of *The New Zealand Scholar*, John Beaglehole wrote: 'So we have the Auckland students' *Phoenix*; we have Robin Hyde's cry, "We are hungry for the words that shall show us these islands and ourselves; that shall give us a home in thought"'. The quotation became canonic in 1940 when, in *Letters and Art in New Zealand*, E. H. McCormick used it to cap a point he was making about Robin Hyde's writing. 'Had she written nothing more than these two "Starkie" novels', he wrote, 'Robin Hyde would have gone far towards satisfying the wistful aspiration quoted in *Phoenix*: "We are hungry for the words that shall show us these islands and ourselves; that shall give us a home in thought"' (p. 176). John Beaglehole, it seems, found the quotation in McCormick's book and inadvertently telescoped the association with Robin Hyde. The original, however, was written by Eric Cook, an associate editor of *Canta*, the student magazine of Canterbury College. Commenting editorially on the first number of *Phoenix*, which, he said, 'has arrived from Auckland and been snapped up forthwith', he wrote: 'This is not to say that we need what Mr. Bertram calls "the usual atmospheric New Zealand pieces, full of tuis and riros and manuka blossom"'. But it does mean that we are hungry for the words that shall show us these islands and ourselves; that shall give us a home in thought'. *Canta*, 9 May 1932.

To recognize our condition, Beaglehole said, is to acknowledge that these uniquely interesting manifestations of creative expression and scholarship were taking place in a 'cultural province'. So long, however, as the province 'communicates life', it could stimulate minds. But he added: 'The province will communicate life only if it has a rich and varied life, and the province that has a rich and varied life has a rich and varied tradition'. The more we feel our life here to have its own meaning, to be authentic, the less will we have to apologise for it because it is not a metropolis, a cultural fountain-head.

Participation on our own terms in the shared life of a cultural tradition was thus Beaglehole's answer to expatriation and to stifling feelings of inauthenticity. Active engagement was what was required.

A tradition is not a thing that just happens, and persists without the conscious knowledge of those it affects. If we are to profit from it in the best possible way, to extract from its richness the maximum nourishment, we must discover it. It needs critical enquiry, conscious exploration. It is the scholar's job to make the tradition plain. As a scholar, he must be in the tradition; but he must also stand outside it, and with a double duty, to make real in New Zealand both the old world tradition, that which we share with others, and the tradition that is peculiar to ourselves. He is concerned with the pattern of life we have got from our own past, as a community in this country, and so with our sense of the age we live in, in this place now. Our scholar, for this purpose, has tended to be a literary critic; but in a broad sense he must be a historian, whether his subject-matter be literature, art, politics, economic development, social relations of any sort at all. In a broader sense, even, he may be the writer of the school bulletin about sheep-farming or our railways or the exploration of our country. Whatever he is, he must be conscious of what he is doing, he must be critical.

In *The New Zealand Scholar* Beaglehole gave his own answer to the riddling question of identity that had troubled his generation of poets, artists, writers, and public thinkers. It was, it seems to me, his response, born of experience, to the resignation of those two lines of Allen Curnow which had earlier given a forlorn edge to the quest: 'Not I, some child born in a marvellous year/Will learn the trick of standing upright here'. Beaglehole's image of the seed bed, with some seeds already sprouting, gave hope and encouragement. It allowed the possibility of some future harvest. A generation later, we can, without embarrassment, enjoy the fruits of each annual harvest of the work of New Zealand scholars — defined broadly, as Beaglehole enjoined, to cover the creative and scholarly achievement of men and women thinking. If we reflect only on historical research and publication, and compare the bibliographical entries before and after 1954, we find ample confirmation of John Beaglehole's belief that something was stirring.³

3 For the contribution of the *New Zealand Journal of History*, see Keith Sinclair, 'Editorial: the First Twenty Years', NZJH, XX, 2 (1986), pp. 107-110.

But the questions that troubled Beaglehole's generation are no longer issues in the terms in which he posed and answered them. His Margaret Condliffe Lecture is now of historical rather than contemporary importance. Re-reading it, I was struck once again by how well it delineated an emerging state of mind — one that I, for one, felt to be right in the mid-fifties, and which I still thought to be right during the sixties and until the early seventies. But I was also struck — as I had not been at the time of publication — by what he did not see and therefore did not include in his discussion of an emerging national identity. 'The New Zealand Scholar' is defined only in relation to the Western tradition. The 'metropolis' in Beaglehole's terminology is Europe, more particularly Britain. The 'colony' or the 'province' is Pakeha New Zealand. It has been a shock to me to discover that the New Zealand scholar who knew more than any other person about European perceptions of the Maori people at the time when Aotearoa first came seriously to the attention of Europe devoted not a phrase nor an allusion to the place of the Maori heritage in the search by New Zealand scholars for the defining features of a national identity. In this omission he was, however, in good company.⁴ Until well after 1954 the search for a New Zealand identity was implicitly a search for a Pakeha identity. To the extent that Maori were mentioned they were, like women, subsumed.

