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Illustrious Visitors in New Zealand
1880s–1930s

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History. The University of Auckland, 2014.
Abstract

Numerous famous individuals travelled to New Zealand in the period from the 1880s to the 1930s. Their names have previously lent celebrity endorsement to the promotion of New Zealand tourism and the twentieth-century historical project to define a unique national identity. This thesis contextualizes some of these recognizable names and faces by placing them into the transnational circuits that brought them to New Zealand. It addresses three groups of mainly male visitors to New Zealand from the 1880s to the 1930s: political commentators, itinerant lecturers, and wealthy fishermen.

Partly due to the promotional efforts of these visitors, New Zealand has acquired the international reputation of being a ‘social laboratory’ at the turn of the twentieth century, a tourist destination in the early twentieth century, and a millionaires’ playground in the interwar period. Re-situating these privileged individuals in their contemporary networks and communities demonstrates ways in which these national and nationalistic images were generated, and the limits of their application to understanding New Zealand’s past. The personal relationships that created and nurtured the networks that allowed individuals to lead transnational lives in this period are also explored, and this thesis argues that New Zealanders actively participated in these transnational circuits of politics, entertainment, and sport.

If we view history in national isolation we lose sight of the sustained connections New Zealand and New Zealanders had with the world throughout these decades. It is not enough to simply theorize transnational connections; transnational networks must be populated. Peopling these transnational networks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the familiar names that helped constituted them enriches our view of New Zealand in this period.
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Introduction

American adventure-novelist Zane Grey must have arrived in notoriously-blustery Wellington on one of its good days. On this particular summer’s day in mid-January 1926, Grey had been mesmerized by an albatross as the RMS *Makura* steamed the last few miles of its journey from Rarotonga. His Coleridgian reverie was broken by the sight of a large broadbill swordfish. Grey yelled aloud in his enthusiasm at spotting the ‘old rakish sabre shape’ of the fins of a broadbill and ran to fetch his travelling companion, but it had vanished on their return. Although taken by this ‘red-roofed city on hills surrounding a pleasant bay’, Grey did not tarry long, and was soon heading north through the cut and burned-over central North Island, a smoking Mount Ngauruhoe in the distance.¹ Henry Demarest Lloyd and his son were treated to a more typical meteorological welcome when they steamed into Wellington in mid-February 1899. Lloyd wrote that they ‘arrived in midsummer with a temperature of fifty-five degrees [Fahrenheit], so cold that we could see our breath, and with a regular Noah’s ark rain’.² Lloyd was just as keen as Grey to get on with his business in New Zealand, and after a brief run-in over a telegram, he was back out into the deluge to attend to his schedule of appointments.³ Samuel Clemens — better known by his pen name Mark Twain — was nearing the end of his lecturing tour of New Zealand when he passed through Wellington in more clement weather in December 1895. Clemens only had two speaking engagements left to fulfil, and passed the rest of his time in Wellington ‘partly in walking about, partly in enjoying social privileges, and largely in idling around the magnificent garden at Hutt, a little distance away, around the shore’.⁴ One of his ‘social privileges’, a supper at the Club Hotel, kept him up until 1:30am after his appearance at the Opera House on 11 December.⁵

Regardless of the weather outside, all three of these American visitors to New Zealand spent considerable time in the dim, cosy, wood-panelled confines of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century gentlemen’s clubs. Lloyd made it his first order of business in

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³ ibid.
⁴ Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, Hartford and New York, 1897, p.322.
Wellington to produce a letter of introduction to Robert Stout that secured him and his son quarters at a ‘very comfortable club’. What would this unlikely trio have discussed if they had ever crossed paths at a gentlemen’s club in Wellington? Clemens would perhaps keep his potential dislike of Grey hidden behind perfectly-timed witticisms, but some charmingly denigrating aphorism might find its way into the next edition of the Evening Post. Lloyd and Clemens would be able to conveniently direct each other to the crumbs remaining in their fine moustaches after the main course, and Grey, in order to maintain his much-photographed physique, would abstain from dessert. After the dishes were cleared Clemens would lean back in his chair and produce his personal supply of cigars, which Grey, of course, would also refuse.

As pungent smoke began to waft through Clemens’s bushy mass of grey hair, Grey would perhaps be invited to speak as a guest of honour. His speech would undoubtedly be about fishing. Lloyd and Clemens would have to feign interest until the point at which Grey began to expound his vision of New Zealand as a millionaires’ playground. This would surely stimulate lively discussion after the conclusion of his speech. Lloyd would be mildly horrified at Grey’s interpretation, and passionately make his case for seeing New Zealand as a progressive utopia that led the world in egalitarian politics. Clemens would step in as mediator to keep Lloyd and Grey from each other’s throats and get proceedings back on a jovial track with his humorous Twainian tale of the day a New Zealand professor visited Yale. A pacified Grey would take the opportunity to reminisce about Nola Luxford, the New Zealand-born actress who leveraged his affections into a Hollywood film career but never relented to his amorous advances.

This thesis covers a period of over half a century that saw many famous visitors pass through Wellington. What if other notable personages had happened upon this, or a similar, club dinner in Wellington? As ripples of interest spread out across one of these dinners George Bernard Shaw might be awakened from his postprandial slumber and remember the difficulties his trip to Stalinist Russia had raised with New Zealand immigration officials. He

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7 Zane Grey did not smoke cigars. New Zealand Truth, 5 May 1927, p.1.
8 Twain, Following the Equator, pp.259–63.
may well decide that these passport hassles had been all worth it for the axeman’s carnival he enjoyed with his wife in Owhango in 1934, or the night he is rumoured to have spent lodged at the Marine Hotel in the main street of Howick.10 Arthur Conan Doyle could bond with Clemens over their respective trips to the summit of Mount Eden to enjoy the view, or perhaps recommend a trip to the Alexander Turnbull Library to all those present.11 Henry Morton Stanley, Archibald Forbes, and Frederic Villiers would take a moment from sharing adventure stories at the bar to remember the numerous nights they each spent in front of limelight slides recounting these same tales to packed halls in late-nineteenth-century New Zealand towns. Before they retired to their rooms in the early hours, Lloyd and Grey would work out that they had both stayed in Tokaanu. Grey would drift off to sleep still smiling at Lloyd’s story of going to bed in this active geothermal area with ‘faint hopes of being killed in our beds by some delightfully novel experience’, but waking up disappointedly alive.12

Figure 1: George Bernard Shaw with Mrs Shaw at an Axeman’s carnival near Taumarunui, 11 April 1934, F-19071-1/2, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

* * *


For the illustrious visitor from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s, New Zealand boasted many attractions. For turn-of-the-century reformers such as Lloyd, on the prowl for political inspiration, the ‘air was thick with schemes and suggestions’. For late-nineteenth-century public speakers like Clemens, looking to make a buck, the towns were full of punters eager to be entertained. For leisured interwar fishermen like Grey, ever-watchful for the sickle-shaped fins of the swordfish, the waters were full of game. The gendered culture of opulent fishermen like Grey adds to a growing body of New Zealand scholarship on consumption and leisure that brightens our view of the interwar period and loosens the hold of James Belich’s giant spanner. This thesis also looks back to the 1880s to further our knowledge of earlier manifestations of modernity in New Zealand. Just as they brought Grey and Lloyd to Wellington, the late-nineteenth-century steamship networks across the Pacific and the Tasman conveyed many famous visitors to, from, and around New Zealand in this period.

The three men who arrived in Wellington in the opening paragraph were chosen as representatives of the three groups of visitors covered in this thesis: political commentators, itinerant lecturers, and wealthy fishermen. Considering some of these illustrious visitors and their context in this thesis allows us to access a far richer narrative of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century New Zealand than we often receive. These figures have previously been treated at arm’s-length from New Zealand history; they have been designated witnesses rather than participants. Their recognisable names appeared in the contemporary press and on their publications, and have re-appeared in New Zealand history books. They have been naturalized as leisured tourists, taking in the sights and sounds of an emerging nation. But
these visitors were not mere bystanders; the New Zealand they visited was not a hermetically-sealed entity in the late nineteenth century. They arrived in New Zealand as part of three distinct communities that each followed particular circuits. As the introductory paragraphs have indicated, they were attracted to New Zealand for different reasons and they responded to New Zealand in different ways. For Lloyd, it was a socialist utopia; for Clemens, it was at times an uncomfortable hellhole; for Grey, it was an Eldorado. But what exactly was it that they were passing judgement on?

* * *

The place of the nation in New Zealand history is at the centre of a sustained and robust debate in current scholarship. K.R. Howe argued in 2003 that New Zealand’s historiography was determined by an underlying nationalist focus. The twentieth century project to define a distinctive national identity, once central to legitimizing New Zealand history as an academic pursuit, is now viewed by some historians as reductive in its conclusions at best, and implicit in the ongoing process of colonization at worst. The function of the nation is also an historically-specific concept, and its uncritical application can easily be anachronistic. Although it remains central to general historical writing for a popular audience, New Zealand historians have framed their work in multiple ways that do not rely upon the nation. This challenge to simplified national narratives resulted in the publication of *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* in 2009, a collection of essays, organized thematically, that sought to destabilise the genre of general history writing from within. Alongside this thematic approach, local and Māori histories have long engaged with groups and spaces much smaller than the nation, some social and cultural histories have sought to expand the boundaries of the nation, and much recent work has re-situated New Zealand in the wider networks and ‘worlds’ that it has historically been part of.

Local histories have a strong presence in the writing of New Zealand history, both within and outside the academy. Kaponga, Gore, Taradale, Amuri County, Southern

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Dunedin, and Caversham loom large in our historical understandings thanks to the attentions of locally-minded historians. The recent debate surrounding the limitations of the nation as a framework for writing New Zealand history has meant a resurgence of interest in academic local histories. This historical approach can access the local complexities that are flattened in narratives of national development. In conceiving of space, local histories in New Zealand have engaged with localities ranging from those as complex as a constantly changing knot, to those as basic as a place name scrawled in charcoal on a puketea tree.

Local history has an even longer pedigree as an amateur pursuit. When W.J. Gardner wrote his seminal article arguing that the New Zealand academy should accept and recognize local history, the publication and purchase of local histories in New Zealand was thriving. In 1957, when Gardner was writing, local history was still thought of as an ‘amateur’ pursuit where ‘students of lesser capabilities’ were ‘directed’ at New Zealand university colleges. It was not something a student seeking first class honours would ‘tackle’. Domestic local histories lost many of their negative connotations following the publication of pieces of scholarship — such as Caroline Daley’s work on gender in Taradale — which responded to intellectual challenges posed by historians working internationally.

Kaupapa Māori and iwi-based research is another important area of New Zealand historiography that is not determined by national concerns. This body of work has at times been so removed from the nation that it ‘appears as if there is a clear distinction between New

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24 Ballantyne, ‘On Place, Space and Mobility’, p.139.


27 ibid., p.7.


Zealand history and Māori and iwi history’. Nēpia Mahuika has explored the new and old directions of postcolonialism and Kaupapa Māori in order to locate how far historians working in these fields had come, and how much further they might need to travel. Mahuika recommended the need to move even ‘closer to iwi and hapū communities, interpretations and worldviews to truly close the distance between the colonized and the colonizers’. As with the nation, Kaupapa Māori has in turn raised concerns regarding its homogenization of Māori identity, experiences, and mātauranga, and many iwi scholars now look to ‘centre their research in their own tribal paradigms, korero tuki iho and tikanga’. Mahuika signalled that the future of both Kaupapa Māori and postcolonialism might readily include the work of courageous non-Māori researchers, but argued that this would require a ‘bold revisioning of their world and not ours, which places mātauranga at the centre and asks them to consider their reality as historians from elsewhere, submitting to a stripping of their history in order to more fully understand ours’.

Some scholars in New Zealand social and cultural history have chosen to expand the boundaries of the nation rather than forgo it completely. Work on tourism, travel, entertainment, leisure, and intellectual history in New Zealand has demonstrated the importance of international connections and influences. Margaret McClure’s government-commissioned history of the New Zealand tourism industry was explicitly national in approach, yet it stressed the importance of overseas tourists. Margaret Werry has used performance theory to interrogate New Zealand as a ‘tourist state’. By understanding New Zealand as a rhetorical and performativ e creation, Werry’s work acknowledged the importance of external input and outward projection in the construction of national identity. Lydia Wevers has engaged with the travel writing of nineteenth-century visitors to New Zealand and its circulation, and a 2010 issue of Studies in Travel Writing focussed on New Zealand. In her work Felicity Barnes has expanded New Zealand’s national boundaries to

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30 Nēpia Mahuika, ‘“Closing the Gaps”: From Postcolonialism to Kaupapa Māori and Beyond’, New Zealand Journal of History, 45, 1, 2011, p.20.
31 ibid., p.17.
32 ibid.
33 ibid., p.21.
34 ibid., p.27.
include London, functioning as a New Zealand city. The nation is still important for understanding New Zealand history, and these recent works demonstrate a closer engagement with a nation that was not a closed system.

Touring artists are central to the entertainment histories of Peter Downes, Adrienne Simpson, and John Thomson. Their works consistently stress the extent to which Australia and New Zealand were considered a single entertainment market in the nineteenth century. Clare Slako has illuminated the two-way traffic between New Zealand and the United States through her work on the Chautauqua Circuit in early interwar New Zealand, and the experiences of the New Zealanders who found employment on the Chautauqua Circuits in the US. Chris Bourke has shown the importance of international musical trends in popular music-making in New Zealand in the early to mid twentieth century, and Perrin Rowland has shown New Zealand restaurants developing alongside establishments in London, Paris, New York, San Francisco, and Sydney. Charlotte Greenhalgh has demonstrated the influence of the Hollywood film industry and its stars on romance in interwar New Zealand. Charlotte Macdonald has compared national fitness programmes in Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. Daley has made sustained arguments for the lack of social or cultural isolation in New Zealand’s consumption and leisure habits since the 1850s. Chris Hilliard’s work on

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the ‘bookmen’ in Wellington in the 1920s to 1950s has demonstrated an intellectual culture self-consciously engaged with comparable cultures in London and Sydney.46

Alongside the range of work in local and Māori history that operates under the nation, and social and cultural histories that expand national boundaries, much late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century scholarship has been focussed on large-scale communities that transcend the nation. New Zealand — especially in the period with which this thesis is concerned — has recently been re-situated within a multitude of networks, webs, worlds, and communities. Scholars working from within New Zealand and elsewhere have stressed connections across the Pacific, the Tasman, and various permutations of empires.47 The resurgence of imperial history is widespread in current historiography, and New Zealand has been used as part of, and contributed to, this re-reading of an old approach.48 Transnational history often stresses the importance of the local within global networks. The conceptualization of locations in New Zealand as nodes within wider webs seems to capture the historical functions of place, space, and mobility in this period much more appropriately than the potentially-anachronistic search for signs of increasingly-stable nationhood in New Zealand.49

The insights offered by a transnational approach are directly relevant to New Zealand in the period this thesis covers. The central concerns in this approach are ‘movements, flows, and circulation’ rather than static national confines.50 Scholars like Peter Gibbons and Tony Ballantyne have long been encouraging New Zealand historians to think outside the nation.

49 Ballantyne, ‘On Place, Space and Mobility’, pp.50–70.
Gibbons was central to developing the idea of ‘cultural colonization’ in New Zealand. His work was critical of histories that propose ‘national identity/nationhood/nationalism’ as the normative narrative rather than an ideological construct. He called these histories ‘themselves colonizing texts’.\(^{51}\) Gibbons warned that historical writings which did not problematize the presence of Pākehā in New Zealand ran the risk of participating in the colonizing process.\(^{52}\) He subsequently urged New Zealand historians to ‘become less parochial and insular and to centre or even dissolve “New Zealand” as a subject’.\(^{53}\) One of Gibbons’s proffered strategies for this decentring was a world history approach: identifying linkages of local centres in New Zealand to the world system archipelago.\(^{54}\) In this way scholars could move away from divining ‘New Zealand’s place in the world’ to pay attention to the world’s place in New Zealand.\(^{55}\)

Transnationalism was only a partial response to rethinking New Zealand’s histories for Ballantyne, and he recommended grappling with ‘questions of location, space and scale more generally’ and thinking ‘under and beyond as well as across the nation’.\(^{56}\) Ballantyne has argued that the preoccupation with the colonial past as the foundation of the modern bicultural nation has ‘tended to abstract the colony from its broader imperial contexts and from its significant connections to Australia, the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas’.\(^{57}\) In its increasing focus on the nation much academic historiography in New Zealand turned increasingly inwards in the 1970s and 1980s. Scholars like Ballantyne suggest that some historians were too hasty in their nationalistic renovations, and what is needed is to sand back some of their handiwork to re-expose the pink of the British Empire that dominated the wall maps of the classrooms of Brian Rudman’s schooling in the 1960s.\(^{58}\) This thesis rolls up its sleeves and sets about uncovering the transnational circuits that brought famous personalities to New Zealand, not all coloured pink. These circuits were multiple and intersecting: they included networks of personal exchange and political modelling, lecturing for money, and chasing the thrills of big game fishing.

\(^{52}\) Gibbons, ‘Cultural Colonization’ p.15.
\(^{54}\) ibid., p.41.
\(^{55}\) ibid.
\(^{56}\) Ballantyne, ‘On Place, Space and Mobility’, p.50.
\(^{57}\) ibid., p.53.
One of the most useful ways that wider networks have been reintroduced into New Zealand historiography is through Ballantyne’s concept of circulation. Circulation, for Ballantyne, allowed historians to engage with New Zealand’s place in the much broader contexts of imperial regimes, global capitalism, and modernity itself. This concept was demonstrated convincingly in his work on intellectual life in colonial Gore. Re-introducing imperial connections and emphasising circulation reminds us that sites such as late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Gore were part of, and shaped by, much broader transnational networks. Further to this, Ballantyne demonstrated that it was the ‘constant swirl of people and things moving in and out of a place’ along these networks that actually formed places like Gore, rather than the fixity, stability, and growth of institutions celebrated especially by traditions in local history.

Ballantyne conceptualized places as shifting ‘knot-like conjunctures where the ceaseless small-scale mobilities of life in the location interlocked into the more extensive networks that enabled the regular movement of people, things and words in and out of the location’. His chosen metaphor resonates strongly when applied to the illustrious visitors who populate this thesis. They brought the world to New Zealand and New Zealand to the world throughout this period. They too moved continually between places like the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and South Africa, creating communities and relationships. In Ballantyne’s work, Frank T. Bullen, one of the itinerant lecturers covered in Chapter Two, appears out of the blue to deliver a useful sound-bite in the Otago Witness on Gore’s self-proclaimed status as the ‘Chicago of the South’. But who was Bullen? Why was he passing through Gore in 1907? These are the kinds of questions that this thesis will pursue.

The major theoretical underpinning of this thesis is transnationalism, but the story of these illustrious visitors to New Zealand is also inflected by different manifestations of masculinity. Since the late twentieth century, a growing body of work has sought to address

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Ballantyne, ‘On Place, Space and Mobility’, pp.50–70.
60 ibid., p.50.
63 ibid., p.61.
64 Ballantyne, ‘Thinking Local’, p.140.
the invisibility of masculinities in the historical record. Politics, war, sport, intellectual life, and travel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were largely masculine pursuits, and recent international scholarship has sought to problematize them as such. Alongside seminal assertions of the importance of gender in historical analysis, this thesis utilizes Judith Butler’s insights into the performative production of gender, and R.W. Connell’s sociological work on multiple masculinities. A large body of recent scholarship has focussed on the performance of masculinity in diverse contexts, both in formally-staged performances, and in day-to-day life. Masculinities have either been central to, or have informed a small grouping of recent graduate work in New Zealand. Published work on masculinities in New Zealand since the 1980s address the stereotype of the Pākehā male, soldiers and shirkers, the masculine tradition in New Zealand literature, changing views of masculinity, gay New Zealand masculinity, masculinity in popular culture, and the relationship of masculinity to race.
Zealand, white-collar masculinity, and indie rock. This thesis adds depth and detail to its transnational focus by treating illustrious visitors to New Zealand as gendered subjects.

Gendered and transnational approaches to history have found powerful expression in the work of Marilyn Lake. In 2008 Lake grouped turn-of-the-century South Africa, Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand into a geographical and ideological configuration she dubbed ‘the white men’s countries’. The ‘white man’ in whose name these countries were forged was ‘a transnational figure — produced in global discourse and sustained by transnational identifications’. Lake argued that white men of the New World identified most strongly with each other, and this identification manifested in shared models of racial exclusion and segregation. As Lake has shown, this gave an explicitly discriminatory racial underpinning to social security legislation in Australia in this period. Lake’s work on the ‘white men’s countries’ convincingly demonstrated a sustained identification with an imagined community other than the nation by turn-of-the-century men. New Zealanders actively participated in the discursive community that constructed and maintained the masculine ideal central to this community. Where Lake utilized public discourse and legislation to demonstrate the racialized limits of conceptions of citizenship, this thesis explores the letter writing, lecturing, and shared vacations of men within a political network. This approach builds on Lake’s work by demonstrating the importance of personal relationships in the transnational construction of the ‘white man’ in turn-of-the-century New Zealand masculinities. The transnational gendered community of ‘white men’ in turn directly shaped the policies of the Liberal government that would lead some to label New Zealand a ‘social laboratory’.

In its approach to illustrious visitors in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century New Zealand this thesis follows the lead of Gibbons, Ballantyne, Butler, and Lake. The political commentators, itinerant lecturers, and wealthy fishermen who visited New Zealand

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72 ibid., p.266.
73 ibid., p.269.
74 ibid., p.279.
from the late nineteenth century until World War II were highly mobile, and their story is one of circulation and movement. They were also part of gendered communities that stretched beyond national boundaries. As Daley has argued, we miss a large section of our history if local narratives are not put in an international context.\(^{75}\) The following chapters seek to explore and problematize the presence of the illustrious visitors in a transnational context. These visitors were privileged in various ways due to contemporary ideas about gender, and these gendered ideas determined their reception in New Zealand. As Law, Campbell, and Schick have stated, ‘we’ assign ‘masculinity’, and this gives some people ‘power, identity, and legitimacy in society while excluding others’.\(^{76}\) This thesis details a series of the communities, performances, and activities that advanced the status and wealth of particular white men — and a smaller number of women — and brought them to New Zealand shores during this period.

* * *

Just like the imagined meeting of famous travellers in a Wellington gentlemen’s club that opened it, this thesis accommodates a wide selection of international figures who spent time as ‘illustrious visitors’ in New Zealand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The names already mentioned, and the others that are to come, are familiar to many readers of New Zealand history. We are well aware that they spent time in the country. The visitors took much delight in the sound of their own voices and the scratch of their pens — especially those who relied on speaking and writing for their livelihood — so their words are readily available when some facet of New Zealand culture or landscape requires endorsement. The resultant stockpile of validation has been especially useful for the historians of the mid to late twentieth century who sought to isolate a unique national character.\(^{77}\) Lydia Monin covered the entire length of the country with prominent visiting authors as tour guides in her 2006 book *From the Writer’s Notebook: Around New Zealand with 80 Authors*.\(^{78}\) The sole structuring factor in Monin’s selection of anecdotes and quotes was a geographical trip

\(^{75}\) Daley, *Leisure & Pleasure*, p.4.


southward. Given this lack of context, readers may be surprised to read an American literary heavyweight like Mark Twain describing the view from the summit of Mount Eden in the late nineteenth century, or the famed creator of Sherlock Holmes enjoying the vista from the same spot in 1920. Yet if we pluck these recognizable names and faces out of the unanchored waters of celebrity in which they currently swim and place them back in their historical context, their presence in New Zealand in this period begins to make a lot more sense.

My story of the illustrious visitors begins in the late nineteenth century and ends in the waters of the Bay of Islands in the 1930s. It opens in a period of big ideas and wide geographical circulation. For those that had the means, the time, and the inclination, this was also a period of almost unmitigated global access. It has been argued that the ‘American Invasion’ of New Zealand during World War II introduced American popular culture to New Zealand. Yet American culture is just one of a range of inter-related cultures that transnational circuits brought to New Zealand well before the influx of American GIs in 1942. Whether it was progressive politics at the turn of the century, earning a living as an itinerant lecturer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, or travelling the big game fishing circuit of the interwar period, a focus on these visitors evokes a period that was not isolated or dour, but an age of restless mobility. Despite being the ‘farthest-flung outpost of the empire’, New Zealand was part of, rather than a passive receiving ground for, the gendered cultures of these reformers, intellectuals, and sportsmen.

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79 ‘From the grassy crater-summit of Mount Eden one’s eye ranges over a grand sweep and variety of scenery — forests clothed in luxuriant foliage, rolling green fields, conflagrations of flowers, receding and dimming stretches of green plain, broken by lofty and symmetrical old craters — then the blue bays twinkling and sparkling away into the dreamy distances where the mountains loom spiritual in their veils of haze’. Twain, Following the Equator, p.308. ‘I have never seen a more magnificent view than that from Mount Eden’. Doyle, The Wanderings of a Spiritualist, p.183.


81 Ironically, for many American GIs from farms or small towns in the Midwest or the Deep South, cities such as Auckland or Wellington seemed cosmopolitan, and it was in New Zealand that they were introduced to ‘American popular culture’ such as dance bands. Bourke, Blue Smoke, pp.122–3. American musician Max Kaminsky, of the Artie Shaw Band, heard Billie Holiday for the first time being played by a Chinese storeowner in a shop on Auckland’s Queen Street. Dennis Huggard, ed., Artie Shaw in New Zealand 1943, Auckland, 2007, np.


