

experience in New Zealand's past, one or two bibliographies and collections of readings published. But where are the new scholarly monographs which can compare as landmarks in New Zealand women's history?

Given the importance and timeliness of this reprint, it is a pity that the opportunity was not taken to correct minor errors: the Contagious Diseases Act, for example, is referred to throughout as the 'Criminal Diseases Act'. The bibliography has been updated to include more recent published works (though not theses) relating to the women's movement in New Zealand and overseas. With an increasing emphasis on women's history in schools and in university courses, *Women's Suffrage in New Zealand* is likely to remain an important resource for New Zealand teachers and students.

The same can be said of *Women and the Vote*, part of the Hocken Library Victorian New Zealand reprint series. This booklet contains six articles first published between 1887 and 1901. The majority were printed in overseas periodicals, and assess the impact of women's suffrage in the years following the 1893 Electoral Act. With the exception of the sole female represented (Anna Stout, who has great hopes of the 'New Woman'), most contributors are muted in their assessment of women's suffrage, anxious to assure an overseas public of women's good sense and willingness to follow male voting patterns.

Both of these items are very welcome. But it would be a pity if their quality and accessibility reinforced any tendency to regard women's significance as beginning and ending with the vote; if the WCTU activist simply replaced the 'pioneer woman' as the dominant or sole representative of New Zealand women of the past.

MARGARET TENNANT

Massey University

Women and Education in Aotearoa. Edited by Sue Middleton. Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, Wellington, 1988. 219pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

SUE MIDDLETON begins and ends this collection with a plea to her colleagues to free themselves from 'academic colonialism' and 'develop a bicultural, non-sexist sociology of education'. This sounds like a brave and ambitious project and it appears, from the pieces presented here, that an understanding of the past is essential to the enterprise.

The collection ranges unevenly over a broad territory, from specific historical and contemporary issues of sex differentiation in the curriculum to questions of research methodology and personal epistemology. Of most interest to historians will be the new material presented on aspects of schooling in the past. Kay Matthews combines oral history with written records to examine Pakeha girls' experience of primary schools in Hawke's Bay over the period 1880 to 1918. The result is an interesting reconstruction of the role played by schools in girls' lives (one secondary to the family economy) and in the wider community as a 'focus of social life' (p.26).

Ruth Fry and Helen May provide useful extensions to earlier path-breaking work in New Zealand history in their respective areas of the history of girls' secondary education and the exploration of women's lives in the 1950s. Sue Middleton's chapter on 'Contradictions in the education of the New Zealand "postwar Woman"' is less successful, and the research presented threatens to sink under the weight of Marx and Foucault, who are called in to provide an analytical structure.

A commitment to a bicultural perspectives has resulted in the inclusion of two chapters by Maori women. Rangimarie Rose Pere presents an idyll of traditional Maori society,

where the women were 'extremely liberated' (p.9) compared with their English counterparts. She suggests that Maori society can present a more integrated model of education, emphasizing responsibility, independent thinking, and the person as a whole 'rather than as male or female' (p.14). Ngahaia Te Awekotuku writes a fascinating autobiographical account of her educational experiences in the 1950s and 60s, but does not go beyond the uniquely personal to answer the wider question posed by her title, 'What's happening to our Maori girls?'

Important issues are raised in Beverley Bell's analysis of the under-representation of girls and women in science. She suggests that girls bring different experiences to their learning, and explores how these might be brought into service to retain the girls' interest in science subjects and give them a stake in an increasingly technological world. It is women as educators, rather than as pupils, that are at the forefront of Helen Watson's chapter on the impact of the contemporary feminist movement on policies and practices in schools. She suggests that feminist teachers face a long task ahead of them to combat the inertia (and sometimes hostility) of colleagues and the educational hierarchy on sexism in the curriculum.

It is clear from a number of the contributions that Dale Spender has had an enormous impact in heightening consciousness of the sexism prevalent in education. That Alison Jones takes issue with Spender's assumption of the uniformity of girls' educational experiences makes her essay one of the most stimulating articles on contemporary issues. Jones's ethnographic study of class-room interaction convincingly demonstrates that differential access to knowledge exists in all-girl class-rooms, where racial and class origins influence learning.

Sue Middleton pulls this diverse material together in a final chapter entitled 'Towards a Sociology of Women's Education in Aotearoa'. In editing this collection, she has made a useful contribution towards our understanding of the implications of past and current educational practices for women. Many of the issues raised here call for further research and analysis and, if this eventuates, the book will have fulfilled its purpose.

BARBARA BROOKES

University of Otago

White Women in Fiji 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire? By Claudia Knapman. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1986. 230pp. NZ price: \$28.95.

GIVEN recent events, it is tempting to review Claudia Knapman's book within an elegiac, 'as the sun sets slowly on the empire' framework, lamenting the passing of British rule in Fiji. The politics of this aside, Knapman's work requires a wider context than simply that of the colonial experience in the Pacific. While her argument contributes important insights into the history of British colonialism in the Pacific, it also raises questions about the sexual dynamics of racism, examines social and ideological constraints on behaviour in multi-racial societies, and revises many common assumptions about the role of white women in colonial society. Many writers of women's history have been criticized for a simplistic 'add women and stir' approach. Knapman does not come into that category. Not only does she actively rethink the historical conventions of the area she is working in, but her analysis is also cogent, well-researched, and convincing, achieving a nice balance between theoretical concerns and historical context. A sense of the texture of her subjects' lives is conveyed, as well as the wider significance of their actions.