Read again now, 33 years after it was given, *The New Zealand Scholar* expresses a couple of quite unintended ironies. In one place Beaglehole speaks of the might-have-beens of New Zealand history. 'Inevitably', he wrote, 'we deplored the shortness of those hundred years . . . Would that our pioneers had come a century or two earlier'. Then, he continued, quoting from E. H. McCormick's centennial survey, *New Zealand Letters and Art*, there might have been time 'to prepare the way in the mid-nineteenth century for a New Zealand Hawthorne and his drama of Calvinist frustration, set, it would be fitting, in the stern hinterland of Otago; for a Melville to interpret mystically that sordid, picturesque, ennobling, barbarous quarter-century of history in the Bay of Islands; for an Emerson to weave his philosophy in the cloisters of Canterbury, or a Thoreau to muse and write — again it would be fitting — on the lake-side at Tutira . . .'. Was not, one now asks, the collision of peoples from two very different cultural traditions a sufficient theme, one, moreover, to be worked out here and nowhere else in the world? In another place, he speaks of discussion in the Centennial Branch of words that might convey the exact shade of meaning they were hankering for in their meditations on identity. 'We played a good deal', he said, 'with words like "indigenous" and "authentic" — even, I fear, with "autochthonous"'. The last of these words may be taken as evidence of the blinkering effect of the assimila-

4 See, for example, Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience*, New York, 1958. The colonial experience in Boorstin's account is essentially an anglo experience.

tionist, we-are-one-people myth on the consciousness of Pakeha New Zealanders. An autochthon is a son or daughter of the soil, and autochthonous means indigenous as opposed to foreign — in the New Zealand context, Maori as opposed to Pakeha.

John Beaglehole may not have caught these echoes but Ruth Ross did. Autochthonous seems to have been a banter-word in John Beaglehole's circle. He once used it in a letter to Ruth Ross. She responded with 'The Autochthonous New Zealand Soil', her contribution to *The Feel of Truth*, the Festschrift edited by Professor Peter Munz in honour of Professor F. L. W. Wood and Professor J. C. Beaglehole.⁵ Ruth Ross had been a student of Wood and Beaglehole during the war years. Then she worked with Beaglehole in the Centennial Branch and, during the rest of her life, developed, for a Pakeha historian, an unrivalled knowledge of Pakeha incursion, Maori responses, and Pakeha-Maori interaction during the early years of European settlement of the Bay of Islands. From her tireless search for evidence that could form the basis of historical understanding came her important studies of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

'The Autochthonous New Zealand Soil' is a hermetic piece. It is more like a short story than a piece of historical writing. She referred to it, disarmingly, as a 'reminiscence'. What she manages to convey is a sense of cultural difference in the way that the Maori of her acquaintance on the banks of the Hokianga identified with their whakapapa, tribal traditions, and the forces of wairua and tapu that are part of the fabric of their lives. 'In the Maori world', she says, 'the speaker speaks. Understanding is the business of the listener'. And that understanding is bedevilled by the allusiveness of what is said. In the utterances of kuia and kaumatua, episodes in the lives of legendary figures are not easily distinguishable from accounts of last week's fishing trip, from some anecdote from the speaker's own life, or from some topic of current conversation, such as the whakapapa of some person whose forebears are being sorted out. Past and present are not separable in the way historians in the Western tradition assume. The mauri of the ancestors lives on. It is an obligation of the living to keep them alive and protect their mana. This can be baffling to a Pakeha historian, even to one who has enough Maori to be able to have a rough idea of what is being said. There is a cultural difference. Maori and Pakeha occupy different conceptual worlds, have different forms of explanation, different forms of discourse, and they proceed under different protocols and for different purposes. 'I am not unaware', John Beaglehole said at the end of *The New Zealand Scholar*, 'that my trade as a historian is a school of scepticism'. What Ruth Ross seems to be reminding Pakeha historians trained in that school of scepticism is that, to kaumatua and kuia, tribal history is celebration.

Ruth Ross is important to my theme in three ways. First, her work as a

5 'The Autochthonous New Zealand Soil', in *The Feel of Truth: Essays in New Zealand and Pacific History*, Wellington, 1969, pp. 47-59.

historian was one of the seeds John Beaglehole saw sprouting. Let her represent the post-war generation of New Zealand scholars — men and women thinking — who have enlarged our understanding of what it means to be developing a form of civilization in these islands. Her thinking brought her to a different concept of what we should mean when we talk about our national identity from the one outlined in *The New Zealand Scholar*. Relating ourselves to the Western tradition was not for her the issue. For her it was how Pakeha scholars, schooled in the Western tradition, should perceive, try to understand, relate to, live with, and learn from the Maori with whom they associated and shared a century and a half of history, but whose heritage, traditions, and ways of experiencing the world were so different.

She is important, secondly, because, like John Beaglehole, she took a broad view of the scholar's duties. One of the comments in *The New Zealand Scholar* that pleased but also surprised me was Beaglehole's commendation of the School Publications Branch of the Department of Education. When speaking of the seeds he saw sprouting, he said: 'Well, you can see the right seed sprouting if you will look in the right place. Look, for example, at the work of the School Publications Branch of the Education Department. I am not sure that the School Publications Branch does not hold the New Zealand future in its hands.' He saw its publications, I suppose, as a continuation of the excellent *Making New Zealand*⁶ series that was one of the fruits of the Centennial Branch. Certainly he took it as one of the tests of New Zealand scholarship that men and women could write about aspects of our culture in ways that were true to what had to be said and suitably adapted to the understanding of the readers for whom they were intended. Ruth Ross wrote several bulletins, all based on her archival researches, all lively and interesting, all intended to deepen the understanding of boys and girls of aspects of their history as New Zealanders. Her thoughts on the Treaty of Waitangi appeared in a Primary School bulletin fourteen years before 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi' was published in the *New Zealand Journal of History*.

My third reason for placing 'The Autochthonous New Zealand Soil' alongside *The New Zealand Scholar* is personal. It allows me to document changes in my own awareness over the years as I have thought about what it means to me to be a New Zealander. I said earlier that I found the message of *The New Zealand Scholar* comforting for all of two decades but that, re-reading it now, I can see the marks of time on it. My responses to Ruth

6 Joe Heenan included this series in the Centennial Publications at the suggestion of Dr C. E. Beeby. During a visit to the United States in 1930 Beeby had picked up a series of publications on New York whose format and presentation had impressed him. 'I fished it out . . . and showed it to Joe Heenan, who leapt at the idea of having a publication that would convey the spirit of the Centennial publications to a much wider audience than the more scholarly books'. Personal communication, 7 January 1987.

Ross's piece have been the reverse. When I read it in 1969 or 1970 I found it baffling and I thought it eccentric. I had the feeling that an essentially private communication — one in which points were being scored — had been offered for public inspection. Whether or not that was so, I can now see I was not ready for it. In her search for historical understanding and, more particularly, no doubt, as a result of her attempts to understand the ways of the Maori people she was living near on the Hokianga, Ruth Ross found herself confronted with cultural differences between Maori and Pakeha and found herself asking questions that had not occurred to me or to many other Pakeha.⁷ Now that I have had some experience of the Maori cultural renaissance of the last 15 years, I find that her essay speaks to me in ways I begin to understand. John Beaglehole's address gave me satisfying answers to questions that worried me in the fifties. Ruth Ross's essay poses new questions for which answers still have to be found. The uncertainty about what it means to be a New Zealander has returned. The cry from the heart quoted by John Beaglehole must be answered all over again.

The formulation has changed. So, too, has the context of discussion. Questions about our identity as a people are no longer confined to what Beaglehole referred to as those higher reaches of criticism that wash the pages of *Landfall*. They have become matters of much wider community interest.

Our discussions about identity can now be much more concrete and immediate than they used to be. In part this is because the concept of identity does not have as many blanks as it did a generation ago. The growing body of work of our writers and other creative artists, of our scholars and researchers, is helping us to recognize ourselves as people of these islands and not some other country. John Beaglehole's New Zealand scholars are becoming appreciated for what they can do to show us ourselves. However they might regard themselves, our writers and creative artists no longer have to cast themselves in the role of outsiders who live in New Zealand but are not really of it. There are publics for their work — people who look forward to their latest productions as events that will add to their experience and enjoyment. A sense of communion is emerging. It is increasingly supported by institutional arrangements and networks of com-

⁷ The fire was, however, in the fern. There is an important essay to be written of the efforts of the generation of historians who, led by Professor J. W. Davidson, wrestled with what cultural anthropology had to offer historians of what were then called variously race relations or culture contact in New Zealand. The cultural anthropologists whose writings were important included Raymond Firth, Sir Apirana Ngata, Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), I. L. G. Sutherland, Ernest Beaglehole and Ralph Piddington. Also important (among others) as mediators in this search for understanding were Jock McEwen, Dr Maharaja Winiata and Mat Te Hau. When the fire burst into the open it burned most vigorously in Auckland through the teaching and publications of Keith Sinclair and Keith Sorrenson and the theses of their students.