This thesis asks what place these illustrious visitors should have in histories of New Zealand. Chapter One looks at the political visitors who travelled to New Zealand from America, Europe, and the United Kingdom at the turn of the century. They came to New Zealand to witness the reforms of the Liberal government, in a period that has been seen as a ‘profound rupture in New Zealand history’. New Zealand’s reputation in this period was global. New and important political ideas were afoot: women’s suffrage, old age pensions, compulsory arbitration, and other social legislation. New Zealand was yet to decline federation with Australia. What happens to our understanding of New Zealand politics if the personalities and relationships central to these developments are exposed? Chapter Two takes the familiar names of itinerant lecturers previously understood as tourists and places them back amongst an entertainment circuit that stretched across the Anglo-imperial world. This circuit thrived on a commercial masculinity in which money-making, organization, and knowledge of popular tastes were the markers of success. Impresarios on this circuit were able to generate widespread excitement over famous individuals long before the Hollywood star system. How did they fare in New Zealand? In Chapter Three moneyed and leisured men arrived to do battle with the large game fish in the ‘millionaires’ playground’ of the interwar Bay of Islands. When Zane Grey spotted the fins of a swordfish on his way into Wellington, he took it as an event of importance. Swordfish do not travel alone. A reappraisal of a few of the famous visitors to New Zealand and recognition that they, and New Zealand, were part of transnational circuits, transforms our understanding of New Zealand in this period. Rather than nipping briefly across static national borders as impartial observers, these visitors were representative of imagined communities that transcended the nation in work and in play.

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Chapter One

Turn-of-the-Century Political Visitors

I was not an original thinker and never flattered myself that I was, even when a young man. It is true, that like all men who have the habit of brooding intensely over certain matters for hours at a stretch, I sometimes hit upon notions which seemed to be fresh. But experience has taught me that there has been nothing fresh in them except in the minor way of supplying links for piecing together other men’s ideas and fitting them for use. That was my business between 1890 and 1896. There were plenty of ideas about. Labour questions were in full discussion in England, America, Germany and Australia. The air was thick with schemes and suggestions; there were even suggestions in New Zealand.

— William Pember Reeves

At the turn of the twentieth century a ‘small invasion force’ of international political commentators visited New Zealand, seeking first-hand experience of the reforms of the Liberal government. The names of these visitors have become familiar to New Zealand historians as walk-on acts, individuals who have lent celebrity credibility to the theatre of the ‘social laboratory’. Sidney and Beatrice Webb arrived in Auckland on 3 August 1898 and spent a month in the country, accompanied for much of this time by Charles Trevelyan, who would later become an MP and cabinet minister in England. The Webbs were prominent members of the Fabian Society and had an established reputation as socialist intellectuals and analysts of English institutions and social conditions. Beatrice Webb had assisted Charles Booth in his study of the life and labour of the people in London in the 1880s, and Sidney Webb was one of the authors of the controversial Fabian Essays in Socialism. The Webbs were followed in February 1899 by Henry Demarest Lloyd, a muck-raking journalist from Winnetka who would become the leading exponent of the campaign to ‘New Zealandize’ American politics in the early twentieth century. Lloyd spent three months in New Zealand accompanied by his son and covered a vast swathe of the country, penetrating as far into the

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rural North Island as Whangamomona. Lloyd’s trip culminated in a ‘Phileas Fogg globe race’ to reach Harvard in time for his second son’s graduation. He arrived in Boston with two hours to spare, having travelled 10,000 miles in 29 days. In May 1899 ‘notable French visitor’ André Siegfried arrived to make ‘a close study of our land and labour legislation’; his study would be ‘chronicled in some of the leading French journals’. Shortly thereafter in August 1899 another Parisian academic, Albert Métin, passed through on his ‘tour of the world’ to ‘obtain by personal observation reliable information as to the effect of our land and labour legislation’. New Zealand hosted Ramsay Macdonald in 1906, and then Ben Tillett, who, with ‘his hair rather long in front, a rebellious lock on his forehead’, stepped on stage at His Majesty’s Theatre on 3 October 1907 to deliver a lecture on ‘socialism as a curative agent for economic ailments’. Following Lloyd from America were Charles Edward Russell, who made two visits in 1906 and 1911, and James Edward Le Rossignol, who co-authored State Socialism in New Zealand with William Downie Stewart in 1910.


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6 *Auckland Star*, 2 May 1899, p.5.
7 *Press*, 1 September 1899, p.5.
8 *Auckland Star*, 8 October 1906, p.4; *New Zealand Truth*, 5 October 1907, p.6.
When taken as an ensemble these turn-of-the-century visitors highlight New Zealand’s connections to a transnational community of political visitors. As noted in the Introduction, Marilyn Lake has posited that an ‘imagined community of white men’ was ‘produced in transnational conversation between leading intellectual and political figures’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lake named prominent Australian and American figures Charles Pearson, James Bryce, Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, Theodore Roosevelt, Edward A. Ross, and Alfred Deakin as central figures in this conversation.\(^{10}\) The visitors to New Zealand might well be added to this grouping along with William Pember Reeves. Pember Reeves was the major conduit between the Liberal government of New Zealand and these political visitors, encouraging and facilitating their visits and actively engaging in their political dialogue. He continued this role seamlessly even after leaving New Zealand for London in 1896.

The prominent political figures who visited New Zealand have had plenty of historiographical attention as individuals, but have yet to be treated as a group. This chapter approaches politically motivated visitors to New Zealand at the turn of the century as a gendered community. It aims to take familiar names out of bit part roles and re-situate them in their personal and political relationships. What emerges from this approach is a community with a distinct geography and culture. Central to this culture was the ritual of reciprocal visiting. Visits cemented personal relationships that had been founded in correspondence, and gave the visitors the masculine authority of the ‘expert’ eyewitness. Masculinity is not the same as being male, and Beatrice Webb was part of this masculine world. The political visitors created and maintained their community through correspondence and travel across America, England, Europe, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand — a turn-of-the-century geographical and ideological configuration that Lake has dubbed the ‘white men’s countries’.\(^{11}\) Lake’s nomenclature echoes the terminology at the time: Henry Demarest Lloyd affirmed New Zealand’s position in this imagined community, referring to it as ‘a white man’s country, if there ever was one’.\(^{12}\)

The commentators who circulated through the ‘white men’s countries’ enjoyed independent means. It was financial autonomy that allowed their community to exist, and the

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\(^{11}\) ibid., pp.265–84.

\(^{12}\) Henry Demarest Lloyd, Newest England, p.5.
political ideas generated by this community to be put into practice. Sidney and Beatrice Webb were able to devote themselves to writing and research due to a legacy from Beatrice’s father, and Lloyd was made a ‘millionaire socialist’ through his marriage to the daughter of one of the owners of the Chicago Tribune. Albert Métin’s six months in New Zealand from April to October 1899 was funded by a travelling scholarship from the University of Paris and André Siegfried was able to cast his ‘cool gallic eye’ over New Zealand and its institutions as the son of the Minister of Commerce in the Ribot Ministry. The community of political visitors was an exclusive one. Reform was central to their concerns and an intellectual engagement with the political means of improving the world sustained their discourse. They made personal connections with written correspondence and nurtured the resultant relationships through a reciprocal culture of discussion, travel, hosting, and public lectures.

Members of the community of political visitors wrote and published accounts of the economic and political investigations that they undertook during their visits. Lloyd expounded tirelessly on labour issues, Albert Métin published La Socialisme Sans Doctrines in 1901, and André Siegfried followed with La Démocratie en Nouvelle-Zélande in 1904, alluding in his title to Alexis de Tocqueville’s earlier De la Démocratie en Amérique. The Webbs were likewise prolific publishers, although the New Zealand portions of their diaries were not published until 1959. These promoters of progressive politics closely studied each other’s publications, and were often involved in critiquing manuscript versions. Reeves and

Lloyd took an especially deep interest in each other’s work that will be discussed further later in this chapter. The 19 reels of personal correspondence in the microfilm edition of Henry Demarest Lloyd’s papers contain copious correspondence amongst the community of political visitors.\(^{17}\) Charles Trevelyan’s copy of Lloyd’s *A Country Without Strikes* now resides in the University of Auckland library, with 14 January 1901 pencilled on the final page as the day he completed reading it. It was this culture of the circulation of ideas and ‘expert’ eyewitness testimony through private studies, public lectures, publications, and exclusive clubs across the Anglo-imperial world that gave legislative flavour to the politics of reform in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, just as Reeves had described in the epigraph to this chapter.

Mapping the connections between New Zealand and the coterie of political visitors lifts the Liberal era out of a national context. David Hamer and Peter J. Coleman adopted this approach in their political histories of the late 1980s. Hamer suggested that the politics of this period ‘must be seen as part of a changing world scene’, whilst Coleman conceptualized the leaders of late-nineteenth-century reform as ‘links in an international information network’ that ‘corresponded and visited with each other, attended international conferences, read the same books, periodicals, and reports, and studied the same issues’.\(^{18}\) This chapter builds on the work of historians like Hamer and Coleman through the addition of the recent historical approaches of transnationalism, cultural history, and histories of masculinities. The application of these approaches re-frames our understanding of the Liberal reforms. They were transnational in legislative content. They were politically efficient. They were well-publicized. They demonstrate New Zealand men engaging with an international masculinity that embraced intellectualism. Ultimately they tell a different story of a turn-of-the-century New Zealand that was intellectual, utopian, and internationally-connected. Central to all these themes was the importance of the visit.

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Following the transnational turn, a space has re-opened in New Zealand historiography to situate the Liberal reforms in a wider geo-political context. As Tony Ballantyne has argued, the narrative framing of the colonial past as the foundation of the


modern bicultural nation has abstracted nineteenth-century New Zealand from its broader imperial contexts and from its significant connections across the Pacific. Rather than viewing measures introduced by the Liberal government such as the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act as ‘novel’ and placing nationalistic importance on its position as ‘the first compulsory system of state arbitration in the world’, a transnational view allows historians to access the political community that brought such a piece of legislation into being. The novelty of Liberal legislation was challenged by Reeves himself in the self-effacing excerpt from his unpublished memoirs that began this chapter. This quote indicates that Reeves certainly did not understand himself as a lone genius tinkering away in his isolated social laboratory. Reeves emphasized his engagement with a vibrant political scene stretching across the western world during the late nineteenth century. Through his wide network, extensive personal correspondence, publishing, lecturing, and reading, Reeves brought the political ideas of the ‘white men’s countries’ to New Zealand and those of New Zealand to the world. Reeves has often been a ‘shadowy figure’ in New Zealand historiography; placing him as one of the central architects of the Liberal reforms and the man who actively attracted political observers to turn-of-the-century New Zealand adjusts the angle of the historiographical spotlight and brings him back into view as a member of this wider company.  

21 Reeves has been seen as ‘shadowy’ before. In an article regarding the impending return of Reeves to New Zealand in 1925 the *Auckland Star* was of the opinion that due to his near thirty year absence Reeves was ‘a shadowy figure of the past’ to the ‘newer generation’. *Auckland Star*, 7 November 1925, p.8.
From 1891–1894 Reeves was responsible for a series of acts that established an extensive system of labour regulations in New Zealand: the Truck Act 1891, the Shipping and Seamen’s Amendment Act 1894, the Factories Act 1894, the Shops and Shop-assistants Act 1894 and his ‘pet measure’: the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894. Reeves was a skilled orator, and played a major role in arguing for other Liberal reforms,

22 ‘The Truck Act 1891 enforced the payment of wages in cash and not kind. The Shipping and Seamen’s Amendment Act 1894 laid down the proportion of skilled seamen necessary in ships at sea. The Factories Act 1894 forbade the employment of children under 14 and laid down the maximum hours that women and children could work… Despite much opposition, the Shops and Shop-assistants Act 1894 was passed, and led to a prominent feature of New Zealand life for many years — the “long weekend”, with scarcely a shop to be found open from Saturday noon until Monday.’ Keith Sinclair, ‘Reeves, William Pember’ from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara — The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 14 January 2014, www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2r11/reeves-william-pember (accessed 22 January 2014).
such as the land legislation of John McKenzie. Following his appointment as Agent-General for New Zealand in London in 1896 the content of Liberal legislation — especially the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act — was further amplified and circulated through Reeves’s lectures and personal correspondence. Reeves’s lecturing schedule blurred the line between professional duty and personal interest. He spoke regularly in London and elsewhere on the arbitration legislation with which he had been involved. The manuscript of one of these lectures survives in the Alexander Turnbull Library. In this lecture Reeves cast compulsory arbitration as inevitable in England. He spoke of the ample material in other parts of the Empire such as New Zealand, Australia, and Canada on which the ‘forthcoming’ law could be modelled. The secretary of the Fabian Society, Edward Pearse, deemed one of Reeves’s lectures on industrial arbitration ‘the most interesting yet delivered under Fabian auspices’. It attracted an estimated audience of between 400 and 500 people, including George Bernard Shaw, who would visit New Zealand in 1934.

The energies Reeves devoted to the promotion of his own political interests were central to the creation and maintenance of the image of New Zealand as the ‘social laboratory’ of the world, an image that enticed many political visitors to the country. Reeves’s biographer, Keith Sinclair, wrote that Reeves was so inundated with invitations to lecture from 1896 that there would be ‘no point in listing the large number of talks which he gave in the next few years’. The position of Agent-General was a predominantly commercial one and the Auckland Star was delighted when Reeves put politics aside at the Royal Colonial Institute in favour of a talk on New Zealand’s scenic beauties, illustrated by ‘a lantern and some excellent limelight views’. Rather than the heady world of political reform that was Reeves’s personal obsession, his duties as Agent-General largely revolved around the more mundane — albeit tasty — business of butter, cheese, and frozen meat exports. Reeves’s wife Maud also became increasingly politically active following their move to London, and

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23 Sinclair, ‘Reeves, William Pember’.
25 Fabian News, November 1897, np; Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.248.
26 Auckland Star, 1 December 1897, np; Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.248.
27 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.248.
28 Auckland Star, 23 June 1896, p.4.
29 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.253.
as expatriates they carefully nurtured an enhanced image of New Zealand, the central facet of which was the ‘forward-looking’ social legislation which Reeves had helped to establish.\textsuperscript{30}

The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894 was one of the specific pieces of legislation that brought Henry Demarest Lloyd to New Zealand in 1899.\textsuperscript{31} He wrote that ‘almost my first request was to be taken to see a New Zealand strike’, and his ‘introduction to the Compulsory Arbitration law of New Zealand’ was at ‘an interesting Gothic building which did not look like a factory or trades-union hall, and passed into a long, open room, with vaulted ceilings, galleries, [and] stained glass windows’ in ‘a charming spot in Christchurch, bordering on “The Domain,” or public park on the banks of the Avon’. At the table running down the centre of this room he found ‘on each side of it three or four men, the brighter toilets and the better grooming of those on one side showing them to belong to a different class from those on the other, whose plain clothing and furrowed faces bespoke them to be workingmen. They were busy in controversy, and between them, at the head of the table in the white wig of an English chief-justice, was a judge of the Supreme Court of New Zealand’.\textsuperscript{32} The compulsory arbitration that Lloyd witnessed in action in Christchurch is a longstanding touchstone in New Zealand national history as a world first, yet the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was not pulled from thin air by Reeves. He looked abroad for inspiration and found it in the voluntary boards of conciliation and arbitration in Massachusetts and France.

The French board of conciliation and arbitration had settled thousands of trade disputes in France since 1806, but like its counterpart in Massachusetts, it was limited in its powers because it was not compulsory and had no power over wages and hence the largest disputes.\textsuperscript{33} Labour disputes were a shared experience across the western world in the late nineteenth century as a result of the extraordinary expansion of industrial capitalism, and Lloyd wrote glowingly of witnessing compulsory arbitration in action in Christchurch instead of the ‘armed Pinkertons, street riots, [and] starving mothers and babies’ that characterized the labour disputes he had witnessed in America.\textsuperscript{34} Conciliation and arbitration was being discussed in Europe when Reeves first drafted his arbitration bill in 1890. Australian

\textsuperscript{31} ‘Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1894’, \textit{New Zealand Statutes} (NZS), 58, 14, 1894, pp.22–44.
\textsuperscript{32} Henry Demarest Lloyd, \textit{A Country Without Strikes}, pp.1–2.
\textsuperscript{33} Sinclair, \textit{William Pember Reeves}, p.152.
\textsuperscript{34} Caro Lloyd, p.103.
unionists had also advocated the establishment of conciliation boards several times in the 1870s and 1880s. 35  By 1893 compulsory arbitration had already been practiced in the Territory of Wyoming. 36  Reeves was heavily influenced by a draft compulsory arbitration bill submitted in New South Wales by fellow gentleman radical and lawyer C.C. Kingston, so much so that Kingston later accused Reeves of legislative plagiarism. 37  Similarities likewise abounded in arbitration legislation later implemented in Western Australia. 38  It was this transnational political engagement that gave the legislative seasoning to Liberal reforms such as the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

For a piece of legislation central to the national narrative of turn-of-the-century New Zealand, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was the product of a surprising amount of conflict. This is true for the majority of legislation that earned New Zealand the reputation as a ‘social laboratory’ during the Liberal period. John McKenzie wrote to Reeves in 1898 that after seven years in office with the Liberals he was ‘sick and tired of it. It would be nothing if we only had to fight our opponents but we have occasionally a number of our own friends to fight.’ 39  The notably small amount of time during which Reeves passed the majority of his legislation was abruptly ended in 1895. Reeves’s Asiatic and Other Immigration Restriction Bill of 1895 — so telling of the narrow definitions of ‘civilization’ in the discourse of the ‘white men’s countries’ that Reeves was a part of — was unsuccessful. 40  Reeves’s amended Shops Bill was passed only after a long struggle in committee and his Eight Hours Bill, Masters and Apprentices Bill, and Fair Tender Bill were ‘silently dropped’. 41  Raewyn Dalziel noted that in 1895 his bills were ‘not even regarded as government bills and the party was not bound to vote for them’. 42  Sinclair questioned whether Reeves’s latter bills were introduced ahead of public opinion, and inferred from the

36 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (NZPD), 1893, 81, p.379.
37 Auckland Star, 6 March 1903, p.2; William Pember Reeves, State Experiments in Australia & New Zealand, 1902, pp.98–99.
38 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.212.
39 Letter from John McKenzie to William Pember Reeves, 16 February 1898, William Pember Reeves Papers, qMS-1682, ATL.
40 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, pp.226–7.
41 Ibid., p.229.
eventual acceptance of some of the measures he failed to pass before leaving for London that he was ‘advancing only a little way ahead of public demand’.43

Perhaps it was the legitimacy given by the attentions of international political commentators that swayed the New Zealand public into accepting this legislation, just as external validation cemented the ‘social laboratory’ in narratives of national identity. Certainly the lack of support shown for Reeves’s constant revision of his legislation — a necessary feature of any ‘experimentation’ — calls into question the notion of the ‘social laboratory’. The Liberal Member for Wanganui, Archibald Willis, stated in parliament in August 1895 that he was ‘getting sick and tired of so much labour legislation’, especially the ‘continual tinkering’ of Reeves, and Reeves’s defence that all legislation was ‘a continual tinkering with the great social questions’ was not sufficient justification for Willis to accept the incessant modifications submitted by Reeves.44 The Liberals were willing to accept the positive glow of the image of the ‘social laboratory’ but it was only a select few such as Reeves and Tregear that were deeply invested in the operation of reform legislation, and it was this very investment that led to Reeves’s ejection from the Liberal government by Seddon in 1896.45

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Focussing on the presence of political visitors in New Zealand allows us to re-frame the Liberal government as politically efficient and effective publicists. Their branding efforts deserve more attention. Hamer pointed out long ago that very little had been written on ‘image-creation as a facet of Liberal politics’ and this remains the case.46 The political visitors were eagerly hosted by the Liberals, and their travels were often facilitated at the expense of the government, who were ‘clearly only too pleased to help visitors such as Siegfried publicise their achievements’.47 Governmental assistance to visitors will be an ongoing theme in the following chapters. Officials were delegated to accompany Lloyd on his

43 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.230.
44 NZPD, 1895, 91, pp.608, 716–17, 772, 816.
45 Dalziel, p.151.
extended travels around New Zealand, such as the Superintendent of Village Settlements who ‘piloted’ Lloyd to farm settlements on ‘resumed’ estates. The Railways Department put a ‘bird-cage’ carriage at Lloyd’s disposal when he travelled by train.\textsuperscript{48} Sometimes transport infrastructure was not quite up to the task of conveying the visitors, such as when the Webbs and Trevelyan were confronted by a washed out bridge at the Mohaka River en route to Napier. Trevelyan — ‘being a bachelor and athlete’ — opted to cross in a ‘rope cage attached by a pulley to an iron cable, pulling myself across hand over hand with such frightful exertion that my fingers were crooked with the straining for five minutes after I landed’.\textsuperscript{49} Insult was added to injury after this ill-advised display of machismo when Trevelyan’s bag was washed away in the torrent.\textsuperscript{50} Alongside free transportation, visitors to New Zealand interested in politics were granted open access to top politicians and civil servants. This ensured that they received the information the Liberal Government wanted disseminated.\textsuperscript{51} The resultant interpretations were then skilfully amplified and used as justification for and promotion of the Liberal reform agenda.

Via the information network of which these visitors were a part, the Liberal government promoted New Zealand as a ‘social laboratory’ at the turn of the twentieth century. This image endured long after the passage of what is commonly regarded as the last of the major Liberal reforms: the Old-Age Pensions Act in 1898.\textsuperscript{52} James Belich was cautious in attributing importance to the Liberal reforms, noting that their welfare measures were ‘neither numerous nor generous’ and argued that Liberals such as Seddon publicized such ‘firsts’ as the introduction of votes for women ‘after the event much more energetically than they had worked for it’.\textsuperscript{53} The praise of imperial insiders was extremely useful for this promotion and political puffery. Lloyd wrote in \textit{Outlook} in 1899 that ‘this “experiment station” in advanced legislation has a great many novelties to show’.\textsuperscript{54} Ben Tillett, who was more critical of the application of Liberal policies, did not enjoy the same prominence as Métin, Siegfried, and especially Lloyd, who wrote that ‘New Zealand is one of the few things I have seen during my life which was better than the advertisement and which got better the

\textsuperscript{49} Hamer, ed., \textit{The Webbs in New Zealand}, pp.61–62.
\textsuperscript{50} ibid..
\textsuperscript{51} Wilson, p.369.
\textsuperscript{52} Hamer, \textit{The Webbs in New Zealand}, p.12; \textit{The New Zealand Liberals}, p.217.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Outlook}, 9 December 1899, p.877.
more I saw of it’.55 It was Lord Asquith — introducing Reeves to the Eighty Club in London in 1896 — who appears to have first referred to New Zealand as ‘a laboratory in which political and social experiments are every day being made for the information and instruction of the older countries of the world’.56 The idea of the ‘social laboratory’ was to become central to the promotional efforts of Seddon, Reeves, and the Liberals, and this promotion was amplified internationally by these political visitors.

Lloyd was perhaps the strongest external validator of New Zealand as the ‘social laboratory’. He specifically visited New Zealand to gather information on Liberal reforms to use as ammunition for his reform crusades in America. Lloyd presented himself as a ‘democratic traveller’ in photographs and writing: a supposedly-objective gatherer of facts.57 His persona was a masculine construction; an ‘expert’ observer exploring the Anglo-imperial political world. Lloyd’s construction was easy for the Wanganui Chronicle to debunk when it declared ‘this gentleman from Porkapolis… is only the usual person who knows all about us at sight’.58 This quote also hints at an already weary familiarity with the circulation of ‘expert’ eyewitnesses through New Zealand. The Boston Transcript noted that ‘it was a brilliant bit of controversial tactics… while all the world [was] discussing the great social questions, to make the trip to New Zealand and study the reforms… in actual operation’.59 Upon his return from New Zealand Lloyd launched a campaign to ‘New Zealandize’ American politics.

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57 ‘An embarrassment of riches challenges the curiosity of the democratic traveller in New Zealand’. Outlook, 9 December 1899, p.877.
58 Wanganui Chronicle, 3 May 1899, p.2.
59 Coleman, p.52.
Lloyd was a tireless promoter of New Zealand and its Liberal politics in the United States. He published two major works on New Zealand as well as lecturing regularly and maintaining a healthy private and public correspondence. Lloyd’s private correspondence shows interest in New Zealand legislation as a solution to North American issues from residents in Somerset County, Texas, San Diego, and Toronto.60 In addition to these books, lectures, and correspondence, Lloyd published at least 14 newspaper articles and at least six journal articles in periodicals like the *Atlantic Monthly*.61 Hundreds of reviews of his books

60 Letter from E.W. Honin to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 17 November 1900; Letter from Roland T. Patten to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 12 April 1901; Letter from William E. Smythe to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 19 July 1901, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reels 11–12.

61 Coleman, p.51.
appeared, as did countless editorials.\textsuperscript{62} These widespread promotional efforts led to a flood of applications to the New Zealand government for copies of their labour laws and encouraged another American writer, Frank Parsons, to pen \textit{The Story of New Zealand}, a book-length history published in Philadelphia in 1904 that cast New Zealand as a social utopia and ‘the birthplace of the twentieth century’.\textsuperscript{63} The value placed on Lloyd’s promotional efforts by the Liberal government was demonstrated after his death in 1903 when Seddon presented a eulogy in the House of Representatives, a rare tribute for a non-New Zealander in this venue.\textsuperscript{64}

Much of the success of the Liberal government can be attributed to the participation of its leaders in ceremony, ritual, and conscious image propagation. Gender played an important role in these performances.\textsuperscript{65} It is testament to the political nous of the Liberals that so many key facets of what is now thought of as New Zealand ‘national identity’ originate from this period. Amongst these can be placed the national obsession with rugby. As Jock Phillips has argued, it was the 1905 All Black tour of England and Wales that ‘won the hearts of the nation and led New Zealanders to view rugby success as the very essence of New Zealand identity’.\textsuperscript{66} The Liberal government was central in creating this association. The 1905 tour turned the All Blacks into ‘formal representatives of the nation’s manhood endorsed by the highest political leaders’.\textsuperscript{67} It was Reeves himself who cabled the results from London to Seddon in New Zealand, and as the success of the tour grew, Reeves followed the team around and spoke at post-game dinners, while the government took out advertisements for prospective immigrants on the day of each match. After sending the team home via America and Canada at the taxpayers’ expense, Seddon, dubbed the new ‘minister of football’ by the press, was in Auckland to greet them. The players then enjoyed a triumphal procession, a civic reception, and a formal banquet.\textsuperscript{68} In backing the All Blacks the Liberals were associating themselves with pre-approved winners. It was only after the All Blacks had begun winning their overseas matches that the Liberals jumped upon them as

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{62} ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{64} NZPD, 127, 1903, p.991. \\
\textsuperscript{65} Hamer, \textit{The New Zealand Liberals}, p.63. \\
\textsuperscript{67} ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{68} ibid.}
political currency, just as they had begun to associate themselves with the idea of the ‘social laboratory’ after it had received favourable international attention from visiting pundits.

The ways in which the Liberal government courted external commentators can be seen as a key factor in the longevity and success of their tenure. The Liberal promotion of reforms was ‘reinforced by the numerous visitors who came to New Zealand already possessing and willing to further promote an image of it as one of the most “advanced” countries in the world — “advanced” being defined primarily in legislative terms’.69 As J.B. Condliffe has pointed out, this created a bias in their interpretations for two reasons. First, such writers had a predisposition to accept the Liberals’ politically-motivated claims that their reforms had been central to the return to prosperity which occurred in late-nineteenth-century New Zealand. Second, their reliance on government sources, due to the brevity of their time in the country, meant that the Liberal government could present these commentators with the image they sought to cultivate. Condliffe warned historians as early as 1959 to take these interpretations with a grain of salt. He challenged the image of New Zealand in the Liberal era as the ‘social laboratory’, claiming that this was ‘a gross misrepresentation of the spirit behind the Liberal reforms, which were in no way designed to stimulate and guide experiments in social legislation in other lands’.70 The comfortable meshing of the aims of the Liberals and the international reform community led to the widespread proliferation of the idea of the ‘social laboratory’ at the turn of the century, and this concept was again to resonate with those historians involved in the construction of a New Zealand ‘national identity’ from the mid-twentieth century.

Re-constructing the international community of political visitors is a way to temper and redirect the harsh light of nationalism that has flattened our view of this period. In their cameo appearances the political visitors have a consistent place in the general histories of New Zealand, reinforcing and strengthening the mythology of New Zealand as a world model and site of experiment. Historians Keith Sinclair and Michael King both utilized the political visitors in this fashion in their respective assertions and re-assertions of New Zealand national identity.71 Sinclair framed the visitors individually as ‘French political scientists, American radicals, English statesmen and political philosophers’ making ‘pilgrimages’ to the

‘distant colony’ that was ‘the most radical state in the world’. Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, p.194.

King used the political visitors as a ‘procession of luminaries’ that had come to study the social laboratory with ‘envy and profit’. The conclusion of Sinclair’s discussion of the Liberal period was that the ‘democratic and egalitarian aspiration, that yearning for what was later termed “social justice”’ was the ‘main element in the New Zealand tradition’, and that it was an inheritance from the pioneering generation. The nationalistic flattening of the origins of Liberal policies by historians such as Sinclair and King belies their transnational and deeply contested origins.

Re-connecting the network of political visitation lifts New Zealand back into the broader context championed by historians like Ballantyne and extends these connections further across the Anglo-imperial world. The transnational connections across the community of political visitors were widespread and sustained. Prior to his visit to New Zealand in 1899 Albert Métin had received considerable assistance from Reeves in the preparation of his work on socialism in England. The correspondence between Reeves, Tregear, and Lloyd forged the basis of enduring relationships. Lloyd’s 1900 book Newest England was instrumental in the emigration of Thomas Mann to New Zealand from England in January 1902 after the breakdown of his first marriage. Mann toured the country in 1902 on behalf of the New Zealand Socialist Party before leaving for Melbourne. He was to return to tour again in 1908 and returned to England in 1910, having become a revolutionary socialist during his time in Australasia. Mann eventually met Lloyd on a visit to London. Reeves was to form close personal friendships with the Webbs in London, and this led to an involvement with the colourful intellectual and social life of the Fabian Society and its personalities such as H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw, the latter of whom became Reeves’s frequent cycling companion. Reeves was asked to address the Fabians and write for them soon after his arrival in London, predominantly on industrial arbitration. By 1903

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72 Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, p.194.
74 Sinclair, A History of New Zealand, p.196.
75 Press, 1 September 1899, p.5.
77 ibid.
78 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, pp.249–52.
the Reeveses were attending Wells’s weekend house parties, ‘stimulating occasions where a
diverse assortment of literary and socialist acquaintances foregathered’.79

Politics was central to the ‘paradise myth’ that Dominic Alessio isolated as a
dominant nationalist trope in New Zealand.80 The participation of both the Liberals and these
visitors in the transnational construction of this myth belies the contested nature of Liberal
politics and challenges the reification of the nation. As the author of what is widely
considered to be the first general history of New Zealand, Reeves’s writings and legislation
have been used as part of the search for national identity that structured much New Zealand
historiography in the second half of the twentieth century.81 The pseudo-nationalistic
assertions of ‘state experiments’ by the Liberals were given contemporary legitimacy through
the attentions of visiting commentators. These attentions were then utilized by twentieth-
century historians seeking to tease a unique national character out of this period in New
Zealand history.82 The opinions of Henry Demarest Lloyd, Albert Métin, André Siegfried,
and the Webbs are featured prominently as part of the ‘Nationhood and Identity’ section of
Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, their words confirming in the minds of New
Zealanders that their country was the ‘social laboratory of the world’.83

The disjunction between the contemporary political context in which the Liberal
reforms became legislation and interpretations of this period has a sustained historiographical
presence. The abiding association of the Liberals with ‘state experiments’ was most
acerbically critiqued by John Cookson as ‘cheerfully succumbing to the national vanity
initiated by the chief ideologue of the Liberals when he offered the enlightened policies of the
Australasian colonies to the rest of the world’.84 Cookson was specifically referring to
Reeves’s State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, but as previously noted his

79 Fry, pp.29–30, 33–34.
80 Alessio, pp.23–24.
81 Reeves, The Long White Cloud: Ao Tea Roa, London, 1898. This publication is prominent in the
‘Nationhood and identity’ page in the ‘Nation and government’ section of Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New
Zealand. Wilson, ‘Nation and Government — Nationhood and Identity’, Te Ara — The Encyclopaedia of New
January 2014).
82 The praise of Henry Demarest Lloyd is prominent in the ‘Politics’ page in the ‘New Zealand identity’ section
zealand/page-3 (accessed 22 January 2014).
84 John Cookson, ‘How British? Local Government in New Zealand to c.1930’, New Zealand Journal of History,
41, 2, 2007, p.143.
promotional efforts were considerably more widespread. Rather than the nationalistic usage isolated by Cookson, Reeves was in fact presenting the policies of Australasia to the transnational community of political visitors with the authority of an ‘expert’. The international circulation — both physically and textually — of the political visitors allows us to situate the creation and dissemination of the image of the ‘social laboratory’ in its wider context and underscores the limits of its historiographical application to this period.

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Correspondence between New Zealanders such as Reeves and Tregear and internationally-circulating political commentators shows turn-of-the-century New Zealand men using political ideas as masculine currency in the forging of personal relationships that were cemented with reciprocal visits. The shared pursuit of maintaining and improving ‘civilization’ across the western world by political means was central to this masculine identity, a pursuit referred to by Lloyd as the ‘art of society’.  

85 In 1986 Joan Wallach Scott bemoaned the separation of gender from studies of war, diplomacy, and politics and its irrelevance to the thinking of many historians concerned with issues of politics and power.  

86 In the wake of Scott’s comments, the separation of gender and politics has been addressed in much American and European scholarship but they have yet to be satisfactorily integrated in New Zealand historiography.  

87 The letters that travelled between Reeves, Tregear, and Lloyd were particularly intimate. The early correspondence between Reeves and Lloyd has the nervous excitement of two potential soul-mates testing the water. In the week before his trip to New Zealand Lloyd complimented Reeves on ‘the great literary skill and tact with which you have presented the charms of New Zealand, natural and social, to the gaze of the public’ in Ao Tea Roa: The Long White Cloud. He wrote that he was looking forward to his trip the following week with ‘high anticipation’.  

88 Reeves could ‘hardly express to you what a very great pleasure it has been’ to know that Lloyd was ‘in no way disappointed with New
Zealand and… not nourishing any grudge towards the author of “The Long White Cloud”’. He joined with Lloyd in ‘hoping that we may some day have the pleasure of meeting’. 89

Just as Reeves had helped Lloyd with letters of introduction for his time in New Zealand, Lloyd organized interviews and lectures for Reeves while he was in America. Always the earnest man, Reeves wrote that he was not afraid of interviews provided they were of ‘a reasonably serious and accurate sort’. 90 Reeves looked back on their eventual first meeting in Boston as ‘a state of mind, a very happy state of mind’ and the ‘brightest spot’ in his travels. 91 He was accompanied on this trip by a ‘brother Agent-General’, Sir John Cockburn of South Australia, a ‘Progressive’ and a man he was sure Lloyd would like to meet. 92 After this meeting the correspondence between the pair became much more involved. Along with the usual political information that Reeves sent, he began inserting his own poetry in his letters to Lloyd; Lloyd reciprocated with manuscripts that Reeves edited and hawked to potential publishers in London. 93 Correspondence preceding the publication of Newest England showed Reeves taking an active interest in both the accuracy of the figures quoted by Lloyd and the direction of its content. Reeves was ready and willing to aid Lloyd, stating that because of the help Lloyd had already given the Arbitration Act, and the ‘cause’ generally, he would be ‘a strange fellow’ if he were ‘not ready and willing to do anything in return — to say nothing of personal friendship’. 94

89 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 3 July 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 10.
90 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 16 September 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
91 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 10 November 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
92 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 16 September 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
93 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 2 December 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
Figure 5: Henry Demarest Lloyd and William Pember Reeves sit together on a summer’s day on the steps of the John Boyle O’Reilly statue in the Boston Fenway. The photograph was taken by Sir John Cockburn, Agent General of South Australia, and the figures from left to right are Henry Demarest Lloyd, William Pember Reeves, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, and Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Clarke. Caro Lloyd dated the photo as 1900, but correspondence between Reeves and Lloyd puts it in October 1899. Caro Lloyd, Henry Demarest Lloyd, 1847–1903: A Biography, Vol. 2, New York and London, 1912, p.120.

Edward Tregear, the Secretary of the Department of Labour during the Liberal era, was another key conduit between New Zealand and the political visitors. Tregear was in touch with Sidney Webb by the early 1890s, and in 1892 Webb gave ‘high praise’ to Tregear’s department before the British Royal Commission on Labour. An intense correspondence between Tregear and Lloyd was struck up early in 1894, with Tregear initially sending Lloyd copies of the Lyttelton Times and the 1893 New Zealand Year Book that featured an article by Tregear on ‘labour in New Zealand’. He also placed Lloyd on the free list for the Journal of the Department of Labour. Tregear had launched this journal in 1893, thus making himself an international spokesman for New Zealand labour legislation.

Tregear invoked the masculine community of political reform when he wrote to Lloyd asking him to help him by ‘writing now and then, or by sending... a marked newspaper

95 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 16 September 1899; Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 10 November 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
97 ibid., pp.92–93.
occasionally... There is no brotherhood except in love for the poor and helpless’. \(^98\) The departure of Tregear’s ‘beloved patron and socialist soul-mate’ Reeves in 1896 was a major personal blow.\(^99\) This loss was captured in the stark opening sentence of an 1897 letter to Reeves: ‘I want you back.’\(^100\)

Tregear and Reeves were united in their affection for Lloyd, with Tregear gushing after Lloyd’s to New Zealand that ‘I fell in love with him and would serve him gladly’.\(^101\)

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\(^99\) Howe, *Singer in a Songless Land*, p.95.

\(^100\) Letter from Edward Tregear to William Pember Reeves, 15 September 1897, William Pember Reeves Papers, qMS-1680, ATL.

\(^101\) Letter from Edward Tregear to William Pember Reeves, 7 February 1900, William Pember Reeves Papers, qMS-1680, ATL.
This illustration of the cementing of the close personal relationships of the community of political visitors was followed by an evocation of the constant movement that characterized their community: ‘But – he is a terrible wanderer, I have had 3 different addresses since he left…Chicago, Long Island and now Boston. I think if he does not get our stuff regularly it is because it goes to the place he has left.’

This was a culture of travel different from institutional examples of sporting and military tours. Whilst in a sense this was masculinity on a mission, the mission was the global and on-going project to change the world, rather than any short-term goals of national glory.

Lloyd and Reeves joined forces to engage in political dialogue against ideological opponents in the American press. Reeves took evident glee in engaging Americans who publicly questioned the value of the Liberal reforms. Lloyd drew Reeves’s attention to the words of the editor of the New York Times when he likened the Liberal reforms to taking a walk on an empty stomach; Reeves then produced Census data that he felt would enable him to take a walk on the ‘stomach belonging to the prostrate form of the Editor of the Times’, fighting the urge to dance. Reeves was again gleeful when he wrote to Lloyd in 1900: ‘I have no doubt that you are rejoiced as I am to see that the attempt to smash the Arbitration Act by appealing to the Supreme Court has been a total failure’. He enclosed a hostile article clipped from the New Zealand press that he felt showed ‘a complete and valuable admission of our victory’. Lloyd would quote his correspondence with Seddon in defence of claims by the New York Nation that the liberal legislation of New Zealand was about to be repealed by the very men who brought it into existence. Lloyd went so far as to profess his love for ‘the New Zealanders and New Zealand institutions’ in a letter to Joseph Ward, then Minister of Railways. This masculine affection was mutual; Reeves wrote on his deathbed that Lloyd was one of those men who made him think more of mankind.

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102 Letter from Edward Tregear to William Pember Reeves, 7 February 1900, William Pember Reeves Papers, qMS-1680, ATL.
103 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 7 December 1899, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
104 Letter from William Pember Reeves to Henry Demarest Lloyd, 26 April 1900, Henry Demarest Lloyd Papers (microfilm edition), Reel 11.
105 ibid.
107 ibid.
108 Sinclair, William Pember Reeves, p.268.
The interaction with political visitors by New Zealanders shows aspects of turn-of-the-century New Zealand that were not puritanical or isolated but intellectual and optimistically utopian. The intellectual engagement celebrated by these visitors co-existed with the anti-intellectualism previously understood as hegemonic in this period.\textsuperscript{109} This co-existence is epitomised in the political relationship between the bookish Reeves and the populist Seddon.\textsuperscript{110} In his work on colonial Gore Ballantyne sought to re-insert the ‘constant swirl of people and things moving in and out of a place’ that created towns like Gore. Ballantyne conceptualized places as ‘knot-like conjunctures’ where ceaseless local mobility interlocked with more extensive networks’.\textsuperscript{111} The journeys of these correspondents were strands in the Ballantynian knots that tied New Zealand to the wider Anglo-imperial world. These strands were braided with a gendered and racialized sense of ‘fellow feeling’ between the imagined community of ‘white men’s countries’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that followed each other’s fortunes with ‘keen interest and sympathy’.\textsuperscript{112} These reinforced strands transmitted political ideas to New Zealand and the political ideas of New Zealand to the world. The political visitors nurtured a culture of visiting, hosting, lecturing, correspondence, and close masculine relationships that formed the foundation of the Liberal era. Politically-engaged travellers connected Liberal politicians such as Reeves and Tregear to this culture. They nurtured a cosmopolitan atmosphere that belies the isolation and individualism central to the idea of New Zealand as a ‘social laboratory’.


\textsuperscript{110} Seddon was a pinnacle of New Zealand masculinity for Jock Phillips: ‘Seddon was a man’s man, a self-made man, a former miner, a former publican, a pioneer who possessed inner strength and “indomitable will”’. Phillips, \textit{A Man’s Country?} p.237.

\textsuperscript{111} Ballantyne, ‘On Place, Space and Mobility’, pp.60–61.

\textsuperscript{112} Lake, ‘Fellow Feeling’, p.266.
Chapter Two

The Circuit: International Itinerant Lecturers in New Zealand 1875–1923

He’s travelled oft around the world,
Wherever Britain’s flag’s unfurled.
In Lecturers and Her who Sings
He’s dealt; and he’s hobnobbed with Kings.
Smythe is his name; no, not plain Smith;
He takes no stock in any myth.

Another group of illustrious visitors circulated through New Zealand before those who visited for political reasons, and continued to circulate after the political visitors were gone. They were itinerant lecturers. Lecturers were a common form of public entertainment and edification, and just as turn-of-the-century political visitors provided valuable political connections, the lecturers connected New Zealand to the cultural currents of the white men’s countries from the mid nineteenth until the early twentieth century. Some have become enshrined as touchstones in New Zealand historiography; others of comparable contemporary stature have faded from discussion. These itinerant lecturers spoke on a multitude of subjects; among them were preachers, theosophists, explorers, war correspondents, humourists, social commentators, spiritualists, authors, and astronomers. They varied in quality from hacks with short-lived careers to long standing draw cards of the platform, and they followed a deeply-furrowed circuit across the colonial world that connected Australasia with America, Europe, India, South Africa, Southeast Asia, and the United Kingdom. As political visitor André Siegfried noted during his visit in 1899, New Zealand was highly decentralized at this time, and lacked large cities. For this reason travelling lecturers regularly appeared in New Zealand towns such as Timaru, Oamaru, Hawera, Whanganui, Invercargill, Nelson, and Napier as well as Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Christchurch, and linked them all to this transnational circuit.

The lecture was a malleable text, and successful lecturers often demonstrated flexibility in responding to local audiences. More than simply recitations, lectures were

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1 New Zealand Truth, 28 July 1906, p.5.
performances. As Judith Butler has argued, gender is performatively produced.\(^5\) The authority of these lecturers as white men and their exclusivity as illustrious visitors required no ornamentation. For this reason, the stage presentation for these lectures was very simple: usually just a table, water bottle, and reading stand. The ways in which lecturers performed their gendered roles were less simple, however. The ways they performed and how they were received by late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century New Zealand audiences both on and off the platform provides fertile ground for an exploration of an aspect New Zealand’s entertainment and cultural history.

Celebrity visitors to New Zealand in this period have also tended to be treated in existing historiography in a ‘sound bite’ fashion, providing useful one-liners without any context.\(^6\) A transnational approach problematizes the presence of these lecturers. While they presented wide-ranging lecture subjects, they were a largely homogeneous group of white males. This meant that they were privileged on the gendered and racialized entertainment circuit as they sought to exploit the Anglo-imperial world for financial gain. Peter Gibbons has suggested that historians consider how international trade networks, imperial markets, and inter-colonial networks shaped the New Zealand colonial economy; among the commodities these networks brought were these lecturers.\(^7\) Those who crossed the floorboards of New Zealand stages from 1875–1923 ‘aided only by a glass of water and the power of his or her own oratory’ included the Reverend Charles Clark, popular lecturer; Richard Anthony Proctor, astronomer; Archibald Forbes, war correspondent; Moncure Daniel Conway, religious platform speaker; George Augustus Sala, author; Major Henry Craige Dane, war correspondent; Henry Morton Stanley, adventurer; Paul Blouet as Max O’Rell, humourist; Reverend Thomas de Witt Talmage, religious platform speaker; Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis, religion and music; Samuel Clemens (as Mark Twain), humourist; Reverend Haskett Smith, oriental traveller and scholar; Frederic Villiers, war correspondent; Andrew ‘Banjo’ Patterson, bush poet; Frank Bullen, author of nautical adventures; John Foster Fraser, travel author; Roald Amundsen, polar explorer; Sir Douglas Mawson, polar explorer; Joseph McCabe, freethinker; and Arthur Conan Doyle, novelist and spiritualist.\(^8\) They were joined by the occasional female lecturer, such as Lydia von Finkelstein, presenting biblical stories, and Annie Besant, theosophist. Behind every one of these border-

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\(^6\) Lydia Monin, *From the Writer’s Notebook: Around New Zealand with 80 Authors*, Auckland, 2006.


\(^8\) Simpson, ‘Caterers to the Public Entertainment’, p.11.
transcending celebrity platform speakers was Robert Sparrow Smythe, a longstanding caterer to the public amusement who plied the circuit connecting the Anglo-imperial world for decades, assisted and eventually replaced by his son, Carlyle G. Smythe.

Caroline Daley touched upon the presence of international entertainers as part of her proposition that New Zealand was ‘born modern’.\(^9\) Regular tours by professional opera companies from 1871 onwards catered to those New Zealanders with highbrow aspirations, and for all the others there were ‘plays, recitals, circuses, magicians and minstrel shows’.\(^10\) New Zealand was ‘never socially or culturally isolated’ and the direct steamship link to California from the late 1860s made it even easier for itinerant entertainers to visit what many considered a single market in Australasia.\(^11\) Due to the scholarly efforts of Peter Downes and Adrienne Simpson, we have considerable insight into the theatrical and musical entertainers who visited New Zealand in the nineteenth century.\(^12\) Richard Waterhouse has also shed light on minstrelsy and vaudeville as conduits of British and American cultural values in turn-of-the-century Australia.\(^13\) Simpson argued that from the early days of European settlement until the outbreak of World War I ‘professional entertainment in this country was provided almost exclusively by touring performers, the majority of whom worked from bases in Australasia. They moved from place to place following what became a reasonably well-defined circuit.’\(^14\)

The prerequisites for the creation of a buoyant entertainment industry for Simpson were wealth, population, and transport, which collectively emerged in New Zealand as a consequence of the discoveries of gold in Otago in 1861.\(^15\) Once these prerequisites were met, ‘the habit of visiting a theatre to be entertained by professionals became a regular part of

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\(^10\) ibid., p.435.

\(^11\) ibid.


\(^15\) ibid., p.154.
social life in New Zealand’. The managers who exploited this newfound market were fiercely competitive. R.S. Smythe stated in an 1898 interview that ‘if a man wants talent nowadays he must go to Europe for it, so great is the competition between English and American managers’. He refused to comment on his current negotiations, as ‘in this business you must not let one hand know what the other one is doing’.

The predominantly descriptive work of scholars such as Downes and Simpson is now being placed in a transnational framework through work such as Matthew W. Wittmann’s doctoral dissertation. Wittman traced the formation of the ‘Pacific circuit’ for American entertainers from 1850–1890 and focused on the two most prominent exports of the US culture industry in the nineteenth century: minstrel shows and the circus. He demonstrated how the development of the US culture industry during the mid-nineteenth century dovetailed with the emergence of a recognizable ‘Pacific world’, a world shaped by colonialism and capitalism. The itinerant lecturers covered in this chapter followed in the wake of the minstrels from all over the Anglo-imperial world, and continue the story of a shared entertainment culture across the ‘white men’s countries’. Their stories call into question claims of cultural nationalism and demonstrate the wider world’s place in New Zealanders’ free time.

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16 ibid.
17 *Chronicle*, 9 July 1898, p.25.
19 ibid., p.2.
The lecturing circuit that was to bring American lecturers such as Talmage and Twain to New Zealand from the mid nineteenth century had flourished in the eastern United States since the 1820s. It gradually extended across the continent until small hamlets were likely to be as conversant with speakers — and as critical — as long-established larger communities. The American lecturing season stretched from October to March and during that time ‘an army of pundits, prophets, reformers, preachers, and professors took to the road, bustling from town to town, crossing each other’s trails and occasionally meeting to swap yarns about missed trains and missed dinners, cold halls and cold audiences, absurdities and

21 The Minstrels performed at Napier’s Theatre Royal on 19 November 1888, and Easton’s banjo solos received special mention. The hoardings of the Napier Advertising Company had been ‘bright with the amusing posters of the Colored Mintrels’ that week. Alongside his multiple roles in the show, Easton played right field for the Hicks-Sawyer Baseball Club, which put on games against local teams to promote the troupe. Daily Telegraph, 16 November 1888, p.2; 20 November 1888, p.3; Hawke’s Bay Herald, 20 November 1888, p.3.
22 Paul Fatout, Mark Twain on the Lecture Circuit, Bloomington, 1960, p.97.
satisfactions’. The demand by audiences in hundreds of American communities who ‘trudged to town hall or opera house, come fair weather or foul, to be informed and improved’ created ‘a core of itinerants who gave much of their time to lecturing as a profession’.

Soon after the gold rush in California drew minstrels and circuses to the west coast of the United States and launched them out into the Pacific, the highly mobile group of itinerant lecturers were nipping at their heels along the circuit. In his dissertation Wittman argued for the hegemony of American popular culture on the Pacific circuit, and concluded by framing Mark Twain’s presence in late-nineteenth-century New Zealand as an ‘indication that there was something extraordinary about the reach and appeal of US popular culture’. This argument can be seen as somewhat jarring when Twain is placed in the context of the touring lecturers. Mark Twain was one of many lecturers from the US, England, Europe, and Australia whose lectures New Zealanders could attend in the late nineteenth century. Whilst perhaps overstating his case regarding US popular culture, Wittman also acknowledged that the history of the Pacific circuit is ‘inseparable from that of the British diaspora and the British Empire’. Rather than the hegemony of any one culture, this thesis seeks to demonstrate shared cultures in the white men’s countries that transcend cultural nationalism; one of these was the culture of public platform speaking. The ‘surprising’ number of important European and American entertainers who were encouraged to visit New Zealand thanks to the growing regularity of steamship transport were part of a shared cultural experience; New Zealand, like the other countries dotted along the entertainment circuit, was a venue for hire.

