

**Labourers' letters in the New Zealand Journal, Wellington, 1840-45:
Lefebvre, Bernstein and pedagogies of appropriation.**

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Henri Lefebvre suggested that social researchers engage in 'the concrete analysis of rhythms' in order to reveal the 'pedagogy of appropriation (the appropriation of the body, as of spatial practice)'. Lefebvre's spatial analysis has influenced educational researchers, while the idea of 'pedagogy' has travelled beyond education. This interdisciplinary paper combines Lefebvre's analytical trilogy of perceived, conceived and lived spaces with Bernstein's 'pedagogical device' in an interrogation of historical documents. It engages in a 'rhythm analysis' of the New Zealand Company's 'pedagogical appropriation' of a group of agricultural labourers into its 'systematic colonisation scheme'. The temporal-spatial rhythms of the labourers' lives are accessible in nine surviving letters they wrote in Wellington and sent to Surrey between 1841-1844. By revealing how their bodies were 'traversed by rhythms rather as the 'ether' is traversed by waves,' we understand how bodies, social space and the self are mutually constitutive and constituted.

Keywords: history; Lefebvre; letters/literacy; colonisation

Education's fragmented fields of inquiry retain some coherence in their common orientation around the 'pedagogical.' As borders between human sciences became increasingly porous, the idea of 'the pedagogical' flowed beyond education into disciplines such as geography. Conversely, geographical (spatial) theories infused scholarship in education.¹ Henri Lefebvre is viewed as an 'overarching presence in the educational appropriation of spatial theories with many researchers referring to his work on perceived, conceived and lived space.'²

In Lefebvre's work the 'concept of space denotes and connotes all possible spaces, whether abstract or 'real', mental or social.'³ *Perceived* (social) space is that of everyday 'social practice, the body, the use of the hands, the practical basis of the perception of the outside world.'⁴ Lefebvre argued that: 'What we live are rhythms – rhythms experienced subjectively'.⁵ Rhythms of the perceived include those of the body (breathing, the heartbeat, the menstrual cycle) and of nature (day-night, the seasons and so on). *Conceived* (abstract or mental) spaces are 'discursively constructed by professionals and technocrats.'⁶ Mandated enclosures of space (as private or public 'property') they emanate from 'the "world" of commodities, its "logical" and its worldwide strategies; as well as the power of money and that of the political state.'⁷ Rhythms of the conceived include timeframes of industry, regulatory bureaucracy and the metropolis.

¹ For reviews of the influence of geographical concepts in education see: Kalervo N. Gulson & Colin Symes, 'Knowing one's place: space, theory, education, *Critical studies in education* 48 (2007): 97-119; Bob Lingard & Trevor Gale, T. (2007). The emergent structure of feeling: what does it mean for critical educational studies and research? *Ibid.*, 1-23.

² Gulson & Symes. 'Knowing ones place,' 101.

³ Henri Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991): 299.

⁴ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 38.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁶ Kirsten Simonsen, 'Bodies, sensations, space and time: The contribution from Henri Lefebvre'. *Geografiska Annaler* 87B (2005): 7.

⁷ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 53.

Lived spaces tap into unconscious, imaginary and symbolic dimensions of experience ‘kept alive and acceptable by the arts and literature. This “third space” not only transcends but also has the power to refigure the balance of popular “perceived space” and official “conceived space.”’⁸ Rhythms of ‘lived’ space range from ‘explosive and endogenous’⁹ eruptions from the depths of the unconscious to the gentle seasonal commemorations of rituals, holydays and festivals.

Lefebvre conceptualised the body as ‘traversed by rhythms rather as the ‘ether’ is traversed by waves’.¹⁰ Simonsen elaborates:

As part of the lived experience, the body constitutes a practico-sensory realm that is performed in the spatio-temporal rhythms of everyday life. In these rhythms, constituting and constituted, different modalities of social spatiality and social temporality are incorporated as cyclical and linear repetitions, and as the conjunction of the perceived, the conceived and the lived.¹¹

Other than the 1991 translation of *Production of Space* very little of Lefebvre’s work is available in English¹². The term *pedagogy* appears once in this text:

It is possible to envision a sort of ‘rhythm analysis’ which could address itself to the concrete analysis of rhythms, and perhaps even to their use (or appropriation). Such an approach would seek to discover those rhythms whose existence is signalled only through mediations, through indirect effects or manifestations. Rhythm analysis might eventually even displace psychoanalysis, as being more concrete, more effective, and closer to a pedagogy of appropriation (the appropriation of the body, as of spatial practice).¹³

Leaving aside Lefebvre’s allusion to ‘psychoanalysis’, I test the usefulness of ‘rhythm analysis’ in a historical study of the ‘pedagogical appropriation’ (of the bodies and spatial practices) of a group of agricultural labourers whose emigration in 1841 was supported under the New Zealand Company’s [Company’s] ‘systematic

⁸ Rob Shields, ‘Henri Lefebvre’, in *Key thinkers on space and place*, ed. Phil Hubbard, Rob Kitchin & Gill Valentine, (London: Sage, 2004), 210.

⁹ Lefebvre, p. 204.

¹⁰ Lefebvre, p. 206.

¹¹ Simonsen, p. 11.

¹² For reviews of Lefebvre’s *oeuvre*, see Shields; Simonsen.

¹³ Lefebvre, p. 205.

colonisation scheme'. My 'data' include nine letters sent from Wellington by members of this group. Eight of these 'private' letters 'home' survive in published form in the *New Zealand Journal* [NZJ], a newspaper allied with the Company's interests. The ninth, in handwritten form, remained within the family.