munication. The universities have courses on New Zealand literature, New Zealand history, Maori language, and Maori studies, and their art schools, music departments, and visiting fellowships are focal points for creative work. Indeed, the universities, generally, through teaching, research, and publication are making major contributions. The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, in association with galleries, museums, theatres, and a wide range of organizations, is playing a critical role in stimulating the work of creative New Zealanders, making it accessible, developing markets for it, and helping the public to appreciate it. Increasingly, our leading corporations, public as well as private, think it important to sponsor the creative efforts of New Zealanders. The National Library at last has a habitation and names⁸ worthy of its quite central place in our intellectual life. We now look forward to the time when the National Archive is properly housed for its equally important function. The mass media of radio, television, and film provide public platforms for creative and scholarly activity, and so, too, do newspapers and magazines.

Our consciousness of ourselves as New Zealanders is changing and continues to change. We are caught up in a fascinating process of interaction. The more we reflect on our experience in these islands, the more do we appreciate its uniqueness: the more we know and the more deeply we feel about what it is that constitutes that uniqueness, the clearer and more coherent do our views about ourselves and our identity as New Zealanders become. That process of collective self-recognition has been increasingly at work among us as we have tried to come to terms with the major national and international developments of the last 20 years that have shaped our lives. We are learning to replace one view of ourselves and our place in the world with another. The British entry into the European Economic Community forced us to develop a completely new set of trading relationships with the rest of the world. We are gradually learning that, although we may think of New Zealand as Godzone, the rest of the world does not owe us a living.

We are becoming more aware of ourselves as a Pacific country. Australia, Japan, and the United States have become our major trading partners. Significant numbers of Samoans, Tongans, Cook Islanders, Tokolauans, and Niueans have made their homes in New Zealand but keep up links with their families in the Islands. Through our membership of the Pacific Forum and other regional organizations in the South Pacific we are building new communities of interest which range from cultural and educational exchange, through forms of economic co-operation, to regional approaches to collective security. We are learning to cast our thoughts and consider our national interests in the context of the South Pacific. We are also being nudged in that direction by French persistence in exploding nuclear devices at Mururoa, by the inability of the United States and the

⁸ The full title is: 'The National Library of New Zealand: Te Puna o te Matauranga'.

USSR to lessen the danger of a nuclear holocaust, and by international concern about the protection of the biosphere. In short, we are learning our place in the world. We are at once the remotest extension of Western and of Polynesian culture. That dual heritage is not to be found anywhere else.

This change in perception has been strongly influenced by changes in the composition of the New Zealand population. Two-thirds of the New Zealanders now living were born after the end of the Second World War.⁹ The depression of the thirties and the Second World War are history to them, experiences their parents and grandparents talk about. Their views of themselves have been formed against the background of the Vietnam War, decolonization and the emergence of the Third World, the persistence of famine, poverty, and injustice side by side with the nuclear arms race, the environmental movement, and the changing ethnic composition of New Zealand society, particularly in the North Island. It is within these islands and in relation to both streams of our cultural heritage that we are now seeking a home in thought.

But who are 'we', and what is the 'home in thought' 'we' are building? The generalized 'we' I have been using can be bewitching, particularly when associated with phrases such as 'the New Zealand identity'. It is impossible, however, to talk about national identity from the inside without using personal pronouns. In the convention of this form of discussion it is for the reader to decide whether he or she feels included in or excluded from findings, conclusions, or assertions expressed as statements about 'us'. There is also, it seems to me, another presumption in discussions which Pakeha New Zealanders have in the past engaged in on this subject. The expectation, implied rather than stated, is that the national identity we aspire to, or seek to describe, is coherent and all of a piece. When we talk about our national identity we are presuming to speak for all New Zealanders.

Here, therefore, it is necessary to underline two very important points. Those of us who are Pakeha need to remember that discussion under the heading of our national identity has until the present time been initiated and conducted almost exclusively by Pakeha. The various statements of what is meant by national identity — why it is important, the ideas and the language that are used to give meaning to what is being talked about, evidence that is thought to be relevant, precedents from other countries that may throw some light on our own case — the entire enterprise has developed within, and has been a commentary on, Pakeha culture in New Zealand.¹⁰ In our unwitting Pakeha way, we have set the agenda, appro-

⁹ *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1986-1987*, Wellington, 1986, p. 108.

