

schooling history, the history of the church and religion, Māori/Pākehā relations and, of course, legal history will find this a fascinating and refreshing read.

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The Settler's Plot: How Stories Take Place in New Zealand. By Alex Calder. University of Auckland Press, Auckland, 2011. 299pp. NZ price \$45. ISBN: 978-1-86940-488-8.

NEW ZEALAND has not produced many top essayists who write about a wide range of matters from nature and place to non-fiction, fiction and even texts setting out to be deliberately deceitful. Before the First World War W.P. Reeves, along with that questionable historian J.P. Grossman, produced some useful essays on matters of moment such as deforestation. So too did Blanche Baughan once she switched from poetry to contemplating the great outdoors. The interwar period produced Pat Lawlor, Monte Holcroft, Eric McCormick, Robin Hyde and occasionally J.C. Beaglehole on identity, writing and painting, and the farmer naturalist Herbert Guthrie-Smith on transforming the land. Robert Chapman and W.H. Oliver wrote some interesting examples early in their academic careers in the post World War Two period that traversed the overlap between history, literature, culture and politics. So too did A.H. McLintock with his interest in painting and his involvement with the *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. In more recent times Geoff Park wrote eloquently about the natural world, along with Les Molloy (as did Denys Trussell somewhat more whimsically), while Michael King contemplated the meaning of being the descendant of vigorous colonisers set upon remaking society and environment. Latterly, fiction writers such as the two Fionas — Kidman and Farrell — have begun to write about the experience of growing up in New Zealand and the consequences of serious natural disasters such as the Christchurch earthquakes. Poet Brian Turner and painter Grahame Sydney have also had their say on environment, aesthetics and sport. Various other journalists and academics have tried their hand at essay writing with mixed results and there is a burgeoning number of blogs of extraordinarily variable quality available on the web. It is a pleasure, therefore, to read the work of Alex Calder, which is polished, sophisticated, scholarly and perceptive, yet refreshingly free of jargon or entrenched and/or extreme theoretical posturing.

Calder writes about many things in this collection, from the experience of bush and beach to the meanings of the outputs of various major writers, historians, propagandists and con men. The central idea that ties together this somewhat disparate collection of essays about texts is the notion promulgated several years ago by Judge Eddie Durie that the settlers must learn to settle. By this both Durie and Calder imply that descendants of British and European immigrants will never be truly comfortable in this country until they learn to accept New Zealand as it is rather than continually trying to turn it into something else. Such peaceful reconciliation with this place, of course, also requires ongoing dialogue with the first settlers of this land and acceptance of their understandings of the ways in which this place is special.

Calder organises the essays into four roughly chronological sections: 'Belonging' (the question of Pākehā tūrangawāwae); 'Landing' (cross-cultural encounters in the nineteenth century); 'Settlement' (appropriating land, transforming the landscape, life in the suburbs); and 'Looming' (different kinds of New Zealanders and the awareness of a distant place in the world). This seems a logical way to organise the material and certainly makes sense to an historian.

The background essay entitled 'Nature and the Question of Pakeha Turangawaewae' is

an illuminating unpacking of the musings of Baughan, James K. Baxter and a television documentary featuring Helen Clark on 'belonging here'. This is a piece that traverses the whole of New Zealand history, sets the context for the other essays and provides bookends for the whole exercise. As Calder reminds us we are essentially a suburban people obsessed with connecting with nature in the great outdoors and our supposedly 'pristine' environment. Yet such notions have become 'fairly kitsch and increasingly bound up with the promotion of tourism'. In referencing Geoff Park on nature as a 'terra nullius' without history and Richard White on how suburban dwellers have become disconnected from nature as part of work rather than via leisure pursuits, Calder makes it clear that 'playing in nature does not give a place to stand'. Consequently Pākehā Tūrangawaewae 'should remain a dart laid on the paepae.' It is, therefore, over to the Pākehā to 'pick up' the dart of challenge at our feet 'time after time'.

Personally, as an environmental historian, I enjoyed the excellent essay on Guthrie-Smith entitled 'The Plots of *Tutira*' the most. Calder utilises the insights of some of the best American environmental historians like William Cronon and Richard White to reveal the contradiction between improvement and desecration inherent in this text and reaches the satisfying conclusion that 'It is a long view that allows us to see the settlement of New Zealand by Europeans on the same stage as its settlement by rabbits and weasels, bumble bees and trout, and in terms of processes and tendencies that resist reduction to the cartoon binaries of colonist or invader, improvement or ruination'. (p.156) His reading helps explain why *Tutira* has become a classic with overseas as well as local readers. Both Cronon and White, for example, insist that this text more than any other persuaded them to become environmental historians.

