

Salmond has made available to all a clear picture of the Maori worlds which were contacted between 1642 and 1772, and scotched for ever the myth that the Maori were a culturally or socially homogeneous people at the time of contact.

As an historian I felt there were times when Salmond was not as critical and probing of the written sources as she was of the cultural data available to her. For example Te Taniwha's recorded memories of Cook's presence in Whitianga harbour (pp.87-8) is a superb document to be able to cite extensively, but she does not interrogate its authenticity. From the work of Simmons and Sorrenson we know how carefully Maori traditions and memories recorded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have to be analysed. How scrupulously did the collector/recorder, John White, transcribe the memory? Did he hear it directly from Te Taniwha? What later events may have influenced Te Taniwha's account? The questions are endless and many of the answers may be unattainable, but the reader needs to be assured that the questions at least have been confronted. While there were times when certain sources could have been more rigorously investigated, this criticism does not effect my judgement that this book is a very significant and welcome addition to our growing understanding of the complexities of the contact experience in New Zealand.

Faced with conflicting evidence about the sexual availability of Maori women to the visitors Salmond suggests that captive women may have been freely available (p.176). She does not however consider the question whether the taking of Maori women captives increased after contact with the rapid acquisition of firearms, the presumed increase in warfare and the knowledge that Europeans paid well for the sexual favours of Maori women, captive or otherwise. But I ask too much and my own interests intrude. Maori women are clearly visible throughout *Two Worlds*, from Salmond's sensitive reconstruction of precontact Maori worlds to the ambiguous and at times seemingly contradictory perceptions the foreign visitors recorded. Salmond discusses these possible contradictions knowledgeably and openly, and certainly establishes that many Maori women enjoyed status and respect in early contact Maori societies.

Two Worlds is lucidly and beautifully written in a style that is accessible to the general public as well as the specialists. Much thought and care have gone into the maps and illustrations that accompany and more importantly explicate the text. It is a beautiful book to handle. Salmond's *Hui* and her biographies of Eruera and Amiria Stirling have all become classics in the anthropological literature. I believe *Two Worlds* will also become a classic, and in both the anthropological and the historical literature of New Zealand and in the wider Pacific. This is a rare accomplishment and one to be greatly welcomed.

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The Book of New Zealand Women: Ko Kui Ma Te Kaupapa. Edited by Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1991. 772pp. NZ price: \$45.00.

OVER 130 YEARS ago, the English novelist George Eliot wrote that 'The happiest women, like the happiest nations, have no history'; now the authors of this recent publication have

turned this statement on its head.¹ In *The Book of New Zealand Women*, Charlotte Macdonald, Merimeri Penfold and Bridget Williams have compiled the accounts of more than 300 women who have lived in New Zealand. These range from Palliser Bay Woman of c.1200 AD, to journalist Helen Paske, who died in 1989. As the editors state, the aim of this collective project was not to catalogue New Zealand's 'famous women', but rather to emphasize with a broad sweep 'the variety of courses that women's lives have taken' (p. viii). The inclusion of women of note along with those hitherto unknown in the public sense, challenges the criteria which have previously determined one's entry into an historical text. In setting this alternative agenda, *The Book of New Zealand Women* is indeed at the forefront of research in New Zealand women's history.

The Book of New Zealand Women takes as its starting point the female social pattern that has been provided by recent publications in New Zealand women's history. It then goes a step further to move from the general to the specific; from the public to the private worlds of women and their experiences in New Zealand. This approach allows for the complexity of women's lives to be shown, and suggests that an analysis in terms of the simple life/work distinction does not accommodate the many roles that women have been, and still are, expected to assume. This montage of life stories, presented as a series of biographical portraits, is created as a means of compiling an 'alternative history'.

The Book of New Zealand Women may be read as a collection of fascinating true stories, but it is as a reference work that it will be particularly valuable to historians. At the end of the book, subjects are listed alphabetically, then indexed according to their field of activity, allowing the reader to cross-reference between essays. There is also an index of contributing authors. The detailed indexing is testimony to the quality of research upon which this book is based, but it could be improved with the addition of a list of essays in chronological order. For a reference work the text is generously illustrated, yet without the distraction of obtrusive footnotes.

Variety is also extended to the range of source materials. The sources include published and unpublished material and are drawn from archival collections as well as informal personal records, both written and oral. A list of sources is provided after each essay to facilitate further research. Where the evidence is scarce, or where women left no records of their own, the authors have drawn upon other sources; medical records have been consulted for Annemarie Anon, police records for Opium Mag (Margaret Williams), and the Sweating Commission of 1890 for a portrait of Miss Y and Miss Z.

Although shorter entries have been allocated to those women whose lives have previously been studied, it is surprising just how few these are. It is refreshing to see longer entries on women who have been previously unknown to most outside their immediate circle; women such as Alice Stott, Maro Hoterene, Unui Doo and Jessie Buckland.

For practical reasons, not every woman with a claim to have her story told could be included in *The Book of New Zealand Women*, as its editors admit, but those that are provide a comprehensive insight into women's worlds in our past. In addition to the wealth of detail that will inspire future researchers of women's history, its enduring contribution to the direction of feminist scholarship in New Zealand is in providing an alternative definition of fame and notoriety.

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1 George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), bk.vi, ch.3.