Lefebvre did not elaborate on the 'pedagogy of appropriation.' This paper demonstrates how Bernstein's idea of the 'pedagogical device' can usefully be put to work in a rhythm analysis of 'pedagogies of appropriation.' Bernstein defined pedagogy as

a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator – appropriate either from the point of view of the acquirer or by some other body(s) or both'.¹⁴

A 'pedagogical device'¹⁵ transmits criteria for the production of what count as 'legitimate texts.' As 'legitimate texts', the letters reveal contours of the 'psychic and mental maps'¹⁶ with which 'emigrants of the labouring classes' charted, and helped to 'produce' a new social space.

As 'conceived space' Wellington was imagined in London. Projected across oceans its blueprint was superimposed over Te Whanganui-a-Tara, the lived space of Māori, who had complex economic, political and spiritual connections with its landscape. In Lefebvre's terms, Wellington was 'an architecture of concepts, forms and laws whose abstract truth is imposed on the reality of the senses, of bodies, of wishes and desires.'¹⁷

¹⁴ Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 78

¹⁵ Bernstein, *Pedagogy*, xiv.

¹⁶ Erik Olssen, 'Where to from here? Reflections on the Twentieth Century Historiography of Nineteenth Century New Zealand', *The New Zealand Journal of History* [NZJH], 26 (1992): 73.

¹⁷ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 139.

Part One introduces the labourers, the Company as a ‘pedagogical device’, and the immigrant letter as ‘legitimate text’. Part Two explores Wellington as the imposition of the Company’s ‘rational plan.’ Part Three is a rhythm analysis of the labourers’ letters as ‘legitimate’ texts.

Emigrants of the ‘labouring classes’

On January 8th 1841 the *Lord William Bentinck* - a 444 ton barque chartered by the New Zealand Company - set sail from Gravesend carrying ‘240 emigrants, chiefly of the agricultural classes, and eight cabin passengers’.¹⁸ Four months later, they entered Port Nicholson. The tents and huts comprising ‘Wellington’ had recently been moved from the flood-prone site first selected for the town in 1839 in Pito-One [Petone] near the mouth of the Hutt River. The new site was Thorndon, a narrow strip of beach to the west of the harbour¹⁹. By May 24th, the date of the *Bentinck*’s arrival, ‘The Beach’ was lined with prefabricated huts and raupo whare [Māori-style houses made of reeds]. At either end were pā [fortified Māori villages]: Pipitea Pā at the northern (Thorndon) end and Te Aro Pā to the south.

In the mid-nineteenth century village and kinship groups sometimes emigrated together.²⁰ Amongst the *Bentinck*’s steerage passengers were four families and three single men from the village of Ham in Surrey.²¹ The single men were Charles Stent, William Smith and Charles Brown. The four families were John and Ann Howell (with 5 children under 14); William and Ann Dew (with 7 children under 14, and a

¹⁸ ‘Arrivals,’ *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* [NZG], May 22, 1841, 2.

¹⁹ Chris Cochrane, ‘“A Queer Cantakerous Lot...”: The Human Factor in the Conduct of the New Zealand Company’s Wellington Surveys.’ In *The Making of Wellington 1800-1914*, ed. David Hamer and Roberta Nicholls, (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990), 107-128.

²⁰ Raewyn Dalzeil, ‘Emigration and Kinship: Migrants to New Plymouth 1840-1843,’ NZJH 25 (1991): 112-128; Jock Phillips & Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland, 1800-1945*. (Auckland: Auckland University Press), 65; 74-75.

²¹ For background information see two books by Evelyn Pritchard, a volunteer researcher for the National Trust at Ham House, Richmond, Surrey: *The 1841 Emigrants from Ham to New Zealand Sponsored by Algernon Tollemache of Ham House* (Private Publication, Richmond, 2003); *A Portrait of Ham in Early Victorian Times, 1840-1860*, (Alma Publishers, Richmond, 1999).

daughter of 15); Samuel and Jane Retter, with two children born at Ham and a new baby born on board; John and Catherine Philps with five children (4 under 14, and one of 15). Jane Retter and John Philps were brother and sister. This group had been recruited and sponsored by their employers, the Tollemache brothers, owners of Ham House, landlords of the Ham estates, shareholders and directors of the New Zealand Company.²²

Shortly after the ship's arrival, William Wakefield, the Company's agent in Wellington, wrote to its secretary in London. A brother of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, William had led the Company's advance expedition in 1839 to purchase land from Māori, organise surveys and prepare for the first groups of settlers. In his despatch, William informed the Company of the *Bentinck's* safe arrival, commending 'the high order in which I found her immigrants who ... have been very well selected.'²³ He 'read' the immigrants as of the 'right kind,' their bodies as 'legitimate texts' according to Company criteria.²⁴

The founder of the Company, Edward Gibbon Wakefield [EGW], conceived New Zealand 'as a scientific experiment in constructing a new civilisation.'²⁵ His 'systematic colonisation scheme' was based on three main features: '1st, the sale of lands, at an uniform and sufficient price; and 2^{ndly}, the employment of a large portion of the purchase-money, as an immigration Fund.'

The great object of the price is to secure the most desirable proportions between people and land; but the plan has the further result of producing a revenue, which will not only

²² For details see Sue Middleton, 'The Seven Servants of Ham: Labourers' Letters from Wellington in the New Zealand Journal, 1840-45.' NZJH (Forthcoming 2010).

²³ William Wakefield, 'To the Secretary of the New Zealand Company,' Wellington June 8 1841. Manuscript, Archives New Zealand (Wellington), NZC 3/1.

²⁴ For an outline of 'Systematic Colonisation' theory see: Edward Gibbon Wakefield, 'Letter from Sydney the Principal Town of Australasia 1837,' in *Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield*, ed. M.F. Lloyd Prichard, (Auckland: Collins, 1969), 99-185.

²⁵ Erik Olssen, 'Wