

to Brij Lal, who displays considerable acumen, scholarship and humanity in detailing 'the passage out' in a reflective consideration of the problems that have bedevilled and bedevil.

Tides of History is clearly a handsome flagship of considerable tonnage, but like all flagships relies on support. I do not wish to fire the first salvos, but it is apparent where they will be aimed. The crew carries only two women, and only one indigene (and Lal, a Fijian-Indian). Has the make-up of those who study the Pacific changed so little? The absence of more Pacific Island scholars is mystifying. The book is presumably intended for undergraduates, so why is there no bibliography? The guidance the footnotes provide is too uneven, and a select bibliography or bibliographic essay would have been extremely useful. The book also fails to use photographs as thoughtfully as it might have.

Yet the major fault I find with *Tides of History* is shown by the lack of coverage of the vital 'battles' that have been fought in the academic Pacific, notably insider/outsider (that is, 'academic ownership'), Mead/Freeman and Sahlins/Obeyesekere. Historiographical, academic, and anthropological issues such as these should have been dealt with, rather than ignored or relegated to footnotes. There is no introduction and the preface we are given is tantalising but lamentably short. Lal's final chapter would have served nicely, perhaps better, as an introduction. I can find the unwillingness to take charge understandable, but not so easily excusable, as the editors have often shown their courage with such matters in the past, and firmer guidance would have made for more cohesion, and made points of difference seem such, rather than appearing (or not appearing) as clutter. It is this occasional want of direction which leads to most of the vagaries and contradictions, which nonetheless are commendably few.

Tides of History is a good book. The captains picked 'one of innumerable ways' to sail around the Pacific, and they picked one which was informed, quick, and caught most of the prevailing winds. The ship itself is beautiful, sturdy-looking and contains considerable craftsmanship. An obvious partner to K.R. Howe's *Where the Waves Fall*, it will reach the required shores. Its errors will be fixed in its likely reprinting, its shortcomings perhaps not so easily. I imagine, however, that we should get used to seeing it, as it will be on the water for some time.

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Through Irish Eyes: Australian and New Zealand Images of the Irish 1788-1948. By Patrick O'Farrell. Aurora Books, Ringwood, Victoria, 1994. 132 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-86355-042-9.

WITH THIS BOOK and its predecessor, *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand*, Professor O'Farrell has in a sense come home, but only to visit. After a distinguished career as the doyen of Irish Australian historians, his two most recent books have seen a decisive shift of emphasis and the first consideration of the Irish in New Zealand as part of an Australasian Irish entity. The masterly analysis and detailed research of *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History* (1985) and *The Irish in Australia* (1986) are now supplemented by soulful meditations on the passing of the culture of Irish Australasia. Like 1990's *Vanished Kingdoms* this book combines the author's deeply personal family connection with his subject and fragments of a lifetime's search for its talismans. Both works are beautifully produced and presented, exquisitely written, and richly studded with pearls of wisdom from 30 years of considered reflection.

The logic of the New Zealand dimension to *Vanished Kingdoms* is quite clear, based

as it is on the experiences of O'Farrell's immigrant parents in Waimate and Greymouth, as recorded in their surviving correspondence. The New Zealand elements of *Through Irish Eyes* are more problematic. True the images presented are offered not as a photographic history but as O'Farrell states (quoting Susan Sontag) as 'inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy'. This is a particularly apposite description of the New Zealand images, which surprisingly constitute over a quarter of the illustrations in the book, more than those derived from Irish sources. But while the Australian and Irish images can be securely linked to a vibrant historiography and are the icing on a richly textured cake, for New Zealand there is as yet no cake. If O'Farrell's basic argument is that 'Until very recently the Irish have been the dynamic factor in Australian history, that is, the galvanizing force at the centre of the evolution of our national character' (*The Irish in Australia*), just how appropriate is it simply to add 'and New Zealand' to the thesis? A large number of New Zealand images are included in this collection, but closer examination of the text confirms that they invite more 'speculation' than 'deduction'.

My quibble is that by tacking 'New Zealand' on to Australian-derived interpretations in this way, the book will obscure the effective absence of an Irish dimension from New Zealand historical writing. O'Farrell's stinging castigation of the Australian historical establishment — 'a once dominant Protestant elite, lamenting its own demise, and taken up with its own present confusions and torments' (*Vanished Kingdoms*) — could be applied here even more emphatically. It has been left to visiting academics to whistle-stop through the research libraries and lay out the barest bones of the Irish experience in New Zealand. The locals, it would seem, cannot be much bothered with the Irish. Richard Davis's *Irish Issues in New Zealand Politics* (1974) and Donald Akenson's *Half the World From Home* (1990) are the only monographs on the subject and the few journal articles have cast very narrow beams into the darkness. There is some encouragement in a rising number of honours and doctoral theses, many of them taking Akenson's 'Jobs Undone' as a point of reference, but the limited dissemination of the fruits of these unpublished labours seriously constrains their impact. *Through Irish Eyes* is a little premature in this context, though anything which edges Irish New Zealand back onto the historical stage is a welcome addition to the literature.

We still know very little about the Irish community in New Zealand. We know only a little more about its Siamese twin, the Catholic Church in New Zealand. The blindspot is indicative of a more widespread failure to acknowledge the diversity of identities brought to this country by nineteenth-century immigrants and the persistence of distinctive features well into the modern period. Irish Catholics are the most outstanding example of a founding group with its own religious, political, linguistic, social and cultural baggage whose integration into a wider collectivity was sometimes painful, always problematic and surely worthy of closer investigation. By definition this will demand sophisticated and demanding research since the trail is cold and the imprint left on paper records by a poorly educated people with an oral culture is discouragingly light. Lyndon Fraser's forthcoming *To Tara via Holyhead: Irish Catholic Immigrants in Nineteenth Century Christchurch* will be a major step forward, bringing to bear insights from a rich sociological literature on ethnicity and techniques of microhistorical analysis from North American studies to the Irish Catholic community in Christchurch. Without such detailed case studies at the local level there is virtually nothing that can be argued convincingly about Irish New Zealand. Until there are many more such investigations in depth *Through Irish Eyes* must be seen as a standing indictment of our historiography.

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