¹⁰ See W. L. Renwick, 'Emblems of Identity', Keynote Address to 23rd World Congress of the International Society for Education through the Arts (INSEA), Adelaide, South Australia, August 1978, in Jack Condous, Janfree Howlett, John Skull, eds, *Arts in Cultural Diversity: A Selection of Papers Presented to the 23rd World Congress of INSEA in conjunction with the 7th Biennial Assembly of the Australian Society for Education through the Arts*, Sydney, 1980. See also J. O. C.

riated the language, and given our own meanings to the reality we are trying to explain to ourselves. It is significant that when, during the last 15 years, Maori scholars, artists, and writers have wrestled with the same issues of identity, it has not been with themselves in relation to a national or

New Zealand identity but with their waka (canoe), hapu (tribe) and whanau (family) that they have been primarily concerned.

The second point that must be underlined in 1987, therefore, when our identity as a people is being conceived in bicultural terms, is that the exploration of what that means must take on a new character. The Maori stream of our dual heritage can no longer be treated as if it were an addendum to an otherwise Pakeha culture. Nor is it simply a matter of Pakeha New Zealanders saying that we are now ready for dialogue. Maori New Zealanders have their own agendas and their own ways of dealing with issues. It is imperative, therefore, that whatever is done in future to flesh out the meaning of a bicultural identity is done in full consultation with those who speak authoritatively for Maori, as well as Pakeha, New Zealanders.

This is not something to be entered into lightly or merely as a matter of form. Many of us who are Pakeha, and who also believe in the importance of achieving a bicultural sense of identity, have much to learn about the essential values of Maori culture. What has been taken for knowledge in the past has often been of externals interpreted in the light of Pakeha values and processes of thinking. The only item on the agenda, as proposed from the Pakeha side, should be an invitation to take part in a dialogue, the form and content of which should ideally be developed in consensus.

Consensus? Is that a reasonable expectation? Only time will tell. What is clear, however, is that, whether or not the task can be accomplished, now is the time when it must be attempted. New Zealanders are living through what I for one believe to be the most important moment in our history. For the first time in our joint occupation of this country we are grappling with momentous issues which are as important to Maori New Zealanders as to Pakeha and are being seen by both Maori and Pakeha as being crucial to our future as New Zealanders. For the first time, too, Maori perspectives and points of view, expressed by Maori leaders, have a prominent place in the public debates about the various issues that New Zealanders are now thinking about. It is no longer only on the marae and in their own tribal councils that Maori New Zealanders are speaking their own minds. They are doing it in the Pakeha world as well.

The emergence of mana Maori as a vivifying force in Maoridom and in the wider New Zealand community is arguably the most important political development in New Zealand since the early 1970s. It is political in the

Phillips, 'Musings in Maoriland — Or Was There a *Bulletin* School in New Zealand?', *Historical Studies*, XX, 81 (1983), pp. 527-35; Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart. New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington, 1986, p. 204.

broadest meaning of the word because at the heart of the various initiatives within Maoridom is the conviction that Maori people, through Maori institutions, should have greater control of the structures of power that influence their lives. It is also a volatile development. Not only are there many issues of great importance upon which Maori people have to take a stand as members of whanau and hapu; the interpretations to be given to those arguments that bear on them are also changing rapidly. The essential features of mana Maori are, however, clear: differences of opinion within Maoridom are about means, not ends. Maori New Zealanders are saying to themselves and to Pakeha New Zealanders that they want greater acknowledgement, in the New Zealand way of life, of the values, institutions, and ways of doing things that are characteristically Maori. Instead of being the recipients of services that have been developed in Pakeha ways, primarily to meet the needs of Pakeha New Zealanders, they want to manage their own efforts in the light of Maori values and in their own ways. They want, in short, the power to name their own reality.

They also want changes of attitude and policy within the institutions of Pakeha society that will acknowledge the Maori contribution to our bicultural society. That calls for greater understanding by Pakeha New Zealanders of such basic Maori values as wairua (spirituality), mauri (respect for the life force), wehi (standing in awe), tapu (observing appropriate restrictions), whakapapa (knowing one's place in the genealogy), whanautanga (respect for the members of one's family), and mana (acting to enhance the reputation of the family tribe). It requires traditional Pakeha ways of doing things to be re-thought so that appropriate Maori values are acknowledged by being incorporated. It means giving status to Maori language in education and in public life. It means re-interpreting the Treaty of Waitangi and, on the Pakeha side, re-thinking its implications in the light of the understandings and expectations which Maori New Zealanders have of it based on the language of the Maori text. And, starting with the Treaty, it means reviewing the grievances and the bitter sense of injustice that many Maori people still feel as a result of the wars of the 1860s, the land confiscations of that time, various decisions of government, Acts of Parliament, and rulings of the courts since then.

