

Taranaki. Taken together, the chapters suggest that the politics behind constructing fragments are politically contestable. Attempting a critique of essentialism and/or advancing indigenous knowledges cuts to the core of writing histories of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Yet, in this collection of essays the opportunity for debate is not explored.

Fragments is a useful and enjoyable book. It is fresh and breezy and signals much hope for the future of New Zealand social and cultural history. If it is unconventional, it is not fractious, and despite being engulfed in a paradigm of fragments, the book manages to proceed with confidence and sophistication.

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Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand. By Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley. Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1999. 288 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-19-558371-X.

AUGIE FLERAS and Paul Spoonley's review of ethnic relations and policy, with its focus on racism in New Zealand, appears at a singularly opportune time. As the millennium and the political wheel turn, as the decade closes, *Recalling Aotearoa* re-examines our shop-soiled history. The colonizing enterprise was devastatingly efficient. Decolonization has been slow. Why can we not resolve these issues more rationally and speedily?

Recalling Aotearoa comprises six chapters on cultural politics focused mainly on the historical and current background of Maori and Pakeha relations, another chapter on migration policy and one on the situation of Pacific Islanders. The text is comprehensive and the writing accessible to a wide audience. The authors show the magnitude and complexity of the decolonizing exercise still before us and the ambivalence and reluctance politicians have shown in the matter. While they diagnose the disease of racism they offer no easy or simple solution, yet voice a qualified optimism and offer some positive guidelines.

But the coercive power of the state and its institutions requires more analysis than is undertaken here. However much deregulation may seem to be in vogue, political control is still seen as imperative, as the log-jam in the claims settlement process shows. Nor are issues of degree of cultural saturation, behavioural practice, or distinctiveness in cognitive functioning addressed by Fleras and Spoonley. Thus we are left wondering still, what is the reality, the substance of any of the identities involved, minority or majority, bi-cultural or multi-cultural? If culture is about choices then its basis in prevailing group ethos or value systems needs to be more trenchantly addressed. Differences are irreconcilable, the authors state (p.77). But are they as great as they seem to assert?

That there are demonstrable differences at the reified cultural level is indisputable; whether they are of major dimension and significance is debatable. That debate is only peripherally pursued in this book. For example, the debate over allocation of fish and fishing resources (pp.29–31), while couched in terms of rangatiratanga rights, sounds most of the time like the squabbling at a badly chaired annual meeting of stockholders. Most Maori have little or no interest or say in the matter. Fleras and Spoonley do not put the debate into the discourse of ordinary commercial wrangling but emphasize its 'cultural' aspects, which may be why no solution to the mess of stinking fish has appeared. Ordinary commercial practice and market-place values will prevail in the end because property rights and greed are mutually shared. As the notion of rangatiratanga fades from the emphasis it enjoyed in the 1990s, the thin crust of practicability provides too insubstantial

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a support for alternative cultural practices in the real world.

Fleras and Spoonley see constructive engagement as the 'best practice' solution in the decolonizing process. This will require a rethinking of Maori policy to emphasize the acknowledgement of Maori differences (including internal diversity), moving from need-driven policies to others based on rights, and cutting the Gordian knots of claims settlement. Were academics ever to rule the world, even in a Machiavellian sense, *Recalling Aotearoa* might be useful. As it is, it appears more as fodder with which to conduct post-modernist discourses. Its history is slender and revisionists like Belich receive scant attention.

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A Voyage Round the World. By George Forster. Edited by Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof, assisted by Jennifer Newell, 2 vols. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu. 860 pp. US price: \$115.00. ISBN 0-8248-2091-6.

GEORGE FORSTER'S *Voyage Round the World*, first published in 1777, is arguably the richest of any eighteenth-century narrative about Pacific peoples. It describes Captain James Cook's second voyage, a voyage unprecedented for the range of its contacts with the people of the South Pacific and for the sustained character of interaction with some populations. Cook's ship *Resolution* stayed for 47 days at Dusky Bay, for example, and for a total of 102 days at Queen Charlotte's Sound. Forster's account of the voyage is considerably longer than Cook's and a great deal richer in description than any other narrative from the voyage. It does not limit itself to the voyage, but rather weaves together narrative, ethnographic, geographic and biological observations with reflections on human society and customs. Dating from a time before science started to aim for an objective account, this natural history tries, with a surprising degree of success, to give an all-encompassing description of all of the author's observations, reflections and emotions in a vivid and aesthetically pleasing form.

How did a German, who was just 18 at the beginning of the voyage and 23 when the book was published, come to join Cook's *Resolution* and write such a prestigious book? At first, a group of naturalists including the famous Sir Joseph Banks were supposed to accompany Cook. But when they declined at short notice, Johann Reinhold Forster and his son qualified for places since they had translated a number of philosophically informed travel narratives. On the journey, George was just an assistant, but when his father fell out with the authorities and was banned from writing a travel narrative (see the letters in the Appendix of the book, if you enjoy argument and intrigue), George stepped into his place. He used his father's journals, but he changed and expanded them considerably by introducing his own experiences, aesthetic elaborations and extended reflections. His style clearly reveals the influence of German pre-Romanticism (*Sturm und Drang*), and his own position as a political radical. He was very critical of what he perceived as tyrannical and parasitical despotism among South Sea peoples.

An edition of Johann Reinhold Forster's *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World* was published by the University of Hawai'i Press in 1996. This new scholarly edition of George Forster's account makes a further important work from Cook's second voyage readily available to English readers. With such a complex and multi-layered text, which influenced the development of science (witness Forster's influence on