

New Zealand's London: A Colony and its Metropolis. By Felicity Barnes. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2012. 344pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN: 978 1 86940 585 4.

WHY WOULD PEOPLE thousands of miles away in the Pacific view London as closer to them than many persons, including this reviewer, born and bred in England? By posing and answering this question *New Zealand's London* makes an important contribution to recent debates, in and beyond this journal, about British World and postcolonial perspectives on New Zealand's settler origins and current national imaginings.

Felicity Barnes nails her theoretical and normative colours to the masthead in her introduction when asserting that for many New Zealanders their perceived, prolonged connection to London is neither attributable to 'a quaintly sentimental colonial habit' (p.3), nor 'a faintly embarrassing echo of empire' (p.3). Instead, she argues: 'In New Zealand, Britishness was not simply a "natural" consequence of settler demography. Home was not just a nostalgic habit and London as cultural capital was more than a symbol of colonial immaturity. They were instead elements of a complex cultural relationship that played a crucial role in recreating old colonial New Zealand as a modern, first-world member of empire' (p.6).

For Barnes, relationships between New Zealand and London epitomised a fruitful mutuality between colony, then dominion, and its metropole; an interdependence no less between a distant offshore rural cum suburban hinterland and empire's core city. Various symbolic and material links are explored, drawing from an impressive range of sources, including a splendid set of illustrations. The key period of the thesis upon which this book is based, although its readability and organisation belie its origins, is 1890 to 1940. But the volume opens with a literary reference to London Bridge in 1840 and closes with an aside to a social survey of Kiwi expats in 2011. In between are a series of impressive chapters that generally support the author's main propositions.

The opening chapters trace the foundations of an imaginary conception of London as New Zealand settlers created and cemented their relationship with a place they felt 'at home' in. Many early migrants did not come from the Home Counties, and even if they did, one cannot assume a sense of attachment to their capital city unless they expressly saw themselves as Londoners. Nonetheless, as Barnes relates, what emerged as primarily a symbolic tie became even more meaningful as increasing numbers of New Zealanders physically occupied metropolitan spaces already familiar in their minds. Chapters three and four expand on these themes of time and space, demonstrating persuasively how London's longer heritage and contemporary modernity were used by New Zealanders to illustrate their own transcendence of a colonial status in the building of a new society. Indeed, Barnes often uses the term 'appropriation' to describe how settlers dexterously used *both* the historical depth and the contemporary dynamism of the metropolis to furnish their own Greater Britishness. An interesting discussion of the transition from literary Maoriland images to the shaping of a high-Eurocentric culture at the end of the nineteenth century, for example, highlights the tensions between elites creating new artistic works out of 'borrowed' elements and the mass socio-political and legal setting aside of minorities. Which begs an important question about whether the forms and degrees of reciprocity between the metropolis and its near and far hinterlands warrant the word 'appropriation' being freely used; particularly given how this term has been more commonly assigned to the relations between settlers and indigenes?

Not surprisingly, New Zealand's economic linkages with London are seen as an integral part of colony/dominion/metropolis relations, but these are empirically pursued with some originality by demonstrating how the provision of primary staples, in both contexts, fostered an image of the settler hinterland as London's farm. This is neatly illustrated through examinations (in chapters five and six) of New Zealand's presence at international exhibitions and the imagery in primary producer board advertisements. These

events and objects provide further supporting evidence for arguing how a collaborative (another challenging word) construction of settler Britishness served to underline differences between developed dominions and underdeveloped colonies, while creating a pastoral image of economic development distinct from its urban industrial metropolitan counterpart.

In the final three chapters, Barnes examines various facets of media — the press, film and television — that became highly influential in not only strengthening the connections between intimate others, but also eventually weakening their interdependence. Canadian Harold Innis's discussion of space-bridging techniques is effectively adopted to show how shifts in technology relayed images that maintained the lengthy partnership. Discussion of the influences of Fleet Street and the BBC Empire service, for example, coupled with the extensive use of film shorts local cinemas in the 1930s and 1940s, provides interesting glimpses of cross-national patriotism. This is followed by a lively appraisal of local radio and TV drama from the 1960s to the 1980s that will also ruffle the feathers of many area specialists. On balance, Barnes's critiques of those who have placed greater weight on American influence and (over)emphasised a 'cultural cringe' pursuit of overseas validation are reasonably convincing, but many may find them too selective to be conclusive.

Much the same can be said of the brief epilogue that, tantalisingly, hints at how the above-mentioned historical processes might play out in the twenty-first century. Here Barnes is noticeably more cautious and introduces some caveats that could have been addressed in greater depth in her introduction. She reminds the reader that there were 'Other Londons' (p.277); but what of Other New Zealands? The author acknowledges that London was not home for Scots in Dunedin, and some Australian and other overseas cities, let alone other spaces, were also important points in 'British' networks; if not necessarily commanding the same affection. But, if and how, did New Zealand's London figure in similar or different ways in the eyes of the local born of English/British ancestry and incoming Poms and Brits — and what of Māori and other minorities? This raises vexed questions about the constant dangers of eliding London, England and Britain and their relationship to a somewhat chimerical New Zealand, which the author never fully resolves.

But none of these reservations seriously detract from what is an impressive empirical monograph with a forceful argument that demands rigorous scrutiny. Given 'London', with its multifaceted mix of persons, objects and spaces, was a reality as well as a representation for many New Zealanders for much of settler history, the city still exists as a mecca or gateway for other places and peoples, who may or may not perceive it as a tangible or invented 'home'. Whatever one draws from that thesis, this stimulating, well-written and attractively produced book deserves a wide readership.

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Scrim: The Man with a Mike. By William Renwick. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2011. 308pp. NZ price: \$50.00. ISBN: 978 0 86473 695 6.

WILLIAM RENWICK takes a biographical approach to illuminate the remarkable career of New Zealand's first radio evangelist, the Reverend Colin Scrimgeour. Readable, well-researched and entertaining, this book considerably enhances our understanding of important interconnections between society, politics, religion and the media during the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Of Highland Scots ancestry, Colin Scrimgeour was born into a farming family in