I also enjoyed the witty essays on those old tricksters and unreliable witnesses Augustus Earle and Frederick Maning who played fast and loose with historical truth. All students of New Zealand history should read these slippery documents to learn of the dangers of apparently 'objective' texts. Calder goes on to write well about what we could loosely call the 'canon' of New Zealand literature. Whatever we may think of the likes of Katherine Mansfield, Baughan, Hyde, John Mulgan, Allen Curnow, Frank Sargeson, Janet Frame and Maurice Gee, they are important in terms of coming to understand how New Zealanders (or at least some looking in from relatively marginal positions) have viewed themselves at various points in our history. Calder's rereading of Hyde's classic war novels — *Passport to Hell* and *Nor the Years Condemn* — is fresh and perceptive in revealing her unusually powerful visual imagination. His observations are very helpful to those of us who try to teach courses on New Zealand and the First World War. He also writes very well about Frame and succeeds in making sense of her rather perplexing final two novels — *Living in the Maniototo* and *The Carpathians*. Indeed all the literary essays amplify the subtitle of the collection — how stories take place in New Zealand.

The approach taken by Calder answers a call made many years ago by W.H. Oliver to try and utilise literature to better understand our history. It also follows the example set by some leading British and Irish historians in recent times like Stefan Collini on reading and intellectuals and Roy Foster on William Butler Yeats. Indeed I found Calder more perceptive and interesting than Collini, but that may simply reflect the fact that his essays speak more directly to a New Zealand historian interested in nature and the intersections between history and literature in this place. All of this, of course, presumes that there is a shared language that historians can understand, something which was not the case until literary criticism became comprehensible to the specialist about two decades ago. Calder must be congratulated for finding a language to reopen a fruitful dialogue that had virtually ceased.

Calder could learn something from Collini, nevertheless, if he paid a little more attention to reading and its meanings. This would make for an excellent second volume

as would interrogation of our very fine children's writing which inhabits a much loftier position internationally than our adult fiction. A second volume would also do well to examine the response of the next wave of immigrants from the Pacific Islands, Asia and elsewhere to living in these very remote islands; an examination which one suspects would complicate considerably the perspectives of the rather narrow group of earlier writers discussed by Calder.

On balance this is a very enjoyable and challenging collection of well written and finely crafted essays that helps us better understand who we are, where we have come from up to this point in time and — possibly — where we might be going.

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Migration and Empire. By Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010. 380pp. UK price: £35. ISBN: 978-0-19-925093-6.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS's latest offering in its History of the British Empire companion series is a work on migration and empire by two renowned scholars in the field: Marjory Harper and Stephen Constantine. Together Harper and Constantine have merged their respective knowledge to provide a comparative overview of migration throughout the British Empire. The scope encompasses both historical (since 1815) and contemporary migrations (up to the 1960s), and migration out of as well as into the UK. The volume comprises an introduction, four chapters on key migrant destinations (Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Africa), and six chapters on a range of themes including female migration, child migration and return migration. Much of the literature is familiar to scholars in the field, but the authors also draw on some original research such as interviews with migrants. While the division between destinations and themes generates occasional repetition, the key importance is in pulling the material together in a useful and extensive comparative overview. This approach generates a number of findings, though these often require the reader's active engagement across the chapters, rather than such contrasts being made explicit.

One of the strengths of the volume is its inclusion of statistics. Recent studies of migration have tended to veer towards more qualitative methodologies, but numbers are essential. The authors note sheer figures and percentages, such as Australia's population in 1861 being 1,349,000, with 62% born abroad, mainly in Britain and Ireland. In Canada in 1871, meanwhile, the population was almost 4 million, with 84% of the foreign-born being from Britain and Ireland, and 60% of the entire population having British origins. Alas, no similar figure for New Zealand's total population in 1861 or 1871 is provided, though the authors note that those born overseas formed around 70% of the non-Māori population in the 1860s. Those from Britain and Ireland supplied approximately 80% of immigrants in each census between 1861 and 1901. In South Africa by 1911, meanwhile, of a total population of 6 million, just over one-fifth was European, a minority compared with settlement in North America and Australasia. While such figures are useful, it is up to the reader to extract them from each chapter and make contrasts. An appendix containing various census figures and percentages would have been beneficial, as would some commentary on the differences between the various census data. Canada's census, for instance, contains data on ancestry.

A further strength of the volume is the recognition of the ethnic makeup of migrants throughout the British Empire. Despite advances in migration studies, too often in studies of the British Empire, Scottish, Irish, Welsh and English migrants are lumped together,