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SPECIAL ISSUE:

ANTIPODES:  
NEW DIRECTIONS IN HISTORY AND CULTURE  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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# Editorial Note

The Stout Centre celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a conference entitled 'Antipodes', held from 3 to 5 September in 2009. The conference flyer featured a reversed map, shown on the cover of this issue of the *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, of the antipodean islands from which we look at the rest of the world. For centuries the antipodes were associated with reversals and disorientations, the site of utopian and dystopian narratives and monstrous imaginings. After colonization, Aotearoa became New Zealand in a European geography, a world turned upside down, before struggling to find its place in the Southern Hemisphere, as a Pacific nation in a globalizing world. All these overlapping shifts in our history, society and culture have raised questions about who we are, what we are, *where* we are. The Stout Research Centre for the investigation of New Zealand society, history and culture was founded by Jock Phillips in 1984 to fill a gap he perceived in New Zealand scholarship, the gap of area studies as it was then called, and more broadly conceived of now as scholarly enquiry into New Zealand and its many international contexts. The Stout Centre came into being in order to ask questions and pursue research that should be asked and pursued here, but at the same time to connect New Zealand scholarship to international research.

The conference asked: what is different about working in the Antipodes? How do we see the world and how do we interpret it, in this place and at this juncture? These seemed to be timely questions. We were delighted with the three packed days of papers offered and presented, from a variety of disciplinary fields – history, literature, anthropology, Māori studies, politics, religion, science – and from scholars all over the country. The six keynotes – James Belich, Aroha Harris, Chris Hilliard, Joan Metge, Te Maire Tau and Tony Ballantyne – offered challenging and wide-ranging responses to the conference theme – where are we now, what is distinctive about being New Zealand scholars and what can we do better or differently? A challenge thrown out by both Aroha Harris and Te Maire Tau was whether Pākehā scholars can deploy biculturalism seriously as a scholarly methodology, and Tony Ballantyne and Chris Hilliard urged us to move beyond the circumscriptions of recent historical and critical debate with thoughtful reconsiderations of New Zealand historical practice. James Belich reformulated the narrative of nineteenth-century imperial histories to ask wide-ranging questions which place New Zealand and its history in a global context and Joan Metge revisited her remarkable career to offer new insights to current anthropology.

This volume of the *Journal of New Zealand Studies* therefore celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stout Research Centre in two ways. Firstly it collects together eight of the papers offered at the conference.

Tony Ballantyne's magisterial keynote positively assesses, but also gently critiques, recent New Zealand postcolonial historiography. He urges us to reconnect cultural history to the political and the economic, and to see cultural colonization as reproductive as well as dispossessive. Indeed, it was the reproduction of Pākehā that ensured the dispossession of Māori. Barbara Brookes and Mike Grimshaw break new ground by exploring, respectively, the functions of shame and the possibilities of a cartoon history of religion. Angela McCarthy reflects intriguingly on what migration and madness can tell us about each other, and Erin Mercer explores recent literary representations of identity. Lachy Paterson repositions 'half-castes', while Ewan Morris recontextualizes debate about Māori flags and all they symbolize. Richard Boast suggests that the grand canyon between history and legal history is well worth crossing. On the evidence of these papers, and the rest of the Antipodes conference, research in New Zealand is expanding its critical and disciplinary reach. We would like to thank the contributors to the conference and to the JNZS for their participation.

The second way in which this issue of the JNZS works to build on 25 years of research and scholarship is by inaugurating a review section of the journal. Scholarly reviewing in New Zealand has reached a dangerously thin level. There is almost no public review culture in any medium left in this country. Daily newspapers, so long the reliable source of a Friday or Saturday review supplement have almost all abandoned the cultural duty of reviewing local books which are not fiction or popular best sellers. Radio and television mix local books in with international highfliers, but there is, of course, no 'coverage' of scholarly books in these venues. The *Listener* caters to a broad reading public, only some of which is interested in New Zealand books. Specialist journals like the *New Zealand Journal of History* or the *Journal of New Zealand Literature* do a good job of reviewing in their fields and *New Zealand Books* heroically continues to provide the closest thing we have to a periodical of local intellectual life, but it is our view that this is still not enough. It is rare for New Zealand scholarship to provoke sustained debate, as against guerilla sniping. There is still not enough critical reception of our scholarly work. We hope to make some change to that by providing another venue for the review and critical debate of New Zealand research and scholarly publication. This issue of the JNZS includes eight reviews of recent books by established scholars. Jock Phillips kicks off with a review of *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*. His review, while hard-hitting, is thoughtful, informative and judicious. Like the other seven reviews, and the eight papers, it will contribute to a deeper and broader discussion of what it means to be scholars working in this place at this time.

James Belich and Lydia Wevers  
Editors and convenors