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The lecturers that visited New Zealand in this period were overwhelmingly heterosexual white men. In press coverage, lecturers were often cast as pinnacles of Britishness. When discussing his lectures the Press held Henry Morton Stanley as a ‘living exemplification of what can be achieved by British pluck, that indomitable perserverance and dogged persistency which is the characteristic of these people’ and continued that ‘it is the display of these qualities… which has evoked such enthusiasm in the minds of British people,

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23 ibid., p.98.
24 Fatout, Mark Twain Speaking, Iowa City, 2006, p.xv.
26 ibid., p.295.
27 ibid., p.6.
and indeed that of all other civilised nations’. 29 The Nelson Evening Mail described the Welsh-American journalist and explorer as ‘a man of great note’ who had ‘done more to make the interior of Africa known than almost anyone else who ever lived’. 30 The Nelson Evening Mail had added a gendered inflection to notions of Britishness. In this fashion transnational ideas of masculinities were publically presented for New Zealand audiences.

For lecturers like Stanley, masculinities were closely intertwined with race. Stanley, a man of great note, concluded his last lecture in Christchurch by stating that ‘The continent of Africa… will never be the home of the white man as will New Zealand and Australia and America, but it will be the nursery of nations and it is within the bounds of possibility that the children of this city may see the day when the millions of Africa will join in the chorus of “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and goodwill to all its people”’. 31 The ideas evinced here were linked to the discourse of ‘civilization’, which by about 1890 had ‘taken on a very specific set of meanings which revolved around three factors: race, gender, and millennial assumptions about human evolutionary progress’. 32 Gail Bederman has argued that between 1890 and 1917 whiteness was both a palpable fact and a manly ideal for American, middle-class men in their active work to reinforce male power. 33 These lecturing men appeared on largely empty stages, commanding their audiences with the masculine power of the expert opinion of the white man. 34

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Through his regular ‘running’ of celebrities across the Anglo-imperial entertainment circuit, R.S. Smythe became something of a celebrity himself. Smythe was also an example of the commercial masculinity of the lecturers: for him money making, organisation, and understanding popular taste were the markers of success. His name made regular appearances in New Zealand newspapers, more often than not prefaced by his self-styled moniker ‘the much-travelled’. This nickname was apt. Smythe maintained a hectic itinerary touring his ‘lions’ through Australia, China, India, Japan, Mauritius, New Zealand, and South

30 Nelson Evening Mail, 13 August 1895, p.2.
31 Press, 29 January 1892, p.6.
33 Ibid., p.5.
34 Press, 29 January 1892, p.6. For the few women on the lecturing circuit, more stage-dressing was required. For her lecture on ‘The True Life of Jacob’ in Christchurch in 1888, Lydia von Finkelstein and her assistants donned costumes and dressed the stage to resemble the tent of Isaac. Star, 6 November 1888, p.4.
Africa, as well as regularly being found in America, the United Kingdom, and Europe.\textsuperscript{35} The \textit{West Australian} was not exaggerating when it claimed Smythe had ‘done as much travelling probably as any man living’ and ‘seen more of the world than most people’\textsuperscript{36}.

Smythe was born in London in 1833 and migrated to Australia in 1855 in search of better health. There he began a journalistic career. This career spanned Adelaide, New South Wales, and South Australia before Smythe settled at Deepdene, Melbourne, which became his base for many years. In 1862 Smythe began his involvement with artist management.\textsuperscript{37} His first forays were with the Bianchis, an Italian tenor and soprano duo, and a five-year tour through Australia, Asia, and South Africa with French violinists Poussard and Douay, in the course of which Smythe claimed to be the first manager to ‘conduct a company of foreign artists into Japan after the opening of the treaty ports’, prove the ‘possibilities for professionals of the hill stations in the Himalayas’, and ‘cross the Orange River and “trek” through the villages of what are now the Free State and Transvaal’.\textsuperscript{38} Smythe continued his involvement with musicians throughout his career, although from around 1872, encouraged by the success of his annual lecture tours with the Reverend Charles Clark, he began to specialize in lecture management.\textsuperscript{39}


\textsuperscript{36} \textit{West Australian}, 25 June 1914, p.5.


\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Argus}, 24 May 1917, p.6.

\textsuperscript{39} Shillingsburg, ‘Smythe, Robert Sparrow’; \textit{Argus}, 24 May 1917, p.6.
Figure 8: Robert Sparrow Smythe, Album of photographs owned by Dr. Neild, H37448/72, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.
Smythe was an intrepid entrepreneur and a hard-headed businessman. The *Nelson Evening Mail* reported in 1906 that Smythe had his ‘fingers on the pulse of colonial audiences’ and knew ‘exactly what particular kind of tonic will suit them, and thus it is that he rarely, if ever, makes a mistake when he prescribes’.\(^{40}\) He was widely respected as one of the best managers in Australasia, and his ‘varied experiences, geniality and excellence as a raconteur made him a popular companion’, while ‘his short, stocky stature and bushy moustache provided the stuff of caricature for the press’.\(^{41}\) This incessantly mobile, commercial masculinity is not one usually associated with the late-nineteenth century colonial world. E. Anthony Rotundo has argued that work — in this case “business” — was central to a manly identity in the settled Northern middle-class in nineteenth-century America.\(^{42}\) The discussion in New Zealand has tended towards the ‘hard man’ and the imposition of ‘respectability’ on a drunken late-nineteenth-century male population.\(^{43}\) The itinerant lecturers, when added to the musicians and actors written about by Downes and Simpson, and the minstrels and circuses studied by Wittman, demonstrate how widespread this sort of commercial masculinity was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Impresarios such as Smythe were a key part of this scene.

The intersection of work and entertainment in the commercial masculinity of the lecture platform is a useful addition to the understanding of masculinities in New Zealand. Smythe was on the circuit to make money, and so were his revolving clientele of lecturers. Most were literary figures, but it was their stage performances that drew New Zealand crowds to their lectures. Rob Weir has isolated the three ways a writer could attract notice in this period: the printed page, the spoken word, and live performance. Weir argued that the latter was especially effective for audiences outside America, and it was Samuel Clemens’s mastery of performance that led to the success of Mark Twain on the colonial circuit.\(^{44}\) When Clemens appeared in New Zealand it was Twain that audiences saw: ‘sagebrush philosopher, an artefact from the past, an icon of the American West, a dispenser of universal truths, and a flexible social observer’.\(^{45}\) What they did not see was Samuel Clemens: ‘a man

\(^{40}\) *Nelson Evening Mail*, 26 June 1906, p.2.
\(^{45}\) ibid., p.514.
riddled with carbuncles, wallowing in debt… debasing himself for money’. This was a performance; Clemens understood the need to mask the less desirable reality of his life.

Figure 9: Mark Twain sketched by W. Hodgkins during his appearance at City Hall Dunedin in 1895, A-212-024, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

46 ibid.
This commercial masculinity did not always operate in opposition to the ‘man’s man’. Explorers and war heroes could also perform that masculinity on stage, and make a living from it. The *Otago Witness* summed this up in 1906: ‘The old professional lecturer, ready at a moment’s notice to talk upon any topic suggested, is no longer in demand. Nowadays this “terrestrial ball” is being so thoroughly explored by land and sea in every direction that the question now put by the agencies to the man who wants to lecture is, Have you done anything or Have you been anywhere?’\(^{47}\) This is apparent in the stream of manly men that met with success on the New Zealand lecture platform. The need for personal experience can be exemplified in the personage of Henry Morton Stanley. Stanley’s appearance was infused with the aura of experience:

> A square military set up figure, with a leonine head surmounted by a profusion of white hair, the venerable appearance of which is scarcely in keeping with the fresh youthful looking face illuminated by a pleasant smile. The eyes are keen and with a look of one used to command and be obeyed, evidencing a dominant will, which is the characteristic of the man. One feels instinctively that the personality is no mean one. Even had he not achieved the great things he had the appearance of Mr Stanley is so remarkable that were he in a public assembly the question “Who is he?” would inevitably be asked.\(^{48}\)

The keen eyes and military personage of Stanley are shown below, although his hair is covered and there is no evidence of a pleasant smile.

\(^{47}\) *Otago Witness*, 28 March 1906, p.2.

\(^{48}\) *Press*, 25 January 1892, p.5.
The residents of Christchurch were eager to behold Stanley in the flesh. His final lecture was packed, with only just enough standing room left for the lecturer. He was forced to push his way through the crowd to mount the stage, and spontaneous cheers arose as he was recognized.49 His lecture on the jungles of Africa was full of ‘mystery and awe’: vegetation that had outlasted the rise and fall of dynasties and empires, cannibals, pigmies, and wasps — a ‘host of enemies [that were] far worse than the cannibals’.50 The Nelson Evening Mail dubbed Stanley the most interesting lecturer toured by Smythe. Whilst noting the controversy surrounding his ‘methods’ in Africa, Stanley, for the Mail, as the foremost authority on the African interior in the white man’s world, was undeniably ‘a man of great note’.51

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49 Press, 29 January 1892, p.6.
50 ibid.
51 Nelson Evening Mail, 13 August 1895, p.2.
Figure 11: A handbill advertising Henry Morton Stanley’s lecture season in Christchurch in 1892. Featuring such gripping lectures as ‘THE CANNIBALS AND THE PYGMIES AND THE MYSTERIES OF THE DARK FOREST (“We shall have Meat for dinner to-day!”)’. Theatre Royal (Christchurch) Visit to Christchurch of Mr H.M. Stanley, the Columbus of Central Africa. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, January 25 to 28. A remarkable event. Eph-B-LECTURE-1892-01, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
A prominent type of lecturer who passed through late-nineteenth-century New Zealand was the war correspondent. Archibald Forbes began his lecture tour in late 1882. The centrepiece of this tour was Forbes’s lecture ‘Kings and Princes I have met’, which included stirring tales ‘of battles, of sieges, and of critical moments in the fate of Empires’. Among the ‘most striking figures’ were ‘Emperor Wilhelm… surrounded by Bismarck and Moltke, Prince Frederick Charles and the Crown Prince of Germany’, and ‘perhaps the most thrilling story of all was that told with such deep emotion of finding the body of the young Prince Imperial in the field in Zululand’. This constellation of imperial figures was attractive to New Zealand audiences. Forbes was warmly received. The *Southland Times* stressed that ‘no description of these lectures can convey a proper impression of the charm that belongs to them. They must be heard’. Forbes was in ‘excellent trim’ and ‘added to the force of his address by a very clear and vigorous delivery’. The *Waikato Times* wrote that ‘the hard rider and brilliant writer [had] been the hero of enough adventures to form material for a dozen sensational novels’. Forbes had often been accompanied in these military endeavours by Frederic Villiers, a war correspondent and artist who did a New Zealand tour of his own in 1895. Villiers lectured on his experiences in the Sino-Japanese War, accompanied by ‘limelight views and snapshots taken by himself of the thrilling scenes and massacres’.

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52 *Southland Times*, 30 November 1882, p.2.
53 ibid.
54 ibid.
55 ibid.
56 *Waikato Times*, 15 February 1883, p.2.
57 *Taranaki Herald*, 17 August 1895, p.2.
Figure 12: Archibald Forbes with an impressive chest of medals, F. Lauriston Bullard, *Famous War Correspondents*, Boston, 1914, p.72.
Figure 13: Frederic Villiers with an impressive moustache, image tinted by Allister Hardimann, Allister Hardimann personal collection.
Figure 14: Archibald Forbes and Frederic Villiers, looking suspiciously immaculate ‘after the Battle of Plevna’. Or, perhaps, in a studio. Frederic Villiers, *Peaceful Personalities and Warriors Bold*, London and New York, 1907, frontispiece.
Technologies such as limelight views were popular on the touring circuit. Charles Edwin Major claimed, in one of the few memoirs available that provide insight into public response to the lecturers, that Forbes had brought the first phonograph to New Zealand. On hearing the phonograph that night in the Hawera Town Hall Major and his friend Dick Welsh were ‘both somewhat upset and startled at the very uncanniness of the recording with such hair raising exactitude of every inflection of the human voice’. In 1892 the *Evening Post* counted the phonograph, although it was not a person, as one of the ‘people who have made themselves famous in their several walks of life’. It noted that New Zealand had been ‘kept well to the fore in the matter of visits’ thanks to ‘increased facilities of rapid transit between it and the Old World’. Visiting lecturers, with their stirring tales and displays of new technology, would have given New Zealand men more to talk about than the gold and sheep that Jock Phillips isolated as the sole masculine topics of conversation in the 1880s.

The popularity of the war correspondent coincided with the rise of militarism in the region. Alongside explorers, these men fit easily within our understanding of ‘hard men’ in New Zealand at this time. Phillips has demonstrated the connections between masculinity and warfare in turn-of-the-century New Zealand. He argued that most nineteenth-century British males were brought up with a respect for military achievement and a brazen faith in Anglo-Saxon superiority in combat. The rise of militarism in the late-nineteenth century culminated in New Zealand’s offer of a mounted contingent to serve in the South African War in 1899, and ever-rising numbers of volunteers in the first years of the twentieth century. Philips found it difficult to explain this sudden emergence of military enthusiasm. Steven Loveridge has recently sought to examine the origins of ANZAC mythology in pre-war sentiments around modern masculinity, and the military lecturers usefully supplement his findings.

New Zealand was not unusual with regards to militarism within the late-nineteenth-century Anglo-imperial world. By the beginning of the twentieth century an increased

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58 Seventy Years of Life in New Zealand, Charles Edwin Major Papers, MS 188, Auckland War Memorial Museum Library (AWMML), p.145.
59 ibid., pp.145–6.
60 *Evening Post*, 7 January 1892, p.2.
61 ibid.
64 Steven Loveridge, “‘Soldiers and Shirkers’: Modernity and New Zealand Masculinity During the Great War”, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 47, 1, 2013, p.59.
emphasis on national and imperial loyalty ‘permeated all spheres of [Australian] education. School syllabuses “were filled with imperial geography and history, with British Empire patriots and heroes, [and] stories of white explorers in darkest Africa and arid Australia bringing civilization and Christianity to the ignorant and often savage natives”.’

The material presented by these lecturers would certainly have encouraged this masculine ideal and aided the spread of a reinvigorated imperialist spirit across the Anglo-Saxon world. The adoration with which visiting military lecturers were greeted demonstrates this enthusiasm in New Zealand, and their presence helped to entrench militarism as a masculine ideal. Yet this was only one of many masculine ideals embodied and espoused on the lecture platform.

Frank Bullen was another lecturer with a personal catalogue of adventures. The Otago Witness surmised that it was the ‘general desire expressed to hear him personally recount his remarkable adventures and experiences’ that induced Bullen to take to the lecture platform. His obituary in the Geographical Journal described him as a ‘well-known lecturer and writer of stirring sea stories’. He had ‘led a roving and adventurous life from quite an early age’ and this existence had provided the material for most of the ‘thrilling episodes’ in his books. These exploits in the Merchant Navy were what the New Zealand public paid their entrance fee to hear, rather than the more sedentary 16 years Bullen spent as a junior clerk in the Meteorological Office prior to embarking on the lecturing circuit. Whilst Bullen fulfilled his role as a ‘good platform man’ he was less successful at preserving his celebrity status off the stage. The Poverty Bay Herald hinted that box office receipts during Bullen’s New Zealand tour may have suffered due to his ‘capital company in the small hours’. Charles Edwin Major remembered meeting Bullen at the Grand Hotel in Auckland, and spending two evenings in ‘entertaining conversation’ with him. The Herald argued that given Bullen’s accessibility at the hotel bar people were more inclined to enjoy a ‘drink and a chat’ with him for a shilling rather than pay up to three shillings to hear him present a formal lecture without any ‘liquid refreshment’. A lecturer’s cachet as an illustrious guest was only maintained through exclusivity.

65 Martin Crotty, Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870–1920, Melbourne, 2001, p.82.
66 Otago Witness, 28 March 1906, p.61.
68 ibid.
69 Seventy Years of Life in New Zealand, Charles Edwin Major Papers, MS 188, AWMM, p.141.
70 Poverty Bay Herald, 17 November 1906, p.4.
Figure 15: Caricature of Frank Bullen with supplies of whale oil and sea biscuits amongst his books and lecture notes. *Otago Witness*, 4 July 1906, p.42.
Due to geographical proximity and the efforts of Carlyle Smythe, New Zealand was visited by Roald Amundsen in April 1912, only a few months after his successful trek to the South Pole. Although his arrival at the Pole before the British party led by Captain Scott was controversial, Amundsen was well-received in New Zealand. The *Auckland Star* was impressed by ‘that big blonde Norseman, whose quiet air of self-restraint serve[d] only to enhance the admiration which his distinguished exploits [had] already won for him’. When he appeared at the Auckland Town Hall the ‘simple narrative of his famous dash for the Pole’ was already well known to the audience, but what mattered to them was hearing it from his own lips. The charm of the story was in its ‘simplicity and directness’; the *Star* remembered with pleasure ‘the unobtrusive modesty of the man’. Other coverage created a consistent image of Amundsen. The *Otago Daily Times* reported that ‘the famous Norweigan, though fairly broad of shoulder and well set-up, convey[ed] to one a sense of almost well-to-do benevolence. He is a man of about middle age, and is blessed with pretty robust health.’ The *Hawera & Normanby Star* was impressed when Amundsen was asked how he would spend the day in Wellington and he simply replied ‘quietly’. 

![Roald Amundsen](image.png)

*Figure 16: Roald Amundsen, Herman John Schmidt 1872–1959, Portrait and Landscape Negatives, Auckland District, 1/1-0012-6-G, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.*

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72 *Otago Daily Times*, 23 April 1912, p.7.
73 *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 27 April 1912, p.3.
The understatedness admired by the press was present in Amundsen’s lecturing style, and was well-received by New Zealand audiences. The Poverty Bay Herald described the lecture at the Auckland Town Hall as a “plain unvarnished” story of a great endeavour carried to a glorious conclusion, told without a flourish, and with the homely directness of a fireside tale… the simple directness of Captain Amundsen’s narrative was a surprise to every hearer. Modesty is a characteristic of all truly great men, and Amundsen is nothing if not modest.74 The Press likened Amundsen to an army officer in appearance: ‘he is tall and straight, with not an ounce of superfluous flesh. His heavy drooping moustache, and an unusually prominent nose, are features which heighten the military illusion’. His voice maintained its pleasant tone throughout the lecture, even when he referred to being forced to eat dog meat.75 Smythe again capitalized on interest in Antarctic expeditions when he toured Sir Douglas Mawson, leader of the Australasian Expedition of 1911–1914, through New Zealand in October 1914.76

Figure 17: Sir Douglas Mawson, Antarctic Explorer, H13075, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

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74 Poverty Bay Herald, 27 April 1912, p.3.
75 Press, 27 April 1912, p.15.
76 Free Lance, 17 October 1914, p.10; New Zealand Observer, 17 October 1914, p.9.
Entertainment and edification went hand-in-hand on the Anglo-imperial lecture circuit. There seemed to be more room for humour and wit in turn-of-the-century Australasia than on the dour early-nineteenth-century small-town American lecture circuit described by Paul Fatout, in which ‘people generally expected a lecture to be grave and edifying’ and ‘felt swindled by a discourse that seemed frivolous or unspectacular’. New Zealand audiences were more aligned with the crowds found in larger American cities, who were ‘less provincial, more tolerant, more ready to laugh at flippancy and wit’. This was not always the case. ‘Pythias’ took a dig at the lack of sophistication evidenced in the audience for Mark Twain in Hawera in 1895. With his tongue lodged firmly in his cheek ‘Pythias’ estimated that Twain only pleased about 10 per cent of his audience as he never ‘had the grace’ to explain his jokes, so ‘how were his hearers to know that he was “trying to be funny”?’ This uncouth aversion to Clemens’s deadpan performance style was an exception during his lecture tour; he generally won his New Zealand audiences over when he appeared as Twain.

French author, journalist and lecturer Paul Blouet, better known by his nom de plume Max O’Rell, based his lecturing style on Twain. He had been well-received on his earlier 1893 tour. The Nelson Evening Mail reported that O’Rell had ‘quite captivated’ the Wellington people. Charles Edwin Major wrote after O’Rell’s appearance in Hawera that he was ‘a good lecturer, a strong, forceful man, good presence and voice, and a satiric humour’. The celebrities that Smythe had previously brought to Wellington — Richard Anthony Proctor, Archibald Forbes, George Augustus Sala, Lydia von Finkelstein, and Henry Morton Stanley had chosen to ‘instruct rather than entertain’ and O’Rell pursued ‘an opposite course. He utilized the stereotype of the feminine Frenchman to speak satirically as an expert on women; the lecture that had attracted throngs to the Wellington Opera House was ‘Her Royal Highness — Woman’.

77 Fatout, Mark Twain Speaking, p.xvi.
78 ibid.
79 Hawera & Normanby Star, 9 December 1895, p.2.
80 Nelson Evening Mail, 2 February 1893, p.2.
81 Seventy Years of Life in New Zealand, Charles Edwin Major Papers, MS 188, AWMML, p.168.
82 Nelson Evening Mail, 2 February 1893, p.2.
Being comfortable with conviviality did not mean that New Zealanders eschewed the serious. As well as the humourist, another type of lecturer that the ‘hard man’ school of historiography does not prepare us for was the preacher. The Reverend Charles Clark was ‘one of the most compelling and educational speakers on the professional circuit’ and held hundreds enthralled with his lectures on Thackeray and Dickens over a platform career spanning three decades, making him the most regular fixture on the lecture circuit. Clark had been part of the Albert Street Baptist Church in Melbourne before being attracted by the financial promise of the lecture circuit. His tours were always managed by Smythe. Clark first toured New Zealand in 1875. Alongside his literary lectures was a history of the Tower of London, littered with gore and intrigue. His reception in Blenheim was so hearty the cheers were reported to have literally shaken the building. The *Auckland Star* hoped that Clark’s lectures would have

…a beneficial influence upon the minds of the young people of Auckland, and lift their thoughts from much of the painted twaddle and degrading literature in yellow covers, which is lavishly circulated in Auckland families, into the life and light and noble sentiments embodied in the

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83 Simpson, ‘Caterers to the Public Entertainment’, p.11; *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, 1 June 1900, p.16.
84 *Wanganui Chronicle*, 17 April 1900, p.3.
85 *Auckland Star*, 23 April 1875, p.3.
86 *Evening Post*, 10 February 1875, p.2.
works of Dickens, Thackeray, and Kingsley, perhaps, the healthiest writers of the nineteenth century.\footnote{Auckland Star, 26 January 1875, p.2.} Clark’s lecture on ‘Christmas in Old England’ featured demonstrations of Christmas carols by none other than Smythe’s wife.\footnote{Auckland Star, 26 January 1875, p.2.} Over the next twenty-five years Clark gave regular lectures in New Zealand as well as Australia, South Africa, and Canada. His ‘silver jubilee’ tour in 1900 boasted 12 lectures in Christchurch and Auckland, and 17 in Wellington.

![Figure 19: Reverend Charles Clark caricatured as a ‘popular preacher’ in the Weekly Times, 22 November 1873, np, H96.160/2525, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.](image)

Religion, literature, and charity were often intertwined in Clark’s lectures. He would regularly preach sermons in aid of war and other causes, although some New Zealanders felt that Clark was prostituting his official title by continuing to title himself ‘Reverend’ after abandoning his position as a pastor for the more profitable and congenial lecturing circuit.\footnote{New Zealand Illustrated Magazine, 1 June 1900, p.16; Wanganui Herald, 18 May 1900, p.3; Wanganui Chronicle, 5 January 1878, p.2.}

As a keen publicist Smythe always had an eye to the promotional benefits of these
engagements, and in response to public demand for a charitable sermon in 1875 scheduled one for Clark in Auckland on his way to Australia.\textsuperscript{90} Smythe’s business sense was also demonstrated in Christchurch in 1900 when he received word just prior to one of Clark’s lectures that Warner’s Hotel, at which they were both staying, was on fire. Smythe advised Clark to continue with the lecture, as the night’s receipts would pay for Clark’s lost wardrobe twice over, and he was wearing the most important item from it — his platform suit — already. However after being told that the manuscript for Clark’s new lecture was at the hotel ‘the face of the usually imperturbable impresario underwent a sudden change’ and the audience was summarily dismissed as the two made haste to the hotel to ensure that Clark could open with ‘St. Paul’s: The Heart of the Empire’ in Wellington.\textsuperscript{91}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure20.png}
\caption{Reverend Charles Clark and R.S. Smythe during Clark’s silver jubilee tour, \textit{New Zealand Illustrated Magazine}, 1 June 1900, p.17.}
\end{figure}

It was not only Smythe who was interested in making money in the colonies; the lecturers themselves were also there for the financial incentives. Samuel Clemens described his 1895 tour of the Anglo-imperial world that would bring him through New Zealand as a ‘lecturing raid’ in which, accompanied by the Smythes, ‘we lectured and robbed and raided for 13 months. I wrote a book and published it. I sent the book money and lecture money to

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 10 April 1875, p.5.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Wanganui Chronicle}, 17 April 1900, p.3.
Mr Rogers as fast as we captured it’. They certainly were not on the circuit to support local commerce. Before his departure Clemens had stocked up with 3,000 manila cheroots and four pounds of Durham smoking tobacco. One of these cigars was eventually smoked at the home of Charles Edwin Major in Hawera, who remarked on Clemens’s habit of carrying a stock of cigars. Clemens was on the circuit on the advice of the industrialist Henry Huttleston Rogers, a hard-nosed capitalist nicknamed ‘Hell Hound Rogers’. Arthur L. Scott was hardly exaggerating when he claimed in 1969 that ‘his six weeks in New Zealand did not interest Mark Twain to any degree’. Clemens was extremely reluctant to return to the discomforts of the lecture circuit, and the decision to embark on this long trip was ‘a hellish struggle’ over ‘the horrible idea, the heart-torturing idea… I, with patience worn to rags, I was to pack my bags and be jolted around the devil’s universe for what? To pay debts that were not even of my making’. Scott’s view was reinforced in 2010 when Twain’s voluminous autobiography was published with a single note in the appendix the only mention of his time in New Zealand.

