

violent hostility in the 1870s to strong support in the 1880s is insufficiently explained. There is sometimes a certain primness, which occasionally seems to reify Te Kooti, and prevent him coming through to us in full colour as a 'wag' of great charm and pleasant expression who drank schnapps for preference — though Binney does tellingly compare him to the Loki-like legendary heroes, Maui and Tawhaki. Above all, Te Kooti the social revolutionary, preaching change within Maoridom as well as resisting dangers from without, is insufficiently analysed. From 1868, perhaps even before, his position seems to have been pan-tribal and anti-chiefly — almost as much of a threat to traditional Maori society as to Pakeha. The merging of social with ethnic resistance in prophetic movements is well known internationally, and it needed more explicit exploration here. There is no doubt that Binney has the analytical skills for this; it is the method and structure that she has chosen which sometimes hamper her use of them.

There are places in *Redemption Songs* where the reader bogs down in detail, or where the tone becomes almost exegetical — whole pages discussing a single enigmatic saying. But the thickly-descriptive level of detail becomes addictive once you adjust to it; the style first engages, then absorbs. Like the method, the style is reminiscent of good literary biography: sometimes difficult, but rich and weighty, a fascinating and complex mind lovingly preserved in its own medium, in this case spiritual. The spiritual was Binney's preferred dimension in her previous books too. If there is an element of personal quest in this, I wish all such inner voyages so enriched the cultures which housed them.

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*Ngā Uruora / The Groves of Life: Ecology and History in a New Zealand Landscape.* By Geoff Park. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1995. 376pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86473-291-0.

'IF MY JOURNEY in Cook's wake has a particular intent it is to find the spot where, with an axe and a quadrant and some carefully chosen words, his shore-party enshrined such trees in New Zealand history' (p.31). In *Ngā Uruora*, Geoff Park introduces the reader to the fertile coastal plains of New Zealand which once promised rich opportunity to Maori and Pakeha, but have now disappeared. Commencing with Cook's *Endeavour* party on the Hauraki Plains, and the New Zealand Company's arrival in the Hutt Valley, Park takes us through the river flatlands and on a journey through landscapes which exist today as testimony to the imperatives of colonial settlement. These same landscapes saw the wanton destruction and transformation of the indigenous forests and swamps as part of the imperial drive towards 'progress'. Working within these wider parameters, Park focuses his discussion on four places where small remnants of the forests' indigenous ecosystems of kahikatea and harakeke still survive. Literally following in the footsteps of early explorers, the author travels by canoe and overland to Tauwhare on the Mokau river, Papaitonga in Horowhenua, Whanganui Inlet and Punakaiki on the South Island's west coast. On arrival, he discusses the particular histories of these places, their significance to Maori, their importance to conservation efforts and their continued vulnerability. The central thesis of *Ngā Uruora* is that these forgotten parts of New Zealand must be saved, or at the very least shielded from the ravages of western

industrialization. Park also reminds us that New Zealand is part of a global ecosystem: no longer can New Zealanders afford to relegate 'ecocide' (like genocide) to other distant parts of the world. The author also takes issue with those ecologists who argue that by the time Europeans arrived in this land the fertile coastal plains had already been despoiled by Maori. Instead, he suggests that if the last survivors of ngā uruora are to become incorporated with current efforts directed towards the sustainable management of natural resources, Maori knowledge and traditional methods employed in the maintenance of these ecosystems must again become central to their care. Although he does not idealize traditional Maori attitudes towards the environment — as others have been tempted to do — Park argues that Pakeha are only now coming to recognize the sense of place Aotearoa forced on Maori.

*Ngā Uruora* constantly switches between the past and the present, evoking both historical and contemporary views of a particular landscape. This juxtaposition of place provides a sense of self-reflexivity to the narrative, and is an acknowledgement that history is simply the past re-made through the eyes of the present. In many ways, *Ngā Uruora* breaks new ground in New Zealand historiography. The rather eclectic style is evidence of the value of an interdisciplinary approach and is one that should be encouraged. It challenges conventional notions of categorization in that it may be read as history, ecology and personal odyssey. In this latter respect *Ngā Uruora* echoes John Pascoe's work following in the wake of early Pakeha explorers in New Zealand, documented in his *Explorers and Travellers: early expeditions in New Zealand* (1971). By tracing the journeys of Cook and others, *Ngā Uruora* bears unconscious similarities to Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (1987) where Carter follows Cook's linguistic colonization of the Australian continent through acts of naming. Although Park does not mention Carter's notion of spatial history, his concern with spatiality is not unlike Carter's. Park is, however, concerned less with the journey of exploration than with the aftermath and its effects on the environment. Its attention to detail reminds one of Guthrie-Smith's *Tutira* (1923), often cited as the classic study of a New Zealand landscape.

Criticisms of *Ngā Uruora* are minor, although the rather confusing style of referencing must be noted. The rich material in this book deserves a more thorough and accurate method of directing the reader to a source. The text could also have benefited from further editing. Apart from suggesting that Maori values be accorded centre stage in environmental planning and conservation policy, Park does not provide us with firm remedies or sustainable solutions for saving and maintaining natural ecosystems. This rather indefinite approach nonetheless steers away from preaching.

Craig Potton's colour photography perfectly captures the isolated and almost mystical nature of ngā uruora and is itself a plea for conserving such places. The images, although conveying a particular kind of beauty, are not of the typical tourist genre, but aim to show the pristine beauty of these hidden places. Framed by the photographers' lens, they are at least preserved within these pages. The remainder of the text is embellished with small black and white portraits, an assortment of contemporary and historical images taken from early sketches, photographs, charts and paintings of the new land, which provide the perfect complement for the text.

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