

in many formal and informal ‘contracts’ — and there is some mention of Chinese, but only in terms of legislation restricting immigration. This is a unitary account, without much deviation from norms or consideration of different groups within the community and different kinds of citizens.

The book is clearly a product of the time of its genesis, and is anchored in the concerns of scholars in the late 1990s. By my reading there are no references to material published after 2003 and the wave of New Zealand work in this area at this time and subsequently is barely acknowledged, apart from David Thomson’s *A World Without Welfare* (1998) in the final chapter. Curiously, much space is devoted in the early chapters to the Australian historiography from that earlier time, rather than, for example, the work of W.H. Oliver and, more importantly, Margaret Tennant. While Martin states, for example, that the mechanisms of social security have not been addressed, he does not refer to Margaret McClure’s standard text on its development nor Melanie Nolan’s detailed discussion of women and the state in *Breadwinning* (2000). It would have been interesting, too, to know what he thought of Michael Belgrave’s argument in *Past Judgement* (2004) that social policy was all about changes in family demography and that Labour’s social security was all about the family, not the citizen. Current scholarship has also deconstructed such generalities as ‘the state’ (and also ‘the citizen’) to show how different parts of government administration might have worked separately or against each other; and how policy and contracts may or may not have worked on the ground, in practice.

There is a lot of useful detail here and Martin is to be commended for attempting such a wide-ranging and overarching synthesis. Yet it still left me with the view that there is a lot more to be said and researched about this most central plank of New Zealand society and history.

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The Dress Circle: New Zealand Fashion Design Since 1940. By Lucy Hammonds, Douglas Lloyd Jenkins and Claire Regnault. Godwit, 2011. 422pp. NZ price: \$75. ISBN: 978-1-869621-81-0.

DRESS IS A NECESSARY PART of New Zealand history. This sumptuous book is about the dressiest and most fabulous garments that New Zealand’s professional designers have come up with since 1940. It chronicles the development of an industry from a tiny, elite and hidden presence to national and international media darling. It was the success of ‘the New Zealand Four’ (Karen Walker, WORLD, Zambesi and NOM*d) at the 1999 London Fashion Week that provided the key motivation to write this history. The authors seek to argue beyond reasonable doubt that New Zealand had a history of fashion design well before 1999.

The year 1940 is chosen as the starting date because that is when twentieth-century modernism was introduced into New Zealand design. Furthermore, it is a time period now nearing the extreme distance of living memory. A strength of this book is the use of first-hand accounts and insider knowledge as sources. Thanks to their passion for the subject, the authors have succeeded in comprehensively recovering a plethora of relevant primary sources. Surprisingly, however, related critical work, for example by Chris Brickell on Christian Dior’s ‘New Look’, and by Wendy Larner and Maureen Molloy on the New Zealand fashion industry, goes unmentioned.

Despite its grand air, this is really a very particular, focused examination of a small, edgy pocket of New Zealand’s past. As is explained in the introduction ‘Any number of popular labels are (and were) popular because they are dull, conformist and derivative’

(p.10). As the title indicates, this is a book that instead seeks fabulous fashion and views clothes for their design, rather than utility. It is an urbane story, with much of what usually counts as 'kiwi clothing', such as rural fashion and indigenous influences, receiving little coverage: Māori motifs in Miss New Zealand costumes and politician Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan's striking clothing are exceptions. Men might be half of the clothes-wearing population, but they have largely shunned fashion, and men's clothing hardly appears.

The Dress Circle situates itself within the field of the design history of New Zealand fashion. 'Design history combines an understanding of the process of creativity and aesthetics with knowledge of the methods and circumstance of production available to the society that produces goods' (p.11). To use older labels, it is a case of business history meets costume history. A biographical approach to those in the industry is taken, including wherever possible naming and providing biographies for models.

The reality of fashion design is that it is very difficult to create something original. 'Change it just enough' was the industry mantra when making patterns from pictures in magazines. Copying, sanctioned through patterns for home-sewing, was the staple of home sewers. It emerges that many of the early designers were taught by their mothers and then moved into apprenticeships. Although a compliment, commercial copying has been problematic. In 1989, for example, Harris and Hall of the Thornton Hall label took Shanton Apparel to court for copying one of their designs and won.

The design scaffolding for *The Dress Circle* itself is provided by fashion photographer Deborah Smith's specially shot photographs on the cover and at the beginning of each chapter. With the assistance of her brother Mark, Smith has photographed a garment from each decade under consideration. The clothes are thus transported to the present with the assistance of contemporary models and settings. Placing the historical artifacts on real people has a powerful effect that unites the past with the present. These pages stand out from the reproduced historical images that lavishly illustrate the rest of this appealing book. Smith's images give the historic garments life and comfort.