The lecturers on the circuit presented an image of desirable masculinity on the platform, but the humdrum realities of their slog around the world as part of their profession were far removed from the material they presented. Michael Davitt, who was lecturing in New Zealand at the same time as Clemens, echoed Clemens’s sentiments in his diary at the close of his New Zealand tour: ‘So farewell to this my second and as I most fervently pray my last lecture tour. May God grant I shall never again be compelled to resort to this hated work for the need of bread and butter. Amen!’ As Michael Kimmel has argued in relation to American manhood, the history of masculinities imbued in the story of these lecturers is at once ‘the story of spectacular technological and military triumphs and of the sobering dullness of everyday life’.

Whilst ex-clergyman Reverend Charles Clarke resonated with New Zealand audiences enough to sustain a lecturing career spanning multiple decades, the American preacher,
clergyman, divine, and ‘sensational pulpit orator’ Reverend Thomas De Witt Talmage was not so successful.\textsuperscript{[101]} His first critique in the \textit{Evening Post} was ‘written on the practical side of a ream of sandpaper, the article dealing out a series of left-handed compliments anything but flattering to the lecturer, manager, and audience’.\textsuperscript{[102]} Talmage was ‘a tall man, old, but lithe of figure, with a good-humoured, intellectual face, a large mouth, flexible lips, and eyes which at the distance appear deep sunken and twinkling behind bushy eyebrows, a forehead which extends back far beyond what was once the line of hair, but where now but a few scant locks are drawn over in the manner of men who, having little, treasure it much.’ There was nothing to take issue with in his appearance, but the \textit{Evening Post} reviewer complained of his ‘harsh and unmusical voice’ and ‘singular’ pronunciation. His gestures were criticized as ‘marked and angular’, and at times he appeared in ‘precisely the attitude of a swimmer commencing the side stroke… completed by a strange champing, prancing movement of the feet’.\textsuperscript{[103]} Butler has elaborated that gender must be ‘understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self’.\textsuperscript{[104]} Talmage fell short of the masculine ideal expected of platform lecturers in New Zealand.

Not only was Talmage’s voice offensive, his material was dated. The \textit{Evening Post} gibed that some of Talmage’s jokes had been ‘cracked by Columbus on the deck of the Santa Maria’.\textsuperscript{[105]} Again a New Zealand reviewer bemoaned the sophistication of the audience, claiming that they were so primed to hear a humorous lecture that their premature laughter and positive remarks often obscured the punch lines before they were delivered.\textsuperscript{[106]} The critique of using dated material was amplified in the press around the country. Though Smythes’ advance publicity trumpeted that ‘in his genial humour and vivid imagination, his wealth of imagery and great command of words, his undoubted earnestness, and his power of holding an audience from exordium to peroration, [Talmage] has no equal’, the residual impression he left behind was one of ‘using up rather poor and old jokes’.\textsuperscript{[107]} The \textit{Taranaki Herald} wrote that it was ‘well Dr Talmage made his reputation before he came here, for all who heard him were grievously disappointed with him as an orator’.\textsuperscript{[108]}

\textsuperscript{[101]} \textit{Otago Witness}, 13 December 1894, p.37. \\
\textsuperscript{[102]} \textit{Otago Witness}, 26 July 1894, p.37; \textit{Evening Post}, 17 July 1894, p.2. \\
\textsuperscript{[103]} \textit{Evening Post}, 17 July 1894, p.2. \\
\textsuperscript{[104]} Butler, \textit{Gender Trouble}, p.191. \\
\textsuperscript{[105]} \textit{Evening Post}, 17 July 1894, p.2. \\
\textsuperscript{[106]} ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{[107]} \textit{New Zealand Observer}, 23 June 1894, p.7; \textit{Nelson Evening Mail}, 13 August 1895, p.2. \\
commercial humorous lectures Talmage preached sermons for local congregations. Smythe continued to India with Talmage after his time in Australasia, and a correspondent in India questioned the wisdom of ‘a pulpit orator being starred as a theatrical attraction before Indian audiences. No class of men are thought less of than parsons; by the majority they are voted humbugs, as India has been a sort of batten ing ground for all kinds of religious humbugs since the days of the East India Company’. Audiences in India had no time for religious lectures from American speakers. New Zealand audiences were fine with religious material; it was Talmage’s personal style that led him to fail there.

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Whilst the geographical tour circuit was solidifying by the late nineteenth century, travelling entrepreneurs like Smythe were working out the ropes as they went along. In December 1880 the New Zealand Herald reported that European and American visitors to the Melbourne Exhibition were surprised at the ‘immense amount of time and money’ devoted by inhabitants of the colonies to ‘public amusement’; Smythe was eager to channel as much of these funds into his own coffers as he could. In towns where Smythe was wary of making a loss guarantees were often raised to induce Smythe and his lecturers to visit, as was the case in Hawera in 1883 during Forbes’s tour. These late-nineteenth century towns were happy to raise a guarantee — often voluntarily — to ensure they would not be passed by. Smythe would also tailor prices appropriately, such as when he ‘temper[ed] the wind to the shorn lamb’ with ‘popular prices’ for Forbes in financially-depressed Hamilton in 1883. The Australasian press were well aware of Smythe’s pecuniary intentions. During Clemens’s tour as Twain in 1895 an Australian reporter explained away the long pauses central to the Twain persona as opportunities for Clemens to listen to Smythe counting the takings in the back room.

As well as cultivating his ‘much-travelled’ persona in the colonial press, Smythe would utilize his wide network of press contacts to generate puff pieces for his visiting celebrities.

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110 New Zealand Herald, 13 December 1880, p.6.
111 Hawera & Normanby Star, 17 February 1883, p.2.
113 Waikato Times, 15 February 1883, p.2.
114 Fullerton, p.167. Samuel Clemens spoke in a slow drawl with many pauses when he appeared on stage as Mark Twain, and was given to pacing the stage, ‘seeking as much exercises as its limited dimensions would allow’. Evening Post, 10 December 1895, p.3.
Smythe eventually employed advance agents such as Hugo Fischer and Harry Muller in New Zealand to travel ahead of the lecturers and place advertisements, arrange tickets, and organize press and billboards.115 Smythe would organize discounted train tickets to bring in audiences from outlying areas, and special late trains would run after the lectures.116 The Reverend H.R. Haweis detailed how Smythe would ‘cook’ his ‘big fish’ for public use:

> For weeks before his approach stupendous statements appear in alluring newspaper paragraphs introducing the name of the approaching lion — Pears’ Soap and Mother Siegel’s Soothing Syrup are not in it with Smythe’s trumpet blasts. Then hoardings and handbills suddenly herald the coming man. In every town I entered, my name in letters two feet long, white on a pale blue ground, stared me in the face, at the railway stations, on the omnibuses, at the hotels. The descriptive handbills were wonderful. One might suppose the whole civilised world was nothing but one vast listening ear, waiting for the least whisper that might fall from my lips.117

As Caroline Daley has shown in her work on Eugen Sandow, Australasian theatrical managers at the turn of the century were creative, tireless, and shameless in their marketing efforts.118 Just as Haweis’s visage was liberally plastered throughout each town, so was Mark Twain’s. The Evening Post reported that Twain bore ‘a singularly strong likeness to his photographs — not always a trait of the stars’.119

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115 Taranaki Herald, 17 August 1895, p.2; Evening Post, 2 December 1895, p.2; Star, 12 August 1895, p.3; Rev. H.R. Haweis, Travel and Talk, Vol. 2, London, 1896, p.159; Hawera & Normanby Star, 8 December 1900, p.2.
117 Haweis, p.149.
119 Evening Post, 10 December 1895, p.3.
Figure 21: The Athenaeum Hall in Melbourne advertising a lecture by Reverend Haskett Smith in the late nineteenth century, H39357/240, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.
Smythe also liked to keep his costs down where possible. Obtaining theatrical discounts on steamships had long been endemic on the entertainment circuit, and on receiving notice at the British India Steamship Office in Bombay that concessions had been strictly limited to missionaries, Smythe obtained full clerical costume for his party and secured the discount. He was dismayed to find on disembarkment in Kurrachee that the actual missionaries on board were dressed ‘like any ordinary civilians, in white cotton suits and pith helmets’. Breathless pieces of publicity often appeared in the New Zealand press in advance of Smythe’s clients, and they were usually engineered by him. The promulgation of these often-exaggerated reports was aided by Smythe’s extensive contacts in the press, thanks to his time as a journalist. A common tactic was to claim that a certain tour was his most successful to date, such as in an 1894 Auckland Star piece that reported that Smythe regarded his tour with Frank Bullen as ‘his most successful managerial effort since he began running platform celebrities with Richard Anthony Proctor, the astronomer, twenty-six years ago’, even though he had been warned by acquaintances that ‘people will never leave their firesides… to hear a man talk about whales’.  

New Zealand audiences were attuned to hard-sell techniques in the late nineteenth century. In 1886 the North Otago Times dispatched with a long list of Smythe’s lecturers. Archibald Forbes was ‘exactly the commodity desired by Mr Smythe — what letters to spell Smith — a good marketable article, much talked and written of equal to any amount of puffery. And undoubtedly Archy… did very well, as did Mr Smythe, but it cannot be said that he left his memory embalmed amongst the people’s treasures’. Moncure Conway was also ‘put before the public as good goods’ by Smythe; ‘he even plastered the walls with M.C.’s phiz, and dabbed him the “greatest intellect in the Southern Hemisphere.” That was beyond endurance.’ Then came George Augustus Sala; ‘of all mortal men heralded to the colonies… about the most bepuffed. Not overwhelmed with humility, he was not above the market dodge of puffing himself.’ The astronomer R.A. Proctor was ‘A very good draw. The world-travelled manager could not complain of the gate money. But Mr Proctor has left no ineffaceable mark upon colonial annals.’ The war correspondents on Smythe’s roster were simply filling up their ‘pouches’ in return for ‘a hash up of eventful doings which have been written threadbare’. When discussing Smythe’s avoidance of Nelson on his tours with Talmage and Annie Besant, the Nelson Evening Mail wondered whether this was done

120 South Australian Register, 22 May 1899, p.6.
121 Auckland Star, 16 June 1894, p.5.
122 North Otago Times, 5 August 1886, p.3.
as a ‘compliment to the intelligence and good taste of the place’, as other newspapers had reported that Talmage was using ‘rather poor and old jokes’.123

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For a man renowned as a prolific letter-writer, frustratingly little remains in the way of the personal papers and ephemera of R.S. Smythe.124 He had ‘often been urged to publish his reminiscences of the days when the “show business” in Australia and New Zealand was something of an adventure’, but replied that ‘it is so easy not to write a volume of reminiscences; besides, it is almost a distinction’.125 James Francis Hogan spoke in 1896 of ‘catching’ Smythe at home in Melbourne, although he was ‘quite as likely to be met with in London, New York, Cape Town, Simla, or Hong Kong’.126 Hogan described the autographed portraits of the celebrities Smythe had piloted displayed prominently on the walls of the drawing room; they were still hanging when Smythe was visited by the West Australian 18 years later.127 An article on “Professionals” Abroad in The Cornhill Magazine of 1871, attributed to editor Frederick Green, appears to be based on Smythe’s experiences — if not entirely written by him — and captures the vibrancy, adventure, and hardships of the entertainment circuit in the mid nineteenth century. It also gives some sense of how geographically far-flung this itinerant circuit was, and the number of entertainers who were travelling on it at any given time:

One of their most striking characteristics is, that they do not confine themselves to the highways of the world, as one would think travellers with amusement would, but roam into all sorts of by-paths, as if they only travelled for amusement. They are by no means content with keeping to the seaboard, and stopping at the principal ports, but roam far away in the interior, where one would think they would find nothing more profitable than experience of the inconveniences of travel. I myself have met them picnicking on the top of Pedro-Talla-Gall; drawing sweepstakes in the Happy Valley at Hong Kong; dancing at the Queen’s Birthday ball in Adelaide, and with lunatics at the Yarra Bend Asylum near Melbourne; taming horses à la Rarey and taking restorative drams afterwards at Colombo; lecturing on electro-biology to New Zealand gold-diggers at Dunedin; amusing his Siamese Majesty with performing dogs and monkeys at Bangkok; playing violin variations on “Taza ba taza” in the John Lawrence Hall at Lahore, and Gounod’s “Meditation on Bach’s First Prelude” in the Masonic Hall at Kurrachee; taking a constitutional on the Bund at

123 Nelson Evening Mail, 13 August 1895, p.2.
124 Argus, 24 May 1917, p.6.
125 ibid.
127 ibid., p.5.
Shanghai; gathering ferns on Mount Wellington in Tasmania; celebrating the departure of a lucky speculator in Back Bay shares in Bombay; camping out in the Karroo at the Cape; trying their voices in the Taj Mahal at Agra; drinking whisky-punch by a large wood fire on the banks of the Indus by moonlight; smoking in Camoens’ garden, at Macao; bargaining with silk-workers in Peshawur, shawl-dealers in Loodiana, and ivory-painters in the Chundny Chowk at Delhi; enjoying the dolce far niente in the Sandwich Islands; dining with Spanish priests at Manilla, and with Swedenborgians at Graaf Reinet; eating mangosteens in Penang, and game-pies at Tien-tsin; feeding the sacred crocodiles at Muggar Poor in hot and sandy Scinde; chatting with the missionaries and their wives at Foo-chow-foo; boating in the delightful harbour of Port Jackson; curio hunting in Yokohama; contemplating Napoleon’s tomb at St. Helena; conjuring for the amusement of the enthusiastic merchants of Batavia; dancing what is called the silver-belt jig, with the thermometer at about 100 degrees Fahrenheit, at Singapore; trying to preserve their vivacity by drinking absinthe among the savages of New Caledonia. In short, wherever I have been east of the Cape of Good Hope, I have met some kind of professionals either sojourning, or en route, voyaging at sea in large ships or small, or travelling on land by railroad and dak gharree, on horseback, in sampans, dandy dhoolie, palankeen, and sedan-chair; in buggy, tent-cart, stage-coach, and omnibus; by bullock-train and mule-waggon, and even on the back of commissariat elephants.128

The lecture on ‘electro-biology’ to gold-diggers in Dunedin fits seamlessly into this account of the travels of itinerant entertainers. New Zealand was an established part of this circuit.

After his father’s retirement from the circuit Carlyle G. Smythe continued touring celebrities through New Zealand with speakers such as the explorer John Foster Fraser, who presented lectures including ‘Across Siberia and a Dash Through Manchuria’ in 1909, and Joseph McCabe, who lectured on science and rationality in three separate tours in 1910, 1913, and 1923.129 The younger Smythe was responsible for the spiritualism lectures of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1920.130 In his role as the ‘St Paul of Spiritualism’, Conan Doyle was arguably the most famous ‘missionary’ to visit New Zealand.131 The presence of the creator of Sherlock Holmes promoting spiritualism generated publicity on a scale previously unknown for members of this small religion, and stimulated vigorous newspaper debate.132

130 Ashburton Guardian, 16 November 1920; Dominion, 7 December 1920, p.5; Free Lance, 15 December 1920, p.7; New Zealand Truth, 10 July 1920, p.6; p.5.
132 ibid., p.107.
The experience of the horrors of the World War I resonated across the Anglo-imperial world, and Jay Winter and Jenny Hazelgrove have pointed out that interest in spiritualism and manifestations of life after death increased dramatically as a result of this prolonged conflict.\textsuperscript{133} New Zealanders in the 1920s eagerly embraced the widespread fascination with the supernatural, and stories about ghosts, fairies and hauntings were ubiquitous.\textsuperscript{134} Conan Doyle’s posthumous presence lingers in New Zealand in one of the odder records in the Alexander Turnbull Library: the psychic recordings of Violet May Cottrell.\textsuperscript{135}

It had taken twenty years to persuade Conan Doyle to visit New Zealand, and his subject material was vastly different to the ‘Novels and Novelists’ lectures he was presenting when initially approached by R.S. Smythe. His financial model was also much altered, with his proceeds from the tour donated to various Spiritualistic organizations.\textsuperscript{136} Spiritualism was still topical in 1923 when McCabe presented his lecture ‘The Imposture of Spiritualism’ at the Auckland Town Hall.\textsuperscript{137}

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\textsuperscript{134} Harper, pp.126–28.
\textsuperscript{135} Psychic Recordings - Conan Doyle, Violet May Cottrell Papers, MS-Papers-0168-10–13, ATL.
\textsuperscript{136} \textit{Free Lance}, 15 December 1920, p.7.
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Auckland Star}, 27 June 1923, p.8.
\end{flushright}
It is telling that Lydia von Finkelstein, one of the few female lecturers piloted around
the circuit by Smythe, presented her talks on the ‘Holy Land’ in ‘Oriental costume’ and
dressed the stage to ‘represent a landscape or a domestic interior, according to the subject for
the evening’. Similarly attired assistants would aid her in presenting biblical scenes. Newspaper coverage of her lectures focussed on her appearance, as it had with the male
lecturers: ‘as a public speaker, the personal appearance of Miss von Finkelstein is a great
point in her favour. She is exceptionally tall, her height being nearly 5ft 9in, and remarkably
well built. Her fine head is covered with golden hair, while she has a beautiful voice, an
agreeable manner, and a pleasing vein of humour’. Here was the commanding presence of
the white woman. But even though she could speak ‘as many languages as Mezzofanti’, von
Finkelstein could not simply take the stand with just a glass of water. Instead the stage was
‘littered with tents, furniture, pictures, arms, and sundry household accessories’. Von
Finkelstein was a popular lecturer, and Smythe advised Max O’Rell and the Reverend H.R.
Haweis to avoid the colonial lecture circuit in 1888 as ‘no one would be wise to compete on
the lecture platform with Miss Lydia von Finkelstein, whose lectures on “Social and
Religious Life in Palestine”… fill the largest churches and halls to overflowing both in
London and the provinces’.

One female lecturer chose to appear on stage without props. In 1894 Annie Besant
was brought to New Zealand by Carlyle Smythe, and the advance publicity again focussed on
her appearance, quoting from the *Argus* that ‘there was a suggestion of the priestess about
Mrs Besant as she came on, clothed in white samite — mystic, wonderful’. Her ‘cadence’
was ‘pleasant’ and her fluency ‘surprising’. Both Besant and von Finkelstein had a
moralistic and religious bent, and even though she was tall and beautiful, von Finkelstein still
needed to buttress her performances with stage-dressing and assistants. In eschewing stage-
dressing Besant was transgressing a gender norm, and ‘P. Rompter’ expressed surprise that a
woman could ‘rivet the attention of all classes of men’ whilst ‘leaning upon an ordinary
table’. ‘P. Rompter’ also took issue with the female audience members who were more

138 *Star*, 10 February 1888, p.3; 27 October 1888, p.3.
139 *Star*, 27 October 1888, p.3.
140 ibid.
141 *New Zealand Herald*, 15 September 1888, p.4.
142 *Star*, 27 October 1888, p.3.
143 *Star*, 10 February 1888, p.3.
144 *New Zealand Observer*, 6 October 1894, p.15.
interested in gossiping than the content of Besant’s lecture. 145 Male lecturers routinely riveted the attention of New Zealanders from un-adorned stages. Yet when an occasional female lecturer chose this simplicity, it was cause for pointed comment.

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Alongside their commercial engagements, itinerant lecturers were often called upon as after-dinner speakers, both paid and unpaid. This usually occurred in the masculine domain of a gentleman’s club. Club dinners could be full-evening affairs in honour of the eminent guest, or take place at a reception after a public speaking engagement. Either way, the festivities would usually run well after midnight; a full schedule of receptions for an itinerant lecturer required a fair amount of stamina. 146 The venue of choice was usually a gentleman’s club, an institution that took hold in London in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and followed the spread of the British Empire. 147 When he toured New Zealand in 1906, Frank Bullen was a guest of the Wellington Savage Club, and after a hearty welcome regaled the men in attendance with his rags-to-riches life story. This tale included an anecdote that took place at a London club not long before he departed for New Zealand, underscoring the wide proliferation of the culture of these clubs. 148 Smythe would also occasionally drop in to the Savage Club when he was in London. 149

Lecturers such as Samuel Clemens especially enjoyed these exclusively masculine functions. 150 Clemens was a regular feature of the American lecture circuit from 1866. Part of his role as a celebrity speaker was banqueting — what he called an ‘insane recreation, almost as tiring as ditchdigging’. 151 From his early beginnings as a public speaker almost until his death, Clemens was a ‘resolute diner-out’. 152 After his lecture in Taranaki he was hosted by the Taranaki Club. 153 When he passed through Christchurch in November 1895, the local Savage Club held a late supper at the Canterbury Provincial Council Chamber in his honour, and the surviving records of this evening allow access to the culture of hosting on the lecturing circuit. The menu for the evening mixed Twainisms and snobbery with its offerings

145 Otago Witness, 8 November 1894, p.37.
146 Fatout, Mark Twain Speaking, p.xix.
148 Seventy Years of Life in New Zealand, Charles Edwin Major Papers, MS 188, AWMML, pp.141–3.
149 Auckland Star, 2 August 1899, p.8.
150 Shillingsburg, At Home Abroad: Mark Twain in Australasia, Jackson and London, 1988, p.144.
151 Fatout, Mark Twain Speaking, pp.xix-xx.
152 ibid.
153 Taranaki Herald, 7 December 1895, p.2.

The Savage Club welcomed him with their appropriated war whoop ‘Ake, ake, ake, kia kaha!’ and elected him the first honorary member in the club’s history.

Clemens spoke as the guest of honour that evening and a transcript of this speech survives as a clipping in the Mark Twain Papers. He referred to the difficulties presented as the featured speaker, ‘for there is only one speech made before he must get on his feet, and that does not generally afford him a very fruitful text to talk upon, for it consists of compliments to him, and if you listened point blank to compliments fired at you at short range, and have had to talk on a text like that, you must know how weak your position is’. Twain went on to reference his itinerant comrades who had recently been through Christchurch:

We have had a good time these last few days, and I have felt what a good time Christchurch must have been having too. You have never had such opportunities for enlightenment before. You have had the circus. That was spectacular. You have had Mr. Haskett Smith — imagination — and you have had my beloved friend and shipmate, Michael Davitt — philosophy; and you have had me — cold fact. We are all fading away one by one. Haskett Smith has gone. Michael Davitt has gone. I leave tomorrow, and you have nothing left but the circus. Be grateful for the opportunities you have — hang on to that circus.

The Reverend Haskett Smith was also a client of Smythe. The simultaneous presence of Haskett Smith and Clemens in New Zealand was made possible by Carlyle Smythe taking on Clemens while Smythe senior was with Haskett Smith. The Otago Daily Times stated that ‘of all the eminent lecturers who have yet visited the colonies, none have appeared with greater success throughout than Mr R.S. Smythe’s latest celebrity, the Rev. Haskett Smith’. Michael Davitt was in the country to lecture on Irish nationalism and had arrived on the Mararoa with Twain. They came into reasonably direct competition for ticket sales when they were booked to appear on consecutive nights in Oamaru.

That Christchurch was graced by a famed American humourist, an English ‘Oriental traveller and scholar’ presenting Middle Eastern travelogues illustrated with limelight slides,
and an Irish nationalist, all in November 1895, is indicative of the variety of lecturers on the circuit. As part of the introduction of Haskett Smith at St Stephen’s School it was mentioned that ‘New Zealand had been visited by a good many lecturers’, amongst whom there had been ‘war correspondents who had pictured the thrilling scenes of battle, and there had been a brilliant astronomer who had drawn so vivid word pictures of the planets that the hearer almost fancied the speaker had dwelt for a time on Mars and Jupiter’. This ‘brilliant astronomer’ could have been R.A. Proctor, who from October to December 1880 stimulated New Zealand audiences with ‘knowledge of the wonders of the vast expanse of space about us’ as part of an Australasian tour. Proctor had already made three successful lecture tours through America before extending his itinerary to Australasia. One of the war correspondents was most likely Archibald Forbes, who Smythe referred to as ‘The Prince of War Correspondents’ (Forbes affectionately reciprocated by dubbing Smythe ‘the Moltke of Managers’).

And perhaps one was Frederic Villiers, who in August 1895 was ‘drawing overcrowded and enthusiastic houses in Dunedin and Christchurch’ with his limelight views and tales of the Sino-Japanese War.