The implications of all this will be clear to historians. For the first time since Maori and Pakeha have lived together in this country, urgent questions are being asked for which significant parts of the answers are being sought in our history. What was intended at Waitangi in 1840 and what later happened in relationships between Maori and Pakeha have become central to our understanding of ourselves. The interpretations that will be given will be an important contribution to the sense that Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders have of themselves.

History, after all, is what the people of one age find interesting in, and the stories they tell about, some earlier time. Increasingly, New Zealanders are turning their thoughts to their own past. There are stories in it still to be told, stories which, they believe, they and their children should hear. We

have entered an era in which the historical imagination has much to contribute to our sense of ourselves as New Zealanders. There is, therefore, much work for historians to do. Let me conclude with some discussion of what needs to be done if historians and teachers of history are to fulfil the expectations New Zealanders are now beginning to have of them.

In the wake of these changing expectations, some old questions are beginning to be viewed differently and some quite new issues are emerging, in relation to which equally new questions are being asked. If historical inquiry is to shed further light on the experience of New Zealanders, considered in the context of bicultural encounters and exchanges, what sort of history is it to be, who is to write it, and for whose edification? These apparently straightforward questions open up several other issues which are even more fundamental. In the modern Western tradition historians, in company with other scholars, are accountable only to their own sense of their discipline and to other historians and scholars who have claims to judge their work. Historians usually have no wish to be trammelled. They expect to choose their own subjects of inquiry and for their own reasons, not for the 'good' that inquiry into particular issues may do to others. History, moreover, as John Beaglehole reminded us, is a school of scepticism. Historians are rightly suspicious of any possibility that the fruits of their researches might be used for propagandist purposes.

There is a need, therefore, for some discussion among historians, educationists and others on the role that historians and other scholars could be expected to play in satisfying the hunger New Zealanders are developing to be better informed about themselves in relation to their past. I see no reason why the academic freedom of historians or other scholars need be threatened in any way. But I do think it is important, at the outset of what I hope will be an exciting co-operative effort, to note that there is no suggestion, in any of the public discussion I am aware of, that historians or other scholars should be put in leading strings. Quite the reverse. One of the reasons for the current interest in our national identity is the perception that there are myths about our past that may need to be unmasked. Both the questions that are being raised and the expectations about the way they might be handled are thus an invitation to New Zealand scholars.

But there are some difficult conceptual issues to be considered in what, for many of us, is new intellectual territory. Our interest is particularly in the bicultural nature of our heritage. That also requires some reflection on the different assumptions and ways of thinking of Pakeha historians and Maori kaumatua and kuia, and their implications for historical inquiry and publication. Many of the assumptions that Pakeha historians take for granted may well be off-limits to historians — whether Maori or Pakeha — who might wish to inquire into some aspect of a tribe's oral history. The concept of knowledge itself has very different meanings in the two cultures. In the Pakeha world, knowledge is open to all who want to search it out. The expectation is that all new knowledge will, through publication, be available for anyone who wishes to be informed for any purpose. But in the

Maori world knowledge that is important to the whanau, the hapu, or the waka (canoe descent line) has a privileged status. The elders have the responsibility of protecting such knowledge and ensuring that it is respected and passed on to the next generation. It is knowledge which is kept as a special preserve for carefully selected persons. We are thus dealing with a very different concept of knowledge — knowledge that is protected, and handed down because it is essential to the well-being of the whanau, rather than knowledge that is available to anyone, and pursued, and published for all the world to read. It is essential that the reasons for these differences are understood and respected. It will also be essential for protocols to be established for inquiries into subjects where Maori sensitivities are part of the context of the study itself.

Scholars who have been researching Maori subjects or relationships between Maori and Pakeha are of course alert to the point I am making. If it were simply a matter of ensuring that the proper courtesies are observed, the issue would be one of practical not of conceptual importance. But there is more to it than that. There are sensitivities on the Maori side which, now that they have been expressed, call for the most careful consideration by all scholars, particularly Pakeha scholars whose interests embrace Maori as well as Pakeha aspects of our experience as New Zealanders. Michael King's experience is one that all such scholars need to reflect on. Within the tradition of New Zealand scholarship that Beaglehole spoke of, Michael King can stand for the generation of historians that followed Ruth Ross. She opened her pores to Maori conceptions of knowledge and experience so that she could deepen her understanding of what that essentially Pakeha episode, the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, may have meant to the Maori tribes who were asked to sign it. He and others of his generation have gone further. He took some essentially Maori themes, prepared himself by learning Maori and winning the respect of the kaumatua who were the repositories of the knowledge he was seeking, and has written books and produced films which are a very important contribution to bicultural understanding. From his recent experience, however, he has concluded that, 'by the mid-1980s, the climate in Maori affairs ha[s] altered drastically from [what he] had encountered more than a decade earlier'.¹¹

