

seeing Catholicism as an Irish church is much stronger, but the lack of analysis of what this meant in community life is surprising. One longs for more than anecdotal accounts of personalities, for more understanding of the relative roles of religious communities and the laity, for some financial accounting for the church and its varied tasks, for more than the casual descriptions of the Grail and the Catholic Youth Movement.

King writes an enjoyable text, and the photographs are a magnificent evocation, with something of the flavour of church life clearly conveyed in them. But one is left wondering whether the church would have been better served with a work like the 1990 history of the Presbyterian Church, in which a team of historians provided a text which was not just evocative but also insightful, informed, and the product of careful research. I feel the opportunity may not come again.

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*Farewell Colonialism: The New Zealand International Exhibition Christchurch, 1906-07.* Edited by John Mansfield Thomson. The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1998. 175 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86469-318-4.

*FAREWELL COLONIALISM* is a curious title for a collection of essays that examine an international exhibition that was fundamentally colonial, especially since the highlights of the book are the essays that go some way towards examining the culture of colonialism. International exhibitions are events that encompass a vision and a taxonomy of the world as perceived by its organizing body. Yet this collection of papers from a Stout Centre conference, with several additional contributions, lacks an introductory essay. It sorely needs one. Instead, John Mansfield Thomson devotes the first chapter to the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition. While this exhibition was important for many of the precedents it established, perhaps more useful would have been a survey of New Zealand's participation at international exhibitions through the nineteenth century, not just in Britain, but in France, the United States, the Australian colonies and elsewhere. If we are to see such examples of 'Exhibiting Ourselves' as evidence of the construction of a national, or at least a Pakeha, identity, then we must consider the changing role of both the natural environment and of Maori people, culture and material objects in these re-presentations, not only to ourselves but to the world. These were by no means static performances on an unchanging international stage.

Interest in international exhibitions is growing, and while there is some mention here of the work of Greenhalgh, Rydell and Benedict, there is little indication that the Christchurch exhibition was part of something much larger. For example, there is no reference to recent work on colonial collecting and display by Annie E. Coombes and others. Given the length of time from the original conference to the publication of this book, Ben Dibley's analysis of the Christchurch exhibition might have been a worthy, if rather late, addition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ben Dibley, 'Telling Times: Narrating Nation at the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906-7', *Sites*, 34, Autumn 1997, pp.1-18.

If honourable mentions or gold medals are to be awarded then perhaps they should go to Bernard Kernot and Margaret Orbell. As with many exhibition prizes this in part reflects the content of the exhibit and the interests of the judge, as much as the skills of the exhibitor. Kernot's essay, 'Maoriland Metaphors and the Model Pa', examines the exhibition organisers' re-inventing of a homogeneous 'old time Maori' against a backdrop of both Maori and Pakeha responses to the 'ethnographic village'. Likewise Orbell's translations of Maori accounts of the exhibition published in *Te Pīpīwharauroa*, are a welcome addition both to this collection and to world's fair studies. These letters reveal a sense of active agency often overlooked in studies of indigenous peoples on display. Sadly, Janet Davidson's conference paper on Cook Island material culture at the exhibition was not included in this publication, thus exposing the absence of what James Cowan described in his *Official Record* of the exhibition as a 'Polynesian Reunion'.

Not all exhibits, however, can win prizes. But that is not to say that their inclusion does not merit attention. While it is interesting to see chapters on the architecture and gardens of the exhibition, the power of these media in the construction and representation of space — particularly, in this case, colonial space — is overlooked in favour of detailed description. Surely these features can be interpreted as more than 'garnishing'. Reflections on the visual arts form an interesting subgroup — particularly Linda Tyler's discussion of the British Art Exhibit and its impact on art collections in New Zealand. One factor that is not emphasized, however — and this might be said of many of these essays which focus on the colonial relationship — is the attitude of the British themselves. In 1908 Isidore Spielmann, organizer of the British art exhibit at the exhibition, reported to the British Board of Trade that the New Zealanders were 'very much improved by our participation' and that 'we did them a great deal of good, and they all saw that'.<sup>2</sup> Colonialism was far from over.

While *Farewell Colonialism* describes itself as 'an inspiring contribution to our social history', I found little attempt to identify the exhibition's audience and their reactions to the projected images. Women are overlooked with the exception of Ann Calhoun's survey of their artistic contributions, ironically entitled 'more than mere embroidery', and while Thomson describes the music of the exhibition in some detail, there is little reference to 'Wonderland' (the 12-acre amusement park), the side-shows of 'the Pike', and other popular entertainment which might help account for the nearly two million visitors to the exhibition. Given the nature of the event, the wealth of surviving primary material, and the possibilities for writing good cultural history, I cannot help but be disappointed with *Farewell Colonialism*. Despite these reservations, it is exciting to see the publication of a scholarly collection devoted to a New Zealand international exhibition.

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2 House of Commons International Exhibitions Committee. Minutes of Evidence taken by the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to make Inquiries with Reference to the Participation of Great Britain in Great International Exhibitions (Cd.3773). *Parliamentary Papers*, 49, 1908, p.308.