* * *

But was the presence of this bevy of platform speakers in turn-of-the-century New Zealand a benign one? The entertainment circuit was one of many transnational threads that connected New Zealand to what Tony Ballantyne has conceptualized as the webs of empire. This was a wider idea of imperialism than simply that of the British Empire. Many of these platform speakers had a clear idea of themselves as imperial insiders, surveying the rightful territory of the English-speaking world. This concept of ownership was reflected in both what they said in the colonies, and what was published on their return to their various metropoles. When Clemens was treated to a club supper in Melbourne he asserted the unity of the English-speaking peoples. This touched upon the discourse of ‘civilization’, a central set of ideas that turn-of-the-century Americans frequently used to tie

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160 Ashburton Guardian, 7 December 1895, p.2; Nelson Evening Mail, 1 October 1896, p.2.
161 Ashburton Guardian, 7 December 1895, p.2.
162 Marlborough Express, 26 November 1880, p.2.
163 Evening Post, 2 April 1900, p.5.
164 Taranaki Herald, 17 August 1895, p.2.
166 Cooper, p.101.
male power to racial dominance.  

This transnational racial identification was equally important alongside the imagined community of the nation in the late nineteenth century.

In the publication that followed his lecture tour, Mark Twain engaged in amateur ethnology, writing that he was

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\text{…assured by a member of the House of Representatives [in New Zealand] that the native race is not decreasing, but actually increasing slightly. It is another evidence that they are a superior breed of savages. I do not call to mind any savage race that built such good houses, or such strong and ingenious scientific fortresses, or gave so much attention to agriculture, or had military arts and devices which so nearly approached the white man’s. These, taken together with their high abilities in boatbuilding, and their tastes and capacities in the ornamental arts, modify their savagery to a semi-civilization — or at least to a quarter-civilization.}
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Even the perennial trope of New Zealand having ‘better’ race relations than Australia made an appearance. This tone of writing continued throughout his account of his time in New Zealand and was a common thread in the published accounts of platform speakers. The Reverend H.R. Haweis referred to Māori as ‘a grand race, with grand capacities’, but informed his readers that ‘nothing can save them; they are dying out’. In his text colonization was a spectacle waiting for viewers: ‘the country is mapped, organised, and labelled British; but anyone who wants to see the transition period — to me always so exciting — had better make haste. The dissolving view of the Māori out and the white man in can only once be shown. It is now going on, and, like other dissolving views, it is no sooner begun than it is ended’. As David Omissi has convincingly argued, this colonial knowledge was ‘saturated with the desire to dominate’.

Anglo-Saxonist imperialist discourse at the turn of the century insisted that ‘white men had a genius for self-government which necessitated the conquest of more “primitive,” darker races’. The texts of commentators in New Zealand such as the itinerant lecturers, and the political commentators of the previous chapter, were one of the ways in which

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167 Bederman, p.5.
170 ibid.
171 Haweis, p.124.
172 ibid., p.128.
174 Bederman, p.22.
representations of the imperial world and its peoples circulated in the metropole and disseminated racial thinking, infusing the everyday lives of those in Britain and America with a normalized imperial presence. Imperialism was a habit of mind. The discourse of ‘civilization’ was used in multiple ways to legitimize different sorts of claims to power, one of which was to establish white male hegemony. Thirty thousand copies of Following the Equator were sold immediately upon its release, and the proceeds of Clemens’s speaking tour and publication more than covered his debts. The publication of Mark Twain’s travelogue would have contributed greatly to the received knowledge of New Zealand and other colonies for those in America and Europe. This knowledge was patchy in late-nineteenth-century America, if one is to judge by his apocryphal story of the ‘Great Blank Day’ at Yale when the entire university ground to a halt in order to supplement their existing knowledge on New Zealand — the sum total of which was ‘that it was close to Australia, or Asia, or somewhere, and that one went over to it on a bridge’ — prior to entertaining a visiting ‘Professor of Theological Engineering’ from ‘Wellington University’.

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Rather than seeking New Zealand out for its natural beauty, progressive social conditions, and harmonious race relations these illustrious visitors were drawn here as part of a transnational circuit that siphoned money from colonial audiences. New Zealand was just another point on this circuit. The lecturers covered vast distances with grinding schedules, and the conditions in which they travelled were often less than desirable. They have nonetheless been lumped into our understanding of the past as if they were leisured travellers. Their published accounts of New Zealand often favoured stereotypical descriptions of thermal lakes, geysers and glaciers, even if — as in the case of Mark Twain — they never actually visited these areas. The Press missed the mark when it wrote that the celebrities visiting New Zealand in the late nineteenth century had made the colonies ‘their happy

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176 Omissi, p.236.
177 Bederman, p.23.
179 Twain, *Following the Equator*, pp.259–63.
180 ibid., pp.324–25.
hunting ground for a season of rest, recreation, and what our American cousins call recuperation’. 181 They were there to work.

Yet the interpretation of New Zealand as a playground for the rich and famous began to stick, and in the interwar period visitors such as Zane Grey would visit New Zealand to indulge in opulent recreation. The Anglo-imperial entertainment circuit forged gendered and racialized cultural connections throughout the white men’s countries, and the presence of these celebrities in the colonies normalized the larger European colonial presence. This occurred in multiple ways: in the material they presented in their lectures, their representations in the press, their interactions with New Zealanders, their privileged access to the country, and the material that was published after their tours. These lecturers were all brought to New Zealand by the Smythes, and these managers and their clients demonstrate the privilege required to live in a borderless fashion, in a world forcefully opened up for white men through imperialism. Alongside entertaining New Zealand audiences for many decades, accompanied by innumerable choruses of ‘For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow’, the itinerant lecturers naturalized the white man’s presence in New Zealand, paving the way for the moneyed and leisured fishermen who will be discussed in the next chapter. 182

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182 Press, 29 January 1892, p.6.
Chapter Three

‘Opulent Fishermen’: Zane Grey and the Interwar ‘Fisherman’s Eldorado’

At 10am on Sunday 17 January 1926 American novelist Zane Grey sighted New Zealand for the first time. Upon alighting on New Zealand soil Grey made haste from Wellington to Russell, where his lack of sombrero, chaps, spurs, and guns was the cause of much disappointment amongst the local children. This was not the sort of showdown at high noon locals expected of the best-selling author of western novels. Grey had a different battle in mind. His adversaries: the large game fish teeming in the waters of the Bay of Islands. This stubborn, egocentric, temperamental, larger-than-life American was soon to be inextricably linked to big game fishing in New Zealand. By the end of his first trip Grey was already making plans to return, and would fish New Zealand waters four times in total: in 1926, 1927, 1928–1929, and 1932–1933. He detailed his first visit in Tales of the Angler’s Eldorado: New Zealand, released almost immediately upon his return to the United States. Although Grey was popular in New Zealand to the degree that he encountered a boat named after one of his novels, he never gave public readings of his work or catered to his fans in any way. Unlike the lecturers of Chapter Two, Grey was not in the country to entertain New Zealanders, he was there to make demands of New Zealand and its population for his own gratification.

Grey endorsed New Zealand as a prime venue for well-to-do men to assert their masculinity by battling large game fish, and this advocacy placed the country squarely on the itinerary of the ‘opulent fishermen’ who were circulating the globe in the interwar period. By 1931 Otehei Bay, the site of Grey’s camp on Urupukapuka Island in the Bay of Islands, was the home of big game fishing in New Zealand. These were very different sporting men

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2 Well, as much haste as was possible; the trip from Wellington to Auckland in 1926 was fifteen hours overland. ibid., p.25.
3 In a 1993 article, the Independent referred to Grey’s visit as ‘the start of big-game fishing in New Zealand, now one of the leading spots in the world’. Keith Elliot, ‘Fishing Lines: Reeling in the Grey Legend’ www.independent.co.uk/sport/fishing-lines-reeling-in-the-grey-legend-1486987.html (accessed 12 December 2013).
4 Tales of the Angler’s Eldorado had sold up to 14,000 copies in Australasia alone within a year of publication. New Zealand Truth, 26 May 1927, p.1.
5 Zane Grey, Tales of the Angler’s Eldorado, p.48.
7 New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 February 1931, p.41.
to those who we are used to seeing on the pages of New Zealand history books. The limits of this masculine culture were also demonstrated by the widespread, often co-operative, involvement of women in sport fishing that is discussed later in this chapter. During the prime game fishing months of December until early May international sportsmen abounded in New Zealand’s northern waters. Grey was a rare example of public notoriety amongst the cast of comedians, authors, stockbrokers, leisured gentry, cricketers, officers, businessmen, magnates, and royalty who more discreetly sought the thrills of sportfishing in interwar New Zealand. These were halcyon days for a sport whose trajectory across the twentieth century saw increasing numbers of anglers pursuing a decreasing population of fish.

Although sport fishing was booming in interwar New Zealand, its cost and exclusivity kept it out of reach of many New Zealanders. This class exclusivity, combined with the conspicuous consumption, demands of servitude, and showboating of affluent fishermen created opposition to the presence of many of these illustrious visitors. The political commentators of Chapter One enjoyed independent means and association with an exclusive community, but came to New Zealand with the explicitly articulated intention of learning from its people and institutions. Those that came to fish had no such intentions. It is at this point in time that class became a bone of contention in the narrative of the illustrious visitors, and the limits of their acceptance by New Zealanders are shown.

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Little has been written about the wealthy and privileged travellers who fished in New Zealand waters in the interwar period, and the New Zealanders who participated in sport fishing alongside them. The scant existing historical literature on fishing in New Zealand focusses on commercial fishing and occasionally trout fishing, with sport fishing only making an appearance in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century memoirs of people like adventure tourism professional Graeme Sinclair, ‘dedicated billfisherman’ John Angus, and fishing writer Anthony Swainson. This is partly because many of the interwar visitors wished to take their sport discretely; Zane Grey was an aberration with his incessant self-publicity. Many of the fishing lodges and destinations founded and nurtured in the interwar

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8 New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 October 1928, p.49.
period continue to discreetly entertain wealthy travellers unbeknownst to the general population.

Mostly though, sport fishing has been absent in the country’s historiography because the prohibitive nature of the time and equipment needed to engage in this pastime, its class connotations, and the exclusivity nurtured by moneyed fishermen meant that it is at odds with other fishing and sporting cultures in New Zealand. Grey was well aware that ‘there has never been much sympathy between those who fish for a livelihood and those who fish for pleasure’.\textsuperscript{11} In its extravagance, and the wastefulness of displaying rather than utilizing fish that were caught, the culture of sport fishing ran counter to the culture of those who fished for food, and those who fished for a living. Although David Johnson dedicated his impressive history of the New Zealand fishing industry to ‘all those who follow the passion of fishing’, he made no mention of trout or game fishing.\textsuperscript{12} The commercial fishing industry gelled better with ideas of masculinity related to providing, rather than the unproductive consumerism of sport fishing. The opulent fisherman was just one of multiple masculinities tied up with sport and fishing in the interwar period. Those who fished for a living and those who fished as a hobby — rather than as a ‘sport’ — did not share gendered ideals.

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\textsuperscript{11} Auckland Star, 14 March 1936, p.11.
\textsuperscript{12} Johnson, Hooked, p.9.
Figure 23: ‘Mr Zane Grey on board RMS Makura’, 1926, Crown Studios Collection, 1/1-032076-F, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.
The visit of Zane Grey to New Zealand was seen as a major coup for the country’s Tourist Department. Grey’s fame was at its height in 1925, and the successes of his two novels that year — *The Thundering Herd* and *The Vanishing American* — provided him with the finances necessary to plan his most ambitious fishing trip to date. Grey’s fame extended to New Zealand, and he found copies of his novels throughout his travels, often tattered from use. Grey had befriended expatriate surveying, tin, and rubber magnate Charles Alma Baker at the Tuna Club of Avalon in 1920. Baker returned to New Zealand in 1923, and his enthusiasm in the press for the fishing opportunities in the Bay of Islands led the Department to solicit his advice on promoting the country as a tourist destination. Baker’s discussion of the minimal advertising needed to attract the millionaires of California to fish in New Zealand was enticing. Baker suggested Grey as an ideal publicist, and on his return to Catalina in 1924 wooed him to New Zealand with photographs of his latest catches and an official invitation from the government.

Before their visit both Grey and his fishing companion, Englishman Captain Laurie Mitchell, had been in contact with the Tourist Department, which had provided them with literature and information on fishing in New Zealand. Grey was enthusiastic about both big game fishing — a sport which was exploding in popularity at the Tuna Club of Avalon in California — and the more sedate pleasures of trout fishing, a sport literally imported to New Zealand from the United Kingdom and the United States. He was also representative of a wider trend: the *Auckland Star* reported in April 1925 that there were already ‘indications of a big influx of overseas fishermen… next year’. Over a decade earlier the British *Bookman* had commented that people were ‘forming the habit of “running down” [to New Zealand] for a little fishing or mountaineering’. For those who liked ‘a spice of adventure in their holiday programme, North Auckland offer[ed] unrivalled opportunities of deep-sea fishing

14 ibid., p.193.
15 *New Zealand Herald*, 20 April 1923, p.5.
17 Letter from B.M. Wilson to Tano Fama, 8 September 1926, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (ATL).
18 Peter Gibbons argued convincingly that trout and salmon, amongst other flora and fauna, were introduced to New Zealand as migrants sought to transform a disturbingly alien world into a simulacrum of the old world they had come from. Peter Gibbons, ‘Cultural Colonization and National Identity’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 36, 1, 2002, p.8.
19 *Auckland Star*, 23 April 1925, p.5.
combined with the delight of exploring a new land, opulent in the variety of its scenic loveliness and natural grandeur’.21

There is a large body of literature surrounding Zane Grey. As a prolific and popular writer of Westerns — a genre central to American literature — there is a thriving discussion of his written work.22 Grey was also an outspoken personality with conservative views — especially regarding gender — that were often contradicted by his colourful private life, and this has attracted the attentions of a continuing stream of biographers.23 Thomas H. Pauly captured this sentiment most succinctly in the title of his 2005 biography: *Zane Grey: His Life, His Adventures, His Women*. Grey’s unpublished fishing writing has been slowly released since his death, and his extensive personal collection of photographs has been collated and published.24 His unorthodox relationship with his wife has been documented through the publication of their private correspondence.25

Like the political commentators of Chapter One and the lecturers of Chapter Two, Grey was exceptionally quotable. His name has the tendency to appear in places like the front flap of Philip Holden’s collection of writing on the ‘golden years’ of fishing in New Zealand, and one of his quotes leads the first chapter of Tony Orman’s 1979 publication *The Sport in Fishing*.26 Margaret McClure has discussed his time in New Zealand in the context of the development of New Zealand’s tourism industry.27 Here, though, he is placed in the gendered context of the group of wealthy international fishermen who visited New Zealand in the interwar years. These fishermen followed a transnational circuit that allowed them to exploit fishing opportunities throughout the entire year. Many New Zealanders were less than impressed by the traits of participants in the culture of the opulent fishermen, and the power imbalance between millionaires and ‘ordinary’ New Zealanders engendered some negative reactions. Through his outspoken celebrity presence in the interwar press, Zane Grey dominated the public image of this group, and drew much of the criticism.

21 *Northern Advocate*, 15 January 1925, p.4.
As in Australia, sport fishing attracted little, if any, publicity before colourful personalities like Grey ‘discovered’ the pursuit locally. New Zealand interest in big game fishing had first been piqued by sporadic reports of the activities of the Tuna Club of Avalon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The *Evening Post* reported in 1902 that fights with ‘big conger or bass’ in British waters ‘seem sufficiently exciting, but they pale into insignificance compared with the sport obtained in Californian waters’. The *Evening Post* would ‘from time to time’ mention the ‘amazing weights of fish caught fairly on rod and line’ by members of the Tuna Club, and ‘visitors to that remarkable spot’. Occasional long reports of battles with big fish in California and Florida were appearing in local newspapers by 1915 emphasising the ‘rush’ of striking a large fish and the spectacle of it flinging its ‘whole splendid length out of the blue water into the blazing sunshine’. By 1918 the Tourist Department had published a booklet by Charles E. Wheeler focussing on deep-sea fishing in New Zealand. Ten thousand copies of this publication were sent to the United States, Canada, and Britain in 1920 in an effort to garner publicity. In 1923 the Tourist Department sought to lure men to the Bay of Islands with the clumsily archaised Kipling-like ‘Māori proverb’: ‘When thou hast caught a swordfish singlehanded, thou wilt be a man, my Son.’

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28 Dunn, *Angling in Australia*, p.130.
30 *Oamaru Mail*, 12 June 1915, p.3.
31 *Akaroa Mail and Banks Peninsula Advertiser*, 8 February 1918, p.2.
Although contemporary commentators opined otherwise, interwar sport fishing in New Zealand was not an egalitarian national pursuit in which everybody could participate.\textsuperscript{34} This sport was consumeristic, and often extravagantly wasteful, with catches dumped back at sea after being ritualistically weighed, displayed, and reported in the press.\textsuperscript{35} By the 1920s and 1930s wealthy, adventurous, international tourists hauled in marlin, swordfish, and mako sharks in unprecedented quantity and size in the waters of the Bay of Islands and Coromandel. 375 swordfish and sharks were caught in the bumper 1925–1926 season at Cape Brett and Whangaroa, weighing in at 95,332 lbs in total.\textsuperscript{36} Members of the Bay of Islands Swordfish and Mako Shark Club alone had reeled in 157 game fish by 12 March of the 1927–1928 season.\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{Auckland Star} estimated that the collective weight of this haul dumped at sea was 22,200 lb.\textsuperscript{38} Even the Tourist Department had the head of the 957 lb black marlin caught by Mr H. Court in the mid-1930s displayed in its Queen Street office in 1939.\textsuperscript{39} For the ‘neophytes’ for whom the ‘big monsters’ were not biting, there was always the kingfish to

\textsuperscript{34} See for example: \textit{Evening Post}, 7 September 1928, p.10; \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine}, 1 September 1928, p.52; 1 November 1928, p.43; 1 September 1929, p.39.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Auckland Star}, 14 June 1928, p.8.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Auckland Star}, 18 December 1926, p.11.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Auckland Star}, 16 March 1928, p.5.
\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Auckland Star}, 14 June 1928, p.8.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Auckland Star}, 4 February 1939, p.10.
‘fall back on’, a sort of training fish appropriate to gain experience before taking on the ‘sporting’ species.40


40 New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 November 1928, p.43.
‘Sporting’ fish were those that would put on dramatic displays of leaping and fighting when caught on a hook. ‘[T]he world’s sportsmen’ were drawn to New Zealand waters to do battle with these species.\(^{41}\) They did not come for the blue shark, ground shark, raraemai shark, or grey nurse shark. These were not sporting fish, and the New Zealand deep sea angling clubs did not give certificates for their capture.\(^{42}\) The mako shark needed occasional justification as the ‘aristocrat’ of this otherwise shunned species.\(^{43}\) Despite its public defence as a ‘sporting’ fish, fishermen visiting New Zealand such as Major Bernard Hamilton, soldier, writer, and sportsman of England, continued to thumb their noses at the mako shark.\(^{44}\) New Zealander Ernest Wiffin described a ‘sporting’ experience as part of the Grey party:

Having located a fin we go full-speed ahead for about a mile keeping an eye on the fin all the while. When well ahead we alter our course so that we can be right ahead of our fish, slowing down so that the fish will come up to us. We have already determined him to be a Marlin and he has seen the two Tarperinos [lures], and has quickened his speed and become curious in regard to them. We put on a little speed which also moves the Marlin to greater action. He has decided that his jumping thing is something to eat and comes with a rush, and hits it with his bill. The Marlin is not really a swordfish, but a billfish and uses the so-called sword as a stick. Having hit the teaser and proceeding to mouth it, much to his astonishment he finds it still alive and jumping. Whereat he strikes again, and yet again. By this time he has become a little mad and becomes interested in the teaser on the other quarter, and has a go at that one, with the same result. By this time he is really mad and is thrashing from one to the other in a perfect frenzy.\(^{45}\)

The vicissitudes of ‘sporting’ status are illustrated in the 1918 founding of the Bay of Islands Kingfish Club, which was disbanded in 1924 and replaced by the Bay of Islands Swordfish and Mako Shark Club, which in turn became the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club in 1953.\(^{46}\) In line with their ‘sporting’ status, swordfish were known to keep the gentlemanly hours of 10am until 4pm, before or after which E.P. Andreas argued it was a waste of time to cast a line.\(^{47}\)

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\(^{41}\) Alsop et al., *Selling the Dream*, pp.258-259.

\(^{42}\) *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 1 February 1928, p.43.

\(^{43}\) *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1932, p.9; *Evening Post*, 20 February 1933, p.8; *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, 1 November 1928, p.43.

\(^{44}\) *Auckland Star*, 4 January 1927, p.5.

\(^{45}\) ‘Mercury Island Fishing Trip’, Reminiscences, Ernest James Cason Wiffin Papers, MS-Papers-7070-2, ATL, p.3.


\(^{47}\) *Auckland Star*, 16 March 1925, p.10.
In sport fishing there were dramatic displays by both the fish and the fisherman. Mirroring his western novels, Grey’s stirring fishing tales were always cast as an heroic individual battle, although he usually travelled in a 190 foot schooner with ten ‘sportsmen’, five launches, fifteen launchmen, five shore staff, one cook, and two photographers.48 As much as he may have considered himself to be one, the opulent fisherman was no man alone. New Zealand fishermen were aware of the importance of good support crew. Knowledge, such as the best times and tides for engaging in the hunt, was provided by experienced launchmen.49 Wiffin argued that ‘as far as deep sea anything’ was concerned, the crew was the most important item of the organisation, with the angler’s abilities amounting to nothing unless his boatmen were of the ‘same comparative value as he himself’. Wiffin had seen ‘good trophies’ lost through the incompetence of a boatman. In New Zealand Grey engaged Peter Williams, who he described as the best boatman in the world, and the two Arlidge

48 Evening Post, 24 December 1926, p.9; Telegram from Wilson to Northcroft, 18 August 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, Archives New Zealand, Wellington (ANZ).
49 New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 November 1928, p.43.
brothers, as well as an assistant for both of the brothers.\textsuperscript{50} As important as these crew members were, for Wiffin none superseded the cook and her scullery man, Mrs Moran and her son Ben, of Russell.\textsuperscript{51} For his 1928–1929 visit Grey’s schooner, the \textit{Fisherman}, contained a number of wooden houses in sections, to be erected as part of his camp.\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fisherman_schooner.png}
\caption{Zane Grey’s 190 foot schooner the \textit{Fisherman}. Loren Grey, \textit{Zane Grey: A Photographic Odyssey}, Dallas, 1985, pp.128-129.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{51} ‘Mercury Island Fishing Trip’, Reminiscences, Ernest James Cason Wiffin Papers, MS-Papers-7070-2, ATL, p.2.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Evening Post}, 5 June 1928, p.11.
Figure 28: Zane Grey onshore in Otehei Bay, wondering where to begin unpacking. Loren Grey, Zane Grey: A Photographic Odyssey, Dallas, 1985, pp.132–3.

Figure 29: A dramatic leaping shot of the 976 lb Black Marlin caught by Captain Mitchell in 1926. Loren Grey, Zane Grey: A Photographic Odyssey, Dallas, 1985, p.138.
Alongside meticulous recordings of the weight of his catches, Grey also obsessively catalogued the extensive tackle that was central to his fishing expeditions. For Grey, the ‘question of tackle is the most important in any angler’s equipment’, although this was ‘entirely aside from the unqualified joy there is in collecting tackle’. The unabashed consumerism and brand awareness of gear acquisition was central to the masculinity of the opulent fisherman in the interwar period, and Grey was candid in expressing the pleasure he gained from it. In the posthumously published *Tales from a Fisherman’s Log* he detailed some of the equipment being prepared around the world for his second trip to New Zealand:

Coxe was making three more of the Z.G. reels, and a still larger one for my own use and experiment. Hardy, of England, was building me an Alma reel to hold 1000 yards of 39-line. MacRae was gathering together all the Murphy rods available, which turned out to be only fifty-four. The last rods Murphy made me before he died were four of the extra heavy weight. Baylis, of Connecticut, was at work on black palm rods; as was Shaver of Los Angeles on the famous Dualwood rods. The South Bend Bait Company, manufacturers of the well-known Tarporenos, were experimenting with teasers of our own design. Pflueger built more of the wonderful swordfish hooks, and Crandall, maker of the Swastika Brand linen lines, was busy on a big order of 39 and 36-lines for us, with a vast assortment of lighter lines from number 6 to 24.

Even the extensive table of equipment (Figure 30) provided in *Tales from a Fisherman’s Log* was not exhaustive. Alongside tackle was the 10,000 gallons of diesel, 500 gallons each of oil and kerosene, 7500 gallons of gasoline, and 8000 gallons of water that were loaded aboard the *Fisherman* for Grey’s second sojourn to New Zealand in 1927.

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54 ibid., p.12.
55 ibid., p.15.
The equipment and clothing necessary to construct the appearance of a ‘sporting’ man in the context of big game fishing is a useful addition to our understanding of masculinity and consumption. When taking part in their sport fishermen knew they were on display, and were careful to clothe themselves appropriately. They did not don rugby jerseys or black woolen singlets. Danielle Sprecher argued in 1999 that men’s clothed appearance had largely been ignored in New Zealand history, but that recently ‘greater historical attention has been paid to the importance of men’s appearance in relation to definitions of masculinity’. This is reflected in Caroline Daley’s recent efforts to temper ‘black singlet’ interpretations of New Zealand’s past, and Doris de Pont’s edited collection of essays on the history of the colour.

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black in New Zealand fashion, society, and culture.\textsuperscript{57} Daley has also utilized gendered participation ratios in urban beauty contests to demonstrate male interest in their appearance in interwar New Zealand.\textsuperscript{58} The carefully crafted appearance of the opulent fishermen could not be further from the apparent national obsession with the colour black.