Some Maori leaders and writers are taking the stance that it is no longer acceptable for Pakeha scholars to write about matters that are essentially Maori. Regardless of what happened in the past, they now regard it as culturally inappropriate for Pakeha scholars to write about and interpret the Maori world. They have had enough of seeing their culture, their traditions, and their history interpreted to the world by Pakeha writers, however sympathetic and well-meaning. As an expression of mana Maori, Maori writers should, they say, be the interpreters of their own culture. Not all Maori take this view, as can be seen from the comments of the various

11 Michael King, *Being Pakeha: An Encounter with New Zealand and the Maori Renaissance*, Auckland, 1985, p. 161.

Maori reviewers of Michael King's *Maori* and Margaret Orbell's *Natural World of the Maori*. But the fact that the view is held and that the challenge has been made so publicly means that a new chapter has opened for research and writing about any aspect of our shared past where the mana of Maori people is involved. Pakeha scholars have in the past had to learn how to deal with various ideological stances which have become part of the Western tradition of scholarship. But ideology has never been a Western monopoly, and, in a bicultural society, Pakeha as well as Maori scholars must learn to recognize Maori forms of ideology, try to understand why particular stances are taken up, and then find ways of living with them.

Again, therefore, there is a need for more discussion between Maori and Pakeha scholars with the aim of clarifying the kawa — the protocol — under which inquiries into Maori and bicultural subjects should be undertaken. In entering into such a discussion it would not be necessary to assume a unanimous outcome. Our knowledge of ideological thinking — its motivations as well as its forms — suggests that it would be unrealistic to do so. What is needed is a thorough, frank examination of what different concepts of history mean, how various processes of historical research relate to them, and what assumptions about audiences and publications are made by Maori and Pakeha historians (and other scholars) when they separately begin to consider the 'same' subject in a bicultural context. There are two related objectives to be sought. The first is to find a home in Pakeha thought for Maori assumptions about historical inquiry. That is essentially a task of cultural understanding and it places Pakeha historians under an obligation to become attuned to Maori ways of thinking and acting. The second is to devise approaches to historical inquiry that are appropriately bicultural in a New Zealand context. This is even more demanding. It requires Maori and Pakeha alike to think creatively about their relationship to each other, not only in respect of differences between the two cultural traditions, but of the attributes of those cultural traditions that each value in the promotion of historical understanding in a bicultural society.¹²

There is an important future for reflection on the historiography of New Zealand history considered in the context of Maori and Pakeha views of the world. The aim would be to achieve a greater understanding between Maori and Pakeha of what historical research means in each cultural tradition, of topics that should, from one perspective or another, be taken up or left alone, of historical interpretations that should be revised, and of assumptions in historical writings thus far that may need to be challenged. As well as kaumatua, kuia, and historians, there should thus be a place at the table

12. For an example of this approach see Judith Binney and Gillian Chaplin, *Ngā Mōrehu: The Survivors*, Auckland, 1986. See also Binney's 'Maori Oral Narratives, Pakeha Written Texts: Two Forms of Telling History', *NZJH*, XXI, 1 (1987), pp. 16-28.

for philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, theologians, and anthropologists whose expertise is in the role of knowledge in the construction of social reality. Stated summarily like this, it may sound like an invitation to portentous word-play. I would be very disappointed if that were to be the outcome. For the issues are urgent and real. To put it bluntly: a bicultural way of viewing ourselves as New Zealanders in relation to each other, in our past as well as our present, calls for a philosophy of history as part of a philosophy of biculturalism. There are no reach-me-down solutions. Our situation as a people is unique and we must fashion our own intellectual tools if we are to build our own home in thought. Such reflection calls for dialogue across disciplines as well as across cultures. For the issues to be wrestled with are, at bottom, epistemological: they have to do with the nature of what passes for knowledge, how it is gained, its status and authority, its function in creating conceptual worlds into which people are inducted and in the light of which they define themselves; and how, as new questions are asked or new approaches become available, new forms of knowledge are created, old forms are reinterpreted, or become less interesting or compelling, or are superseded by new social constructions of 'reality'.

