

dynamics of identity do not always lend themselves to a fluid structure. Moreover, *New Zealand Identities* would have been better served by an introduction that outlines the scholarship on identity in New Zealand, thereby placing the newness of this work into sharper relief. A solid grounding in the literature would also assist the new reader to the field.

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Kin: A Collective Biography of a New Zealand Working-Class Family. By Melanie Nolan. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 2005. 251 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877257-34-6.

FOR THE SECOND TIME, Melanie Nolan has written a fascinating and valuable book that is not exactly the book it says it is. In *Breadwinning*, subtitled *Women and the New Zealand State*, she had at least as much to say about men as about women. Now she has written a book called *Kin* which, protest as she may, is really about class.

The book's introduction makes the case for broadening the focus of the historiography of the working class in New Zealand. An informative discussion of that historiography includes the charge that the debates have focused too narrowly on certain groups: skilled workers, trade unionists, the non-religious; or the transient, the disorderly and the unorganized; and on men. Or that they have focused too much on specifically political organizations, at the expense of the breadth of working people's concerns. This charge of a too-narrow definition of New Zealand working-class culture operates as the rationale for Nolan's project here, which is to examine the lives of the five children of Sarah and William McCullough, born in Ulster between 1860 and 1875, as a means of considering the variability of working-class culture as it developed here. I am not entirely convinced of the fairness of all the charges set at the door of the historiography, but neither do I think that matters: the book needs no excuse. Chapter two, which examines the nature of cultural transfer from Ulster to southern New Zealand, is particularly interesting, making the case that the critical period of migration to New Zealand occurred before sectarianism and populist Orangeism had bitten deep in Ulster — for which we can be thankful. Here Nolan sets forth the view that of all the affiliations the family brought with them, it was Presbyterianism which endured most powerfully.

William and Sarah McCullough were Ulster Scots, Irish Unionists and evangelical Presbyterians. William was not a skilled man himself, but the pair had three skilled sons and two skilled sons-in-law. From Belfast they emigrated with all five children in 1880, arriving in Christchurch and Timaru and dispersing over time to Wellington, Kaiapoi and Dunedin.

Jack McCullough, eldest and most politically active of the siblings, was the subject of the political biography Nolan wrote as her MA thesis. In returning to this work after a gap of 20 years, she found herself interested in the others: in sisters and brothers whose possible significance had been of little interest to her earlier historical self. What would it mean to look beyond Jack? she now asked: to look beyond Jack the international socialist, trade unionist, workers' representative on the Arbitration Court, pacifist, lapsing Presbyterian, moderate drinker and occasional temperance supporter, even more occasional and guilty placer of a bet — in short, an outstanding representative of respectable and politically active working-class masculinity. But as Nolan points out, Jack himself recognized that he held minority political beliefs. A long glance down the line of younger McCulloughs offered a more diverse picture, although the picture remained a respectable one. There was Margaret, taken by her mother to the founding Timaru meeting

of the WCTU, later becoming a national officeholder and responsible for establishing the (dry) Seamen's Rest. Stalwart of Trinity Church (built to seat 700 by a congregation then numbering 65), she and her fellows gathered clothing and quilts for welfare work; raised funds for mission work at home and abroad, including paying the salary of a missionary doctor in the Punjab; collected over 37,000 stamps for sale in one year; studied; and prayed. Surely this was a life of activism no less than Jack's? Next in line was Jim, one of a small, out-voted coterie of Christchurch Labour councillors arguing for the council to concern itself with social issues. A painter, he aspired to self-employment but was hampered by the effects of an accident. Jim affiliated more strongly to friendly societies than to the trade union, and was committed to Methodism and temperance: his wife's family was influential in all these connections. The next sibling, Sarah, led a life that was primarily domestic — but this Nolan says relatively little about. She too, however, was extensively involved in the Presbyterian Church, was loyalist and patriotic, frequently contributing her musical talent to fund-raising causes. Frank, the youngest, trained as a bootmaker but at the end of the Long Depression became a salesman, eventually taking a job with the Kaiapoi Woollen Mills and becoming a branch manager: the only brother to leave a working-class occupation.

Nolan's achievement here is to make the case for working-class culture beyond political organization; to bring women, religion, patriotism and local politics into the frame. That the McCulloughs were inveterate joiners provides the book's structure as well as its key sources. Each sibling's participation in the organizations to which they belonged, usually as leading figures, is used to illuminate the multiplicity of affiliations generated by this family and in so doing to indicate the variability of the beliefs and commitments flourishing in New Zealand respectable working-class culture — and, if this family is a guide, able to exist in remarkably tolerant accommodation of different opinions. The focus on organizations has a down side, in that it takes away from the book's ostensible focus on family. Insights into family relations tend to be glimpses into the interstices of the book — Jack helping Frank pack his samples, or going to a concert with Sarah. But there is not a great deal on these sibling relationships, the cross-generational relationships, or the marriages — on the ways in which this relatively close family conducted its family life. Sources, of course, may have precluded this.

Nolan points out early that gender has been too often missing from the historiography of class. This book does not especially deal with men as men; the masculinity of the skilled and the authority in the home which that often entailed does not come in for scrutiny. Nor does the home itself receive a great deal of attention, and I would like to have seen more discussion here: decor, food and dress would seem to have a place in thinking about how women enact class. But the book does bring into focus important preoccupations of the respectable women of the working class. The neglect of religion in working-class historiography is in significant part a hidden question of gender, and it receives substantial compensation here. For its variety of achievements, *Kin* is a valuable addition to the literature on class in New Zealand.

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IF, AS ROBIN WINKS SUGGESTS, the study of history is inevitably embedded in its context and time and reflects current preoccupations, we may, like Malcolm Campbell in this volume, wish to ponder why there has been a recent resurgence of interest in