Alongside attention to appearance the importance of brand names in fishing equipment to wealthy fishermen such as Grey reinforces interwar sport fishing as a consumerist masculine pursuit.\textsuperscript{59} Connections between masculinity and consumption have already been made in an American context. Utilizing a fine-grained analysis of the 1890 Census of Manufacturers Mark A. Swiencicki has demonstrated that ‘the present day male love of style, recreation, and consumer goods goes back more than a century’ in America.\textsuperscript{60} Sporting and athletic equipment featured strongly in this masculine consumption and Swiencicki argued that as well as the traditional historical view of these commodities as props in the rituals of militaristic training they should be seen simultaneously as transforming their participants into consumers.\textsuperscript{61} Masculinity, modernity, ritual, and consumption also intersected in Justin Bengry’s study of turn-of-the-century shaving in England.\textsuperscript{62} In visiting New Zealand, fishermen such as Grey brought with them consumer habits from America and England, and this nurtured a transnational masculine culture of consumption. In its obsessive attention to equipment, and fastidious attention to appearance, the pursuit of game fish by wealthy fishermen unites masculinities and consumerism in New Zealand.


\textsuperscript{58} Daley, ‘Taking Off the Black Singlet’, p.119.


\textsuperscript{60} Swiencicki, ‘Consuming Brotherhood’, p.777

\textsuperscript{61} ibid., p.792.

Contemporary press accounts of the heroic battles between sportsmen and monsters of the deep had little time for what they were wearing, but there was always room for details of outfits in the accounts of women who fished. The men who fished for big game in New Zealand in this period were turned out remarkably similarly as they battled denizens of the deep from their swivel chairs, and this was reflected in the multitude of interwar posters that advertise New Zealand fishing. Zane Grey was able to display a well-kept body too. He kept himself in shape for fishing by eschewing lunch for most of his writing and fishing career, and making a habit of taking the long walk to the post office every morning when he was at home in California. He would also make regular use of a rowing machine — set up in a sunny spot on the roof — and undertake strenuous calisthenics. Although discussing a fisherwoman, the sentiments of the *Sydney Morning Herald* were just as easily applied to the

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63 He ate substantial breakfasts however: cereal, fruit, hotcakes, and ham or sausages. Gruber, *Zane Grey*, pp.213-4.

64 Loren Grey, pp.88, 101.
opulent fishermen: ‘it’s not as easy as it sounds, even when your clothes are just so, and you’ve paid the last instalment on your equipment’.  

Figure 32: Captain Mitchell, in a shirt neatly buttoned to the top, poses with some of the paraphernalia of the opulent fisherman. Zane Grey, *Tales from a Fisherman’s Log*, Auckland, 1978, p.43.

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65 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 1940, p.6.
Figure 33: This well-dressed gentleman and his assistant advertising swordfishing in the Bay of Islands circa 1930 represent the epitome of the opulent fisherman. Peter Alsop, Gary Stewart, and Dave Bamford, eds, Selling the Dream: The Art of Early New Zealand Tourism, Nelson, 2012, p.257.
Figure 34: Zane Grey kept himself in prime physical condition for most of his career. Loren Grey, Zane Grey: A Photographic Odyssey, Dallas, 1985, p.207.
Grey was on the leading edge of the rapidly developing technology of sport fishing tackle in the 1920s with the bespoke reels he had built to his demanding specifications. This technical mastery was key to the masculinity of the opulent fisherman. As Georgine Clarsen has shown, ‘technology did not emerge fully formed, with the meaning of sexual difference naturally imprinted on it’. The complexity of the relationship between technology and masculinity has long been recognised in feminist history. It was through the creation and repetition of the countless rituals of these fishermen that fishing technology received its gendered connotations. Scratching the surface of the image of the opulent fisherman later in this chapter reveals widespread female involvement and successful husband and wife fishing partnerships, yet the fisherman remained the central representative of this group. Even as late as 2004, Maria Lohan and Wendy Faulkner found few examples in which gender-technology relations were clearly changing for the better in their introduction to the issue of Men and Masculinities focussing on technology. Yet class seems to transcend gender in this instance, and the gendering of fishing technology presented no impediment to feminine participation.

Grey was scathing of the techniques and equipment used for sport fishing in New Zealand on his first visit. His scorn for the ‘primitive methods’ of New Zealand sport fishermen soon provoked controversy. A set of criteria had evolved around the Tuna Club of Avalon regarding how to catch fish in a ‘sporting’ way, and technologically and culturally the fishermen Grey encountered in New Zealand failed to live up to this masculine code of engagement. Tackle and methods in New Zealand had evolved from those used in the English tradition of fresh water angling, and Grey was shocked at the lightweight equipment used. He published a series of articles in the New Zealand Herald denigrating local methods, and — understandably for those who did not have the finances or connections to have equipment custom-made at multiple international locations — ruffled a lot of feathers in the New Zealand fishing community. When at home in the late 1920s Grey would be visited almost daily by a tackle professional that he employed, and at one stage he had more than a

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67 Judy Wajcman, Feminism Confronts Technology, St Leonards, NSW, 1991, p.137.
69 Loren Grey, p.124.
70 Zane Grey, Tales of the Angler’s Eldorado, pp.210–211.
dozen items of tackle bearing his name.\footnote{Gruber, Zane Grey, p.214.} Grey pulled no punches, and calling the techniques and equipment used in New Zealand ‘hopelessly inadequate, and unsportsman-like in the extreme’ did little to endear him to local fishermen.\footnote{Zane Grey, Tales of the Angler’s Eldorado, p.214.}

![Figure 35: Zane Grey in his study in 1937 with some of the tackle he collected throughout his fishing career. Technical knowledge and collections showed the opulent fisherman’s mastery of the globe. Loren Grey, Zane Grey: A Photographic Odyssey, Dallas, 1985, pp.202-203.](image)

The response from other fishermen in New Zealand was swift, and the ‘so-called controversy’ was ongoing.\footnote{ibid.} Grey was affronted by this challenge to his opinions and immediately cancelled his scheduled articles in the New Zealand press and removed himself from the discussion, which was continued in Grey’s defence by Alma Baker and Captain Mitchell. The Grey camp sought positive public relations through inviting fisherman to their camp to inspect their equipment. One of those won over was Peter Gardiner, of Kamo, who ‘was keen and quick to appreciate the great superiority and sportsmanship of our tackle and method’.\footnote{ibid., p.215.} Grey invited E.P. Andreas to his camp to ‘let us show him, for the sake of the sport, just what we had and how we used it’.\footnote{ibid., pp.215–16.} Andreas was an Australian businessman and fisherman who had been making annual fishing excursions to New Zealand since early in the
century, ‘long before Grey came to the Dominion with his megaphone’. He had been part of the fishing party credited with the first capture of a swordfish with rod and reel in the Bay of Islands in 1912, and tended to have powerful men such as Sir Tom Bridges, ex-Governor General of South Australia, in his party. The Auckland Star cited Andreas’s catch as the founding of the ‘modern sport of big game fishing in New Zealand’. Andreas’s support would have been desirable for Grey’s campaign, but Andreas declined the invitation and publically cast his lot in with the ‘British system’.

* * *

Aside from a flare up regarding cruelty, opposition to well-heeled fishermen in New Zealand was predominantly based on class and gender. During one of the many controversies Grey provoked — in this instance a run in with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals over the cruelty of sportfishing — the Evening Post highlighted just how stacked the odds were in Grey’s favour:

What we would like to see is a new technique in fishing where the fish could occasionally win. After all, in the thousands of encounters with big fish not one has ever caught Zane Grey. If such an exigency could be provided for every objection of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ought to be quieted.

Both the fishermen and the public did not seem to consider these species of fish a food resource. The fishermen saw them simply as adversaries, and the wastefulness inherent in the rituals of the sport received little comment. On one occasion the Auckland Star floated the suggestion of fried swordfish in restaurants as a way to commercialise these ‘sporting’ fish, but little seems to have come of this. Despite its piscatorial origins in myth, the waters around New Zealand and their fauna are absent from much historiography. The chosen title of Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking’s recent edited collection of environmental histories and

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76 Smith’s Weekly, 5 February 1927, np, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
78 Auckland Star, 22 June 1926, p.9; Sydney Morning Herald, 20 February 1940, p.6.
80 Evening Post, 13 February 1936, p.9. Grey’s response to allegations of cruelty whilst in Australia, as was usual practice whenever someone disagreed with him, was to threaten to ‘go fishing elsewhere’: Auckland Star, 7 February 1936, p.7.
81 Auckland Star, 14 June 1928, p.8.
the 17 essays it contains demonstrate a clear current consensus that the New Zealand ‘environment’ is predominantly land-based.  

Grey’s ostentatious and individualistic ways consistently raised the ire of other interwar fishermen in New Zealand. *Smith’s Weekly* reported that, in response to Grey’s habit of announcing the weight of his catch over a megaphone and running a swordfish pennant up the mast, an Australian fisherman announced the weight of his catch as 6,000 pounds and hoisted his pyjama pants in place of a pennant. Grey’s practice of literally blowing his own horn did not sit comfortably with antipodean fishermen, although his initial ignorance of the value of the pound when tipping made him temporarily popular with the attendants of a Rotorua hotel. 

In the US, alongside the development of tackle, the ‘ethics’ of sport fishing had been elaborated. Certain species of fish had been allocated certain weights of tackle, harpoons had been prohibited, and the triple hook had been forbidden by all ‘high-class angling clubs’ as un-sportsman-like. New Zealand methods relied on drifting with live bait, whilst for Zane Grey, to be true sport, the fish should be ‘stopped and fought’.  

Drifting for fish with live bait is as old as the hills. I learned that method as a boy. It is fishing, of course, and all fishing is wonderful, but it cannot be compared to trolling or casting. In trolling, you get the solid smash of the strike and see the fish; you hook him in the mouth, and that makes him jump. In reasonably smooth water, Marlin will rise. If the sea is calm I can raise Marlin here as well as elsewhere. I have read, and hear, too, that this New Zealand swordfish does not jump, or breach, as the whalers call it. One of my Marlin leaped twenty-seven times, another twenty-six, another eighteen, another eleven. They were all hooked outside the mouth. The drifting method makes it impossible to hook a swordfish in the mouth. 

Grey’s words here neatly encapsulate two key aspects of the ‘sport’ in fishing as defined by the fishermen of California: a dramatic show and endless measuring, counting, and reporting. That Grey had managed to not only provoke marlin into breaking the surface, but done so up

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83 *Smith’s Weekly*, 5 February 1927, np, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.

84 ‘Trout Fishing at Lake Taupo’, Reminiscences, Ernest James Cason Wiffin Papers, MS-Papers-7070-2, ATL.

85 Zane Grey, *Tales of the Angler’s Eldorado*, p.211; *New Zealand Herald*, 20 April 1923, p.5.


87 ibid., p.213.
Grey would again stir trouble on his second visit to New Zealand in early 1927, this time amongst the trout fishermen of the Tongariro River. He was single-minded in his proselytization of his own methods and equipment even in these tranquil waters. In this instance it was a case of the local ‘spoon’ method against Grey’s preferred ‘fly’ method. Local fishermen made the point that ‘whatever method is proving the most effective, they like to be able to do without being dictated to by anyone else… if the fish are taking the fly, then, they say, give it to them, and, of course, when they are on the spoon, catch them with that.’\footnote{\textit{New Zealand Truth}, 5 May 1927, p.1.} The \textit{NZ Truth} enumerated the differences that separated Zane Grey from local fishermen, pointing out that:

\begin{quote}
Long before Grey discovered New Zealand as a ‘Fisherman’s Eldorado,’ the New Zealand fishermen were working by this rule and it was absolutely satisfactory. The line of demarcation between the average fisherman and Zane Grey is that: (1) Zane Grey is not here to fish solely. (2) He is a wealthy man and can afford to wait long periods on these fishing pools. (3) He can afford to wait, fishing with the fly, until the fish are taking it. (4) Primarily he does not want to fish. Now the average man is in a different class: (1) He has only average means and cannot afford to wait month after month in these favoured spots. (2) He goes primarily to get the sport and secondly to catch the fish. (3) He expects to fish unmolested and without being dictated to, just wherever his license permits. (4) His fishing time is an occasional week-end or a general holiday.\footnote{ibid.}
\end{quote}

When a local angler accepted Grey’s wager of a cigar that he could not catch a fish with the ‘spoon’ method because the water was too muddy, and was successful, Grey soon ‘found that he did not smoke cigars and hadn’t any in stock at the time’.\footnote{ibid.}

There was ample class antagonism in the response to Grey in New Zealand. Not only did his methodological myopia raise hackles, but Grey was under the impression that he had secured exclusive fishing rights to the ‘Orchard Pool’ on the Tongariro River. During Easter Weekend 1927 a local angler was advised to move on as Grey wished to ‘do a little fishing’. This strong-arming was not appreciated. Grey’s line of elaborately trussed tents on the banks of the river was another bone of contention. Grey had warned that New Zealand rivers would

\footnote{Grey’s claim that New Zealand marlin did not jump was completely unfounded. For an example of pre-Zane Grey jumping see: \textit{New Zealand Herald}, 4 June 1924, p.10.}

\footnote{\textit{New Zealand Truth}, 5 May 1927, p.1.}
‘eventually become practically the monopoly of the wealthy angler’ based on his experiences in other countries. Although he had remarked that this situation was regrettable, his actions seemed to encourage this eventuality rather than counter it.\(^92\) However, legislation such as the Māori Land Amendment and Māori Land Claims Adjustment Act 1926 guaranteed public use of major streams and lakes for fishing.\(^93\) The earlier controversy over equipment and technique had kept New Zealanders alert for Grey’s faults, and other stories of guides being sent ahead to hold fishing holes and attempts to purchase prime stretches of revered streams circulated.\(^94\)

\[\text{Figure 36: The elaborately-trussed tents of the Grey camp. Loren Grey, Zane Grey: A Photographic Odyssey, Dallas, 1985, pp.142–143.}\]

The controversy in the papers over methods and equipment was representative of the ambivalence New Zealanders felt towards the increasing numbers of wealthy tourists who converged on New Zealand every summer to fish. The \textit{New Zealand Truth} was of the opinion that the New Zealand government ‘lost its head’ when Grey arrived, and ‘treated him rather lavishly — perhaps more lavishly than is generally expected’.\(^95\) J.A. Wilborn, another famous deep-sea fisherman who accompanied Grey on his final trip to New Zealand in the

\(^{92}\) ibid.
\(^{93}\) Māori Land Amendment and Māori Land Claims Adjustment Act 1926, esp. 14.3.
\(^{94}\) Pauly, \textit{Zane Grey}, p.269.
\(^{95}\) \textit{New Zealand Truth}, 5 May 1927, p.1.
summer of 1932–1933 most clearly articulated the motivations behind the official pandering to Grey: ‘If fishermen overseas realised what this country has to offer they would beat a regular tourist trail to New Zealand, and a tourist trail leaves behind it a trail of gold, in your hotels, over your roads, and at your fishing resorts’. The New Zealand government was very interested in obtaining this trail of gold, and undertook multiple ventures to encourage wealthy fishermen to visit the country.

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Even more so than the political visitors in Chapter One, the government was eager to cater to Grey’s demands in return for positive publicity. He was provided with free rail travel, trucks for his equipment, a photographer and dark room, and Wiffin, a keen fisherman who was co-opted from the Government Printing Office to be Grey’s escort. Wiffin accompanied the Grey party in 1926, 1927, and 1928–1929. He was present on the second and third trip by personal request of Grey, and his lengthy absence in the summer of 1929 was the cause of much consternation for the Printing Office. Wiffin had been expected back at his usual duties in early January, but was still fishing with Grey in early March. The interest of the Publicity Department in circumventing ‘proper procedure’ to cultivate Grey’s patronage certainly worked out well for Wiffin in this instance. It was even suggested that, based on his successes with Grey, Wiffin should be employed as an attendant to the wants of overseas fishermen throughout the season, but this never eventuated. The perennial trans-Tasman rivalry also played a role in this pandering, as Australia threatened to usurp New Zealand’s ‘honoured position of the premier game fishing resort in the world’. The government’s efforts bore some fruit; Grey was a big-spender, and would often commission his fishing launches from New Zealand boat builders.

Grey’s requests were sometimes directly at odds with the desires of the local population. In late 1928 Edward Mizen was negotiating the private purchase of Great

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96 Evening Post, 18 February 1933, p.13.
98 Letter from A.H. Messenger to The Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 6 March 1929, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
99 Letter from the Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington to A.H. Messenger, 12 March 1929; 3 April 1929, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
100 Letter from A.H. Messenger to The Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 30 October 1928, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
Mercury Island, and refused permission for Grey to camp there. Through the assistance of the Public Trustee Mizen finally capitulated and allowed the Grey party to base their fishing from Great Mercury Island in the summer months before he officially took possession. By April 1929 he had taken residence on the island, along with significant quantities of sheep. When the government requested that Grey camp on Mercury Island again in 1930 Mizen’s ownership was well-established and he was firm in his refusal. Proceedings became personal when Grey wrote to A.H. Messenger of the Publicity Department to tell him that it was now time to prove that Grey had the friends in New Zealand that Messenger had always bragged about. Always quick to take offence, Grey regarded Mizen’s refusal as a ‘slap in the face’ and advised Messenger that he had cancelled his trip. This prompted a flurry of official paperwork, and ‘utmost endeavours’ to ‘effect speedy settlement’ including personal written requests from the Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts to Mizen, personal visits from government representatives, and a sustained discourse with Mizen’s lawyer Northcroft.

Even though it was soon discovered that Mizen had purchased the island at great expense to obtain complete isolation due to ‘medical reasons’ the Tourist Department continued to hound him and attempted to find ways to circumvent what was a completely legal and justified refusal. A government that had been lauded as leading the world in providing for its citizens in Chapter One was now resorting to methods bordering on totalitarian to achieve its ends. It soon surfaced that the Grey party had left their camp in a ‘deplorable state’ after their last stay on Great Mercury Island. It was pointed out by

103 Letter from A.H. Messenger to District Public Trustee, Auckland, 12 December 1928, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
104 Letter from A.H. Messenger to The General Manager, Tourist, Industries & Commerce Department, Wellington, 27 June 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
105 Return of Sheepowners and of the Number of Sheep and Lambs in each County on the 30th April, 1928 and 1929, Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR), 1929 Session I, H-23b, p.15.
106 Telegraph from Chadban to Publicity Department, 24 June 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
107 Letter from Zane Grey to A.H. Messenger, 29 June 1930; 3 July 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
108 Telegram from Chadban to Tourist Department, 5 August 1930; Letter from Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts to Edward Mizen, 7 August 1930; Letter from General Manager, Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to A.E. Wilson, 11 August 1930; Telegram from A.E. Wilson to Northcroft, 18 August 1930, Letter from Northcroft to A.E. Wilson, 19 August 1930; Letter from Northcroft to A.E. Wilson, 20 August 1930; Letter from General Manager, Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to Minister for Tourist and Health Resorts, 25 August 1930; Letter from Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts to A.M. Samuel, M.P., 5 September 1930; Letter from E.C. Arlidge to H.M. Rushworth, M.P., 6 September 1930; Letter from the General Manager, Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to the Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts, 16 September 1930; Letter from the General Manager, Department of Tourist and Health Resorts to the Minister of Tourist and Health Resorts, 16 September 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
109 Letter from O.N. Campbell, Commissioner of Crown Lands to The Under-Secretary for Lands, 9 August 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.
Northcroft that there was no special reason to insist on camping on this island, and that there were multiple other adequate sites in the vicinity.\textsuperscript{110} Grey was simply being stubborn in insisting on this spot, yet the Tourist Department persisted in kowtowing to his requests. Local ambivalence to the Grey party was made plain by Northcroft when he stated that ‘Grey has not made himself popular, but seems to have gone out of his way to make himself unpopular, and there is a good deal of dissatisfaction that the government should appear to confer some sort of special patronage upon this gentleman’.\textsuperscript{111} Whilst Grey melodramatically blamed his cancellation on the perceived personal slight of being denied his favoured camping spot, it was more likely that his leaner finances due to the economic downturn was the real reason for not fishing in New Zealand in 1931.\textsuperscript{112}  

Zane Grey was not the only opulent fisherman who received official assistance. In 1927 a road was created to allow the Duke of York direct access to the Kowhai Flats and thus to a fishing spot on the Tongariro River. Wiffin had selected this land at Kowhai Flats, belonging to Hoka Down, as a campsite for the Grey party in 1926 after being jokingly sent there by Tokaanu hotel staff when Grey refused hotel accommodation. Wiffin took the use of Kowhai Flats by the royal party as confirmation of his fishing expertise.\textsuperscript{113} Elaborate appointments such as hot and cold running water had been provided at the campsite. In typical style the \textit{NZ Truth} cast these preparations as an annoyance to the Duke, who had hoped for the enjoyment of ‘a little mild “roughing it”’, but had not been allowed it.\textsuperscript{114} The Duke also spent two days fishing in the Bay of Islands in the launch of W. Mason Bayly. Bayly received a gold cigarette case from the Duke as a personal gift, and ‘past-master at fishing’ William Hodgson received an engraved silver watch in return for the fishing expertise he provided the royal fishing tour. F.P. Flinn, Inspector of Fisheries at Auckland, had made the arrangements for the royal visit to the Bay of Islands, and received a personal letter of appreciation in return.\textsuperscript{115} The Duke and Duchess were in New Zealand at the same time as Grey in 1927, and the Governor-General made a special visit to Grey to thank him for his books and articles, which he believed had caused thousands of people to visit the country. Grey also managed to fish with prominent horse breeder Lord Astor of England on this trip.

\textsuperscript{110} Letter from Northcroft to A.E. Wilson, 19 August 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.  
\textsuperscript{111} Letter from Northcroft to A.E. Wilson, 20 August 1930, Visits – Zane Grey, TO 1 175/40/33, ANZ.  
\textsuperscript{112} Gruber, \textit{Zane Grey}, p.224.  
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{New Zealand Truth}, 5 May 1927, p.1.  
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Evening Post}, 5 May 1927, p.8.
The two bonded over horse breeding as well as fishing, and Lord Astor promised to send photos of his horses to Grey’s daughter Betty.116

* * *

Visitors from across the world devoted considerable time to fishing in New Zealand. Baron Dickson of Sweden spent ‘some very pleasant months of sport’ in New Zealand in 1923, capturing a large haul of trout near Rotorua and several swordfish in the Bay of Islands, including one of record weight. The Baron proclaimed big game fishing in New Zealand ‘royal sport’.117 The first swordfish of the 1928 season was caught off Cape Brett by R.H. Goodwin of London.118 Dr. H.J. Morlan of Chicago, President of the Chicago Fishermen’s Club arrived in New Zealand in 1929, and his first enquiry on landing was ‘as to the location of golf courses and fishing streams’.119 Scottish comedian Sir Harry Lauder took some time out in New Zealand in the summer of 1928–1929 to recuperate from a broken rib, and his itinerary included deep sea fishing with his entourage at Otehei Bay.120 He was to return again to enjoy some trout fishing in the summer of 1937, and by mid-April had racked up a total of 115 fish with his companion R.H. Nimmo of Wellington.121 Dr T. Kay, DSO, of Glasgow, honourary surgeon to the King and a visiting surgeon of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and Captain R.D. Mackie, a tea planter from Darjeeling, India, travelled the long distances necessary to ‘land the wily trout at Taupo and Rotorua’ in 1929.122 A number of prominent English sportsmen arrived for the fishing season on the Rangitata in late 1932: Mr White-Wickham, who had only missed three seasons since his first visit in 1921; Sir Phillip Lee Brocklehurst, a member of the Shackleton expedition to the Antarctic in 1907; noted angler A. Matheson, who had taken many trout from New Zealand streams; Captain J. Haggas, a retired officer of the 15th Hussars; Lieutenant-Commander C. Branson; and Major Kerr-Smiley, for 13 years a member of the House of Commons.123 Otehei Bay hosted General and Mrs Palmer of India, and Mr Stewart of Singapore in 1932.124 Another visitor from India, Lieutenant-Colonel R. Bagnall, arrived for some big game fishing in late 1933.125

117 Hawera & Normanby Star, 8 September 1923, p.9.
118 Evening Post, 4 January 1928, p.8.
119 New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 May 1929, np.
122 Auckland Star, 20 February 1929, p.12.
124 Auckland Star, 3 February 1932, p.3.
125 Auckland Star, 8 November 1933, p.12.
In 1935 the Americans Dr and Mrs R.L. Sutton were up North for some deep-sea fishing.\textsuperscript{126} In November 1936 the \textit{Rangitata} arrived from London laden with keen fishermen: Dr and Mrs F.G. Cross, regular visitors; F. Turner, another repeat visitor; and ‘ardent angler’ Oliphant Shaw.\textsuperscript{127}

A trip to the Bay of Islands or the Tongariro River also became a firm staple in the itineraries of those whose visits were briefer than the likes of Grey. A.P.F. Chapman, captain of the English cricket team and the ‘personification of romantic cricket’ spent time fishing while on holiday in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{128} Chapman was the ‘perfect captain of an England cricket

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure37.png}
\caption{‘Sir Harry Lauder (right), the famous Scots comedian, and Colonel Burton Mabin, at the angler’s paradise, Otehei Bay, North Auckland’, \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine}, 1 September 1929, p.38.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Auckland Star}, 9 March 1935, p.16.  
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Auckland Star}, 18 November 1936, p.8.  
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Guardian}, 19 September 1961, p.4.
eleven. He was tall, slim, always youthful, and pink and chubby of the face.’