Another issue is the place of historical studies and, in particular, studies of New Zealand history, in school curricula. In the wake of the Ministerial curriculum review, this is at last becoming a focus for public discussion. More than 20,000 people responded to the invitation of the curriculum review committee to reply to a series of questions the committee sought comment on from the New Zealand public. Their responses amply confirmed the committee's own view that, among other things, school curricula should be reconsidered from the standpoint of their contribution to each child's developing sense of what it means to be a New Zealander.¹³ Essentially this means developing understandings, attitudes, and skills that acknowledge our heritage in two very different cultures, that help students from both cultural traditions to become confident in the one they regard as 'their own' and, equally important, to grow up feeling comfortable in the wider culture of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This line of thinking is a significant departure from earlier thinking about school curricula. All previous statements of objectives have been located in the Western cultural tradition, with particular reference to our development first as a colony in the wider Empire, and later as a Commonwealth nation. They have reflected our Pakeha origins as a colony and the need for Pakeha New Zealanders to join themselves to the traditions of western civilization. Most previous statements have included some reference to Maori New Zealanders. But the Maori have been as seen through Pakeha eyes and in relation to the development of a Pakeha form of society in these islands. They have

13 *The Curriculum Review, 1986: A Draft Report Prepared by the Committee to Review the Curriculum in Schools*, Wellington, 1986, pp. 27, 35, 119.

reflected a Pakeha, not a Maori, view of the world and our place in it.¹⁴ That is now changing. The curriculum review has provided the mandate for greater emphasis in school curricula on studies and activities that will provide young New Zealanders with a more secure understanding of their history and their bicultural heritage. Historians have welcomed this invitation to bring their harp to the party. At this early stage of discussion, it is not yet clear how these understandings should be incorporated into school curricula or organized in teaching programmes. What is clear, however, is that historians and leading scholars of Maoritanga have a significant role to play in identifying what should be included in school curricula. I say this for two reasons. First, because, as I said earlier, a growing sense of ourselves as a people with a distinctive history is one of the central elements of the current public interest in our national identity as New Zealanders. Second, because, although the contributions of other disciplines and forms of expression have an obvious contribution, they will need to be placed in an emerging historical context. Who, however, is to count as a historian? The number of persons, institutions and organizations with a direct interest in inquiry into aspects of New Zealand history is large and is becoming increasingly diverse. In the forefront are the professional historians, bibliographers, research librarians, archivists, art historians, ethnologists, and museologists. Of particular interest is the work of Professor Oliver and his colleagues on the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. They provide an excellent example of historians who are redefining what it is that is worth recording about men and women from the past in the light of our bicultural heritage, the contributions of both sexes, and local as well as national estimations of importance. The proposals that are being discussed within Maoridom for the development of tribal archives and the recording of oral history are of potential importance, too. And there are scattered initiatives in many government departments and local bodies that are becoming aware of historical dimensions of their responsibilities.

Less visible but very numerous are the thousands of New Zealanders who have some continuing interest in local or family history or who are delving into some aspect of our past. A recent survey put the membership of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust at 19,500, of the New Zealand Genealogical Society at 8,000, and the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand at 700. Even allowing for double counting, these numbers represent a considerable amount of interest. University and other teachers of New Zealand history are experiencing an increasing demand for such courses.

Recitals of the kind I have just given can, however, give a misleading impression. I wish I could feel persuaded that these manifestations of activity and interest were supported by an adequate infrastructure of organization,

14 See Colin McGeorge, 'Race and the Maori in the New Zealand Primary School Curriculum', *ANZEAS Journal*, X, 1 (1981), pp. 213-23.

funding, and communication. I hope, therefore, that the recent Ministerial Review of the Historical Publications Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs¹⁵ will have a happy, practical outcome. The establishment of a Historical Branch on a new basis, with an advisory committee which, among other things, would keep people with active interests in history informed of what is happening, would open up all sorts of new possibilities. There must surely be scope, too, for financial support from board rooms for research fellowships that will increase the amount of historical research and book prizes that will stimulate historical publications.

Like John Beaglehole before me, I venture to hope. No one now has to justify the New Zealand scholar. Nor is it as a cultural province of a European metropolis that we nurture our sense of identity. It is as Maori and Pakeha that we are shaping our future under rubrics of bicultural (and multicultural) understanding and respect. For increasing numbers of New Zealanders it is their experience in these islands and in the Pacific that is quite central to their sense of themselves as a people. Regardless of whether it was uttered by Robin Hyde or Eric Cook, they echo the cry 'Show us these islands and ourselves . . . give us a home in thought'. There is indeed much for historians and teachers of history to do.

W. L. RENWICK

Department of Education, Wellington

15 R. M. Williams and G. R. Knox, *Report on a Ministerial Review of the Historical Publications Branch*, Wellington, 1986, p. 22.