Structurally, *The Dress Circle* is a large assemblage of material that chronicles the development of New Zealand fashion design decade by decade. Chapter titles capture the essence of each time period. The 1940s was the decade of 'Stepping Out' into the modern age. Auckland salon designers reigned, with Trilby Yates, Flora MacKenzie and Bobby Angus important individuals. Vulcan Lane was already a site for designer fashion. The notorious Flora MacKenzie discovered that brothel-keeping was more lucrative than making and selling frocks. New Zealand wool made a presence that was sustained through the subsequent decades. It is noted that designer coats and suits were prominent, as they were beyond the home-sewing abilities of many. Christian Dior's 'New Look' took the fashion world by storm and new American ideas about men's clothing set the stage for the rest of the century. The 1950s was 'After Frocks'. Lavish gowns appealed, and the influences of new migrants, and the new Queen, were felt. Prominent designers were Emma Knuckley, Barbara Penberthy, Hall Ludlow and Colin Cole. El-Jay and Poppetwear were two sought-after labels.

The 1960s chapter, 'In Vogue', covers the period when *Vogue* magazine published a New Zealand edition. There are plenty of biographies of leading fashion design protagonists, and a sense of increasing growth and experimentation. The connection to tourism and marketing, especially through the New Zealand Wool Board, is clearly evident. By contrast, the 1970s was 'A Fabulous Mess', eclectic and struggling. The South Island, largely missing in action through the book, emerged with Plume in Dunedin and Barbara Lee in Christchurch. And Marilyn Sainty began a long career that saw her experimenting with designs that heralded in 1999 and beyond.

It was a quantum leap from the 1970s to the glitzy 1980s. This was the decade of 'On the Make', and the foundations for 1999 were laid. It is the pivotal decade in the book. The industry came of age through the likes of the Benson and Hedges Fashion Design

Awards, the publication of Paula Ryan's *Fashion Quarterly*, *Cha Cha*, and television series *Gloss*. Alongside the opulent fashions, there was an important androgynous industrial strand, featuring overalls, army pants and oversize shirts. Streetlife (later Helen Cherry) epitomised this style. Patrick Steele, Barbara Lee, Kostantina Moutos and Keith Matheson were prominent names. Economic reform led to the demise of the domestic apparel industry. Yet New Zealand designer labels were on a course to success.

Building upon the 1980s, the 1990s was a 'Search for a Style' which saw Auckland emerge as the 'powerhouse' of New Zealand fashion, and Trade New Zealand encouraging overseas exporting in a decade when imported garments flooded the domestic market. *The Dress Circle* culminates with the 2000s as 'Our Fashion Moment', which saw the start of the much-hyped New Zealand Fashion Week in 2001. Helen Clark donned New Zealand designer garments and gave fashion an intellectual edge.

Still, the fashion of the 2000s has a decidedly down-home look to it. Would many garments still be appropriate for the theatre dress circle? There's a casual, outdoorsy look to an industry that's proudly urbane, as the top of the fashion industry design for chain stores.

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Dining Out: A History of the Restaurant in New Zealand. By Perrin Rowland. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2010. 280pp. NZ price: \$59.99. ISBN 978-1-86940-464-2.

DINING OUT DESCRIBES THE HISTORY of the restaurant in New Zealand from the 1870s until the present day, and provides a gentle corrective to the dominant narrative of the history of public eating in New Zealand — namely that until the advent of licensing in 1961, New Zealanders were restricted to and largely content with a bland diet of 'plain meat and three vege' when they ate out in the limited venues that were available. New Zealanders were saved from the 'Dark Ages of wowserism' (p.3) by pioneering restaurateurs who both produced and met the desires of an increasingly sophisticated public (as demonstrated by the desire and ability to drink wine with meals) until local restaurants achieved international standards. Rowland suggests that this narrative circulates because fine dining 'does not easily fit with the broad accounts of New Zealand history that regularly emphasizes equality, rural life, ruggedness and practicality' (p. 3). Moreover, this story parallels another widespread narrative about New Zealand national identity — of pioneer restaurateurs 'throwing off New Zealand conformity and colonial cringe to develop forms of culture (and eating) that are both distinctly Kiwi but also world-class' (p.3).

By contrast, Rowland describes a long and rich history of public eating, in which transformations in where and what people ate, and what that experience meant to them, were connected to similar international trends. The earliest public eateries emerged in the 1850s, and by the 1860s ranged from cafés and luncheon rooms, to hotel dining rooms and restaurants, such as the City Buffet in Dunedin, whose food, in 1863, was prepared under the direction of 'an experienced Parisian Artiste' (p.16) and which boasted a 'Parisian Hydrostatic Percolator' (p.16) so that patrons could enjoy the finest coffee. Chinese restaurants also appeared in Dunedin and Auckland at this time, and contemporary newspapers provided descriptions of the food, as well as instructions on how to eat it. In the following decades, an extensive and varied restaurant scene emerged in New Zealand. Rowland describes this as 'The Golden Age of restaurants', where the emphasis was on 'abundance and ostentation' (p.89). Alcohol was consumed in restaurants in these decades, but liquor laws were changed in 1917 owing to pressure