Accompanied by his Hawke’s Bay-born wife, Chapman spent two months holiday in New Zealand after the Australian tour of the MCC team. Other illustrious personages nipping over for a little fishing also peppered the social pages of the interwar press. D.F. Wilbur, American Consul-General for New Zealand, and W.S. Whipple, coal magnate, had ‘good sport’ fishing for trout at Tokaanu in late 1925. Colonel and Mrs J. Strutt were in Taupo to fish for trout in 1928, and E.J. Tait of Sydney, managing director of the J.C. Williamson Ltd ‘theatrical empire’, had managed to fit in a few days deep-sea fishing in the north that summer. Five ships of the Australian Navy spent a week in the Bay of Islands in 1935 for rest and relaxation after completing training exercises, and big game fishing was amongst the projected amusements. ‘Keen deep-sea fisherman’ H.M. Ernst of the New York Stock Exchange made a visit to New Zealand with his wife in 1936. In 1938 Lord Strabolgi, chairman of the Midland Steel Company, hoped to fit in a few days big game fishing amongst his schedule of meetings and personal supervision of the company’s erection of an amusement park for the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition.

The ever-improving facilities on Urupukapuka Island were host to a regular stream of English nobility. Someone had taken notice of the advice of those who, like E.P. Andreas, argued that alongside proper advertising, the most important thing needed in the Bay of Islands to attract fishermen was the provision of adequate accommodation. A picturesque waterfront bungalow in Otehei Bay was occupied by Lord and Lady Grimthorpe in 1928, and Lord and Lady Hillingdon in 1929. Lady Hillingdon remarked that she had expected to ‘camp’, but was instead being accommodated at a ‘Ritz’. Otehei Bay was an ‘up-to-date rendezvous’, and boasted a 75 x 16 foot veranda perfect for dancing in the cool of the evening, fine cuisine, a lounge, comfortable cabins, private bathrooms, and two fast launches for hire.

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129 ibid.
130 Auckland Star, 4 June 1929, p.10.
131 Auckland Star, 3 December 1925, p.6.
132 Auckland Star, 1 March 1928, p.10.
133 Evening Post, 6 March 1935, p.11.
134 Evening Post, 20 February 1936, p.19.
135 Evening Post, 5 November 1938, p.9.
136 Auckland Star, 16 March 1925, p.10.
As was the aim of any opulent fisherman, Lord Grimthorpe hauled in a world record with his catch of a 630 lb mako shark.\footnote{New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 October 1928, p.50.} Grimthorpe had the jaws of this record fish preserved and sent to his country house in Leeds, Yorkshire, while Lady Grimthorpe chose to have its skin turned into ‘useful articles such as shoes, hand-bags, etc.’\footnote{New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 September 1928, p.52.} Lady Grimthorpe had ‘proved as ardent a lover of the sport as his Lordship, and… landed some fine specimens’.\footnote{Ibid.} The Hillingdons were impressed on their arrival by the ‘huge monsters of the deep’ displayed from the derrick on the new purpose-built wharf for deep-sea anglers. They successfully landed a swordfish each, and on their departure gave instructions for the two heads to be mounted by the local taxidermist and shipped to their country home in Nottinghamshire. As was usual practice, the Lord’s capture was reported first — with a description of the spectacular ‘antics’ of the fish — before the Lady was briefly mentioned as having landed a ‘fine swordfish on her own account’.\footnote{New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 May 1929, pp.38–39.} Just as the catch of Lady Hillingdon was appended to the thrilling tales of her husband’s battles, in 1931 Mrs Soden of Dublin was described as being ‘as fond of shooting as she is of fishing, and in this she is not far behind her husband’.\footnote{Auckland Star, 14 July 1931, p.10.} The Sodens had been fishing for nearly 18 months at this point.\footnote{Ibid.}

![Figure 38: The Verandah at Otehei Bay, New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 October 1928, p.48.](image-url)
Although the masculine was usually privileged in the press, it was common for couples to fish together. The wives listed in the previous paragraphs were not simply bystanders to their husbands’ holiday adventures. Lyla Foggia has documented the diverse participation of women in sport fishing since the late nineteenth century and shown how the large amount of equipment required and the privileging of skill over strength fostered significant male/female sporting partnerships throughout this period.\textsuperscript{144} Sean O’Connell has argued that the ‘social construction of much technology as masculine serves to alienate women from it’, but this was not the case with big game fishing.\textsuperscript{145} Dr F.G. Cross of London was accompanied by his wife on his fishing trip in 1936.\textsuperscript{146} Mr H.E. Hughes of Bury-St-Edmunds, Suffolk, was joined by his wife and daughter on his trout fishing trip to the Tongariro River in 1932.\textsuperscript{147} By 1940 Mrs Morrow of Bayview, NSW, was making her fourth fishing trip to New Zealand with her husband. The Morrows were a clear example of a husband and wife fishing team, having landed 19 fish together in 20 days in 1939. The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} still made sure to devote space in the article to describe Mrs Morrow’s outfits in considerable detail, and her use of ‘sunburn liniment’ to protect her ‘fine and delicate skin’. Mrs Morrow’s feminity and love for clothes were explicitly specified alongside her enthusiasm for trolling, striking, playing, gaffing, and landing her marlin.\textsuperscript{148} Morrow’s husband had taught her how to fish, and their fishing trips to New Zealand became a regular shared pursuit. Her best catch to date was a 350 lb striped marlin, and she was well-versed in the etiquette of sport fishing.\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Auckland Star}, 18 November 1936, p.8.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Auckland Star}, 19 April 1932, p.5.
\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald}, 20 February 1940, p.6.
\textsuperscript{149} ibid.
When Mrs Keith Spalding landed a 426 lb broadbill in Catalina in 1921 that was 8lbs heavier than Zane Grey’s flagship catch of the previous year the *Los Angeles Examiner* was overjoyed, and stated that the triumph was even greater because ‘Zane Grey, noted writer, and Arthur Parsons, wealthy San Francisco manufacturer, have been fishing all year for a broadbill with only a coat of sunburn to reward them for their efforts’. 150 On his return from hunting in Arizona Grey opined that Spalding was neither big enough nor strong enough to land such a huge fish and that the catch was predominantly the work of her boatman. A wide range of members of the Tuna Club — some already festering with dislike for the outspoken author — were incensed, and an apology or resignation was officially demanded. Grey

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retracted his statements and apologised, and eventually resigned after an additional battle over line weights in 1923.151

By 1921 Mrs Spalding had ‘substantial experience and verified skill’ in sport fishing. She was married to Keith Spalding, whose family owned the A.G. Spalding Sporting Goods Company, and had interested him in moving from Chicago to Catalina, where both became avid anglers.152 The Spaldings were another example of a husband and wife fishing team, although the Tuna Club’s policy of not admitting women was not changed when Mr Spalding was elected president of club in 1921.153 Chisie Farrington was a prominent female angler of the 1920s who shared this pursuit with her husband, going so far as to time their honeymoon to coincide with the arrival of tuna in Maine. Her wedding present from her husband was a fishing harness.154 The Farringtons did not fish in New Zealand until the advent of the flying boat service from Australia.155

Chisie Farrington had wanted to fish in New Zealand ever since she had heard of the 823 lb black marlin caught by Mrs Eastham Guild — more widely known by her nom de plume Carrie Finn — off Cape Brett in early 1932.156 This was the heaviest fish caught by a woman, and the fourth heaviest sporting fishing captured on rod and reel. Guild donated a cup in her pen name to the Bay of Islands Swordfish Club to be awarded annually to the woman who caught the heaviest fish each season.157 Guild received ‘sheaves’ of congratulations for her catch from ‘all parts of the world’, including a cable from Grey.158 Mrs E. Swift of Chicago came within 7 lbs of this record with her catch off Cape Brett after an eight hour battle in February 1939.159 The Guilds were yet another husband and wife fishing team, and as ‘wealthy Americans, passionately fond of fishing’, they made their home in Tahiti, where they could ‘indulge their tastes to the fullest extent’. This included accompanying Grey while he sought swordfish in Tahiti, and contributing to Grey’s fishing writing.160 They commissioned the construction of a launch in New Zealand, and this was

151 Pauly, *Zane Grey*, pp.204-213.
152 ibid., p.208.
153 ibid.
155 ibid., p.164.
156 ibid., p.11.
157 *Auckland Star*, 4 February 1939, p.10.
158 *Auckland Star*, 2 March 1932, p.11.
159 *Auckland Star*, 4 February 1939, p.10; *Evening Post*, 6 February 1939, p.18.
brought back to Tahiti on their return.\footnote{Auckland Star, 18 January 1932, p.2; Evening Post, 14 March 1932, p.11.} The Auckland Star helpfully specified that ‘shorts and a jumper’ were the ‘principal items of Mrs Guild’s wardrobe when she engaged in her hobby’.\footnote{Auckland Star, 2 March 1932, p.11.} International leisured sportswoman Lady Yule also visited New Zealand in her yacht the \textit{Nahlin} to fish in the Bay of Islands in 1932.\footnote{Auckland Star, 2 February 1932, p.8.}

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It took a certain level of available time and finances to travel the world as a ‘sportsman’, and although this was a pinnacle of masculinity for some, it often did not resonate with the fishermen of New Zealand. Whilst for moneyed and leisured men like Grey the New Zealand summer was ‘one long, bright, slowly-waning afternoon’, for many New Zealand fishermen their time with rod and reel was precious and brief amongst more pressing commitments.\footnote{Evening Post, 16 March 1932, p.3.} The Auckland Star recommended that there ‘ought to be a national fund’ for providing anglers of the calibre found on the Auckland waterfront one Sunday in 1926 with ‘a month of deep sea fishing every year’.\footnote{Auckland Star, 22 November 1926, p.15.} Fishing enthusiasts who only got two or three weeks of the year to indulge in their pursuit doubtless envied opulent fishermen like Mr J. Soden who had the means to take an 18-month trout fishing holiday throughout New Zealand in 1929–1931.\footnote{Auckland Star, 14 July 1931, p.10.} It was often men like Wiffin and the Arlidge brothers employed by visiting sportsmen who got to indulge in this sort of lifestyle. Wiffin was lucky enough to do it on the governmental tab. New Zealand did have its own opulent fishermen, such as Bayly (who put his launch at the disposal of the Duke of York) and records of their catches appeared in the press throughout the summer.\footnote{See for example: Auckland Star, 4 March 1926, p.11; 30 March 1927, p.11; 16 March 1928, p.5; 12 January 1929, p.11; 1 March 1939, p.9; Evening Post, 4 January 1928, p.8.}

F. Burton Mabin acknowledged in the \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine} that it was ‘commonly supposed that only people in affluent circumstances may indulge in this sport’. He went to great lengths to demonstrate how deep sea fishing could be accessible to ‘people of moderate means’, thereby tacitly acknowledging that sport fishing remained predominantly the preserve of wealthy tourists in New Zealand.\footnote{New Zealand Railways Magazine, 1 November 1928, p.43.} This was a sustained discussion; Mabin had earlier in that year stressed that it was ‘quite erroneous to think the
sport is beyond the reach of the ordinary man’.\textsuperscript{169} The \textit{Evening Post} recognised in 1928 that the bulk of the support for big game fishing in New Zealand had come from people overseas and asked if there was any insuperable reason why this was so. For them progress in fishing would not be secured ‘by any false impression that the enjoyment and understanding of New Zealand big game fishing is a matter for tourists and rich men only’. The costs quoted were so reasonable that ‘few people, if they have not made inquiries, would believe that big game fishing at the Bay of Islands could be carried on at so low a range of expenditure’.\textsuperscript{170} Sharing costs was suggested as a means for the ‘average reader’ of the \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine} to ‘indulge in this thrilling sport which has lured so many famous men to our shores in recent years’.\textsuperscript{171} In 1929 A.J.A. Fuchs argued for the affordability of salmon fishing on South Island rivers, and indicated just how common wealthy, foreign, fishermen were:

In the Rakaia River, providing conditions are favourable, bags from five up to eight fish per day are frequently caught. On various occasions, while fishing at the riverside, I have chatted with fishermen from overseas. These tourist fishermen have been deeply impressed with the good fishing available at such a moderate cost. One gentleman, in particular, mentioned that, at considerable expense he had visited Norway and secured only three small salmon in the noted rivers of that country. He also remarked upon how fortunate we New Zealanders were in having such splendid facilities for this class of sport, both for professional and amateur anglers. No section of the community, on the score of cost, is debarred from enjoying it.\textsuperscript{172}

As spring advanced in Auckland in 1935 the social column of the \textit{Auckland Star} discussed ‘one of the twain [who] had wangled a couple of free days and was just as interested in them as is a tobacco millionaire in the six months he is about to spend in his palatial half-million yacht in the Mediterranean’. This man had considered holidays spent ‘shooting ibex on the Corderilleros’ or ‘snaring butterflies in the Malayan jungle’, but knew that the ‘people who do these strenuous things are generally the type who can buy a bunch of coolies, leave the dear old ancestral home in the hands of a skeleton staff and go off for a year or two’. The man in question ‘suggested that it would be a gracious gesture from millionaires who take a fourteen months’ holiday to swap with their servants — give the servants a two-

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine}, 1 September 1928, p.52.
\textsuperscript{170} \textit{Evening Post}, 7 September 1928, p.10.
\textsuperscript{171} \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine}, 1 November 1928, p.43.
\textsuperscript{172} \textit{New Zealand Railways Magazine}, 1 November 1929, p.23.
year spell and take a fortnight’s vacation themselves’. The discussion was typical of interwar gossip columns; a rich and glamorous lifestyle was evoked but the columnist also poked fun and took the opportunity for social commentary.

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The complexities of the presence of the opulent fishermen in New Zealand usefully widen the focus on team sports characteristic of existing New Zealand historiography. Daley has argued that the sports history that has made a lasting impression on the general writing of New Zealand history is the work that offers a nationalistic, masculinist, interpretation of rugby and its place in New Zealand culture. Team sports in New Zealand popular culture and history are mired in egalitarian and masculine mythology. Jock Phillips has deemed rugby and its rituals the purest expression of the Pākehā male stereotype. Individual sports like fishing widen this discourse, especially exclusionist sports like sport fishing that privilege wealthy tourists over local participants. Where the sports field has been seen as erasing class difference, on the interwar waters of the Bay of Islands class was crucial. If men like Ernest Wiffin ever hooked a better fish than Zane Grey they would need to take it off the hook or otherwise ‘throw the match’ to pander to ego of the opulent fisherman. Like the transnational endurance swimmers of the early 1930s used by Daley to suggest the limits of national narratives, the opulent fishermen are another interpretative challenge and opportunity for historians that do not fit neatly within a national framework. A large number of those who fished in New Zealand were privileged visitors from overseas, and the sport required significant investments of time and money. This conspicuous consumption adds to our understanding of the connections between consumerism and masculinity in interwar New Zealand.

The masculinity embodied in the opulent fishermen neatly encapsulates key themes of the interwar period. The importance of technical knowledge as a marker of masculinity was a

clear shift from the intellectual knowledge foregrounded by the political visitors and the itinerant lecturers dealt with in Chapters One and Two. The consumerism at the heart of this masculinity was central to the interwar period, and is reflected in the change from the predominantly text-based handbills and flyers of the itinerant lecturers to the bold image-driven advertising of fishing. The opulent fishermen also illustrate class and economic issues in the interwar period, with the ongoing wealth of individuals amidst the economic crisis of the early 1930s — especially in the US — and its associated tensions finding expression in New Zealand’s fishing spots. Big game fishing was often featured in the New Zealand Railways Magazine — an exclusively interwar publication — which sought to promote domestic tourism. With its mixture of travel writing and technical articles this magazine was the perfect site for the expression of the masculine culture of the opulent fisherman.180

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Just as the itinerant lecturing circuits forged by impresarios like R.S. Smythe in Chapter Two had become well-furrowed by the early twentieth century, the international fishing circuits forged by travelling fishermen in the interwar period were clearly defined by the 1930s. New Zealand featured prominently as an ‘Eldorado’ on a circuit that ran from California to Florida, down to Chile and Mexico, across the islands of the Pacific, and up New Zealand and Australia. This circuit brought the masculine culture of the opulent fisherman to New Zealand, and helped to define areas such as the Bay of Islands as a millionaires’ playground that affluent overseas visitors could exploit at their leisure. The wealth and privilege of these visitors created a large power imbalance with local populations throughout this transnational circuit, and New Zealand was no exception: the rich came to play and the poor facilitated them.

The culture of the opulent fishermen in the interwar period prized the size and quantity of fish caught, and these ‘sportsmen’ were insatiable in their appetite for hauling in large game fish. New Zealanders were employed by these visitors, and fished alongside them. Some were opulent fishermen themselves. The engagement of New Zealand men in this culture demonstrates much more complexity than the ‘rugby, racing, and beer’ stereotype of New Zealand masculinity allows. The widespread involvement of women and the popularity of sport fishing as a shared pursuit between couples subverts masculinist narratives of sport in

New Zealand. As in Chapters One and Two, New Zealanders were confident in their dealings with international sportsmen and the relationship to the wider world that this represented. Rather than simply being passive one-way consumers of the gendered ideals imported by the opulent fishermen, this chapter has demonstrated that there were limits to how far interwar New Zealanders would pander to and embrace these ‘illustrious’ visitors.
Conclusion

Although they have long since departed, the presence of the visitors to New Zealand discussed in this thesis still lingers. I regularly walk to the top of Mount Eden, and as I sit at the summit, I imagine Mark Twain and Arthur Conan Doyle doing much the same.\(^1\) Whenever I am in the Auckland Town Hall, I imagine Roald Amundsen addressing the crowd from its stage.\(^2\) On the rare occasions that I have been granted access to the Northern Club, I am tantalised by the thought of the others who have slipped through its discreet entrance to seek refuge behind its ivy-covered walls. As I rode through Tokaanu during the Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge, I looked down at the Tongariro River and thought of Zane Grey casting his fly out across its waters.\(^3\) As I endure countless tedious hours in transit on the music circuit I am reminded of Robert Sparrow Smythe and his clients. When I drive south through Owhango, I think of George Bernard Shaw and his wife sitting in the rickety stands erected for an axeman’s carnival there.\(^4\) With a little bit of effort, Google Street View can approximate the angle of the photographer who captured Henry Demarest Lloyd and his son setting out from Kurow in 1895 (Figure 40). The buildings that provided Lloyd’s backdrop in 1895 still stand. As I stroll past the old Public Trust Building on Lambton Quay in Wellington, I think of Lloyd.\(^5\) As the ferry from Waiheke pulls into the terminal in downtown Auckland, I try to work out where the Fisherman was berthed when Zane Grey was photographed onboard with members of the Navaho and Hopi tribes who were in town to promote the film adaptation of his novel *The Vanishing American* (Figure 41). I still smile at the thought of George Bernard Shaw cutting a ‘prominent figure’ in a bright red bathing costume on Mount Maunganui Beach in 1934.\(^6\) Perhaps these recurrent associations are what Lydia Monin sought to approximate in choosing a geographical structure for her work.\(^7\)

\(^2\) *Auckland Star*, 23 April 1912, p.8.
\(^4\) George Bernard Shaw with Mrs Shaw at an Axeman’s carnival near Taumaranui, photograph, 11 April 1934, F-19071-1/2, ATL.
\(^5\) ‘I passed few hours in New Zealand with deeper interest than those I spent with Mr John C. Martin, then Public Trustee…familiarizing myself with the methods of his office’. Henry Demarest Lloyd, *Newest England: Notes of a Democratic Traveller in New Zealand, with some Australian Comparisons*, New York, 1900, p.21.
\(^6\) *Auckland Star*, 26 March 1934, p.8.
\(^7\) Lydia Monin, *From the Writer’s Notebook: Around New Zealand with 80 Authors*, Auckland, 2006.

Figure 41: Zane Grey pictured with members of the Navaho and Hopi tribes in Auckland to promote *The Vanishing American* in 1927. Zane Grey, *Tales from a Fisherman’s Log*, Auckland, 1978, p.17.
The lure of celebrity for historians and history readers alike is strong. The librarian I was working with at the Alexander Turnbull Library was just as excited and intrigued as I was when we discovered the photograph of George Bernard Shaw and his wife in Owhango.\(^8\) There is, admittedly, only one person I know of that appreciated my discovery of Douglas Mawson’s sock in the National Library of Australia as much as I did.\(^9\) Handling William and Maud Pember Reeves’s membership badges for the Cyclists’ Touring Club in 1898 provided me with a tangible connection to their bike rides with Shaw around London.\(^10\) More active readers of New Zealand history will already be familiar with the presence of many of the visitors mentioned in this thesis, but these tourists of yesteryear nevertheless still have the ability to jolt our understandings of the past. When I present this material at conferences, it stimulates discussion. Occasionally the influence of Chris Brickell’s ‘illustrative’ rather than ‘indicative’ use of historical photographs will inspire a certain line of questioning pertaining to the nature of the relationship between close companions Archibald Forbes and Frederic Villiers (Figure 13-Figure 15).\(^11\) I am still not adequately equipped to answer those particular questions. Just as they fascinated the New Zealanders who were their contemporaries, these ‘illustrious visitors’ still entice us today.

The term ‘illustrious’ has been applied to many visitors to New Zealand. Its usage has sometimes been sincere, and sometimes tinged with irony. This usage has changed over time. Some of the political visitors had academic, professional, and financial pedigrees that were certainly illustrious, but came to New Zealand to learn from its people and institutions. This interest and flattery earned them widespread endearment. Itinerant lecturers utilized the growing commercialization of international travel to make money through the speaking circuit, and would often have had a knowing twinkle in their eye as they played up to the role of the illustrious guest that was their ticket to an income in New Zealand. Fame allowed them to lead a transnational existence, but determined campaigns in print and posters were necessary to maintain public recognition. Some truly illustrious visitors to the fishing lodges of interwar New Zealand left no more trace of their fleeting presence than a name in the social columns, yet Zane Grey preferred to announce his illustriousness through a megaphone. Some of these visitors have retained or increased their eminence in public perception today;

\(^8\) George Bernard Shaw with Mrs Shaw at an Axeman’s carnival near Taumarunui, photograph, 11 April 1934, F-19071-1/2, ATL.
\(^9\) Sock belonging to Sir Douglas Mawson, Crome Collection, A40006751, National Library of Australia, Canberra.
\(^10\) Personal miscellanea, William Pember Reeves Papers, MS-Papers-0129-24, ATL.
others have been usurped and faded from view. The knowing and ever-changing deployment of terms such as ‘illustrious’ to describe privileged visitors shows New Zealanders confidently engaging with social and cultural icons.

Figure 42: George Bernard Shaw at Tikitere (Hell’s Gate), 1934, Jean Duncan Collection, Auckland War Memorial Museum Library.
Regardless of how these celebrities have crept into our historical consciousness, knowing more about them enriches our understanding of New Zealand history. The connections between New Zealand, the visitors discussed, and the wider world forces us to question the degree to which New Zealand has, or has had, a ‘destiny apart’. The jingoism of the social laboratory has a hollow ring to it when the accusations of legislative plagiarism against William Pember Reeves are exposed. Yet re-con structing the political network that Reeves was a part of reveals more depth to New Zealand social and political history than nationalistic assertions allow. The sense of being part of the wider world feels different when you realize that Mark Twain was grudgingly in New Zealand to pay off his debts. But knowledge of the public figures that lectured from New Zealand’s stages deepens our understanding of culture and entertainment in this period. Having the world’s first Tourism Department loses a little bit of its lustre when you find out how obsequious its ministers were to Zane Grey and his desire to invade another man’s property. Yet we gain insight into New Zealand’s sporting histories when wealthy international fishermen are added to the discourse.

Taken together, the three circuits examined in this thesis clearly demonstrate that New Zealand was tightly bound to many parts of the rest of the world throughout this period. Addressing the Liberal era in transnational context reveals exciting and important new history — such as the development of new forms of government intervention and new conceptions of the citizen — that is global in scope. Taking stock of the celebrities enticed along the entertainment circuit by Smythe shows the surprising degree of involvement a single Australian impresario had in shaping entertainment in New Zealand and beyond. The waters that the opulent fishermen prowled in the Bay of Islands and Whitianga remain firm fixtures on an international fishing circuit, and their fishing lodges still discreetly entertain wealthy travellers. The 976 lb black marlin that Captain Laurie Mitchell caught in the Bay of Islands in 1926 stood unbeaten as the all-tackle world record for decades. The 673 lb swordfish caught by London fisherman H. White-Wickham off Cape Brett in 1928 still holds the record for its class in New Zealand. We write more useful and engaging history when we locate New Zealand in the currents of politics, intellectual life, and leisure that circulated the globe in this period.

Although connections between the wider world and New Zealand have been important for many decades, this thesis also contributes to our understanding of transnational networks by showing ways in which they have changed. The circuits that New Zealand was a part of shifted over time according to intellectual fashions, government priorities, and publicity campaigns. The political interest surrounding the Liberal reforms stimulated a brief but intense circuit of travel and correspondence in the decades surrounding the turn of the century. The itinerant lecturing circuit was more prolonged. It grew out of the entertainment circuits forged by minstrels, circuses, opera companies, and musicians, and stretched into the interwar period. Throughout its peak years the speakers on the circuit changed from general lecturers, ready to speak on any topic, to war correspondents and adventurers, to authors, scientists, theosophists, and satirists, to a group of polar explorers, to the world’s most prominent spiritualist. Public lectures may not be the popular form of entertainment they once were, and Hawera may not receive so many visiting celebrities these days, but New Zealand and Australia are still often considered a single market for touring entertainers. New Zealand’s past looks different when its illustrious visitors are understood, not just as transient spectators, but as contributing characters — good, bad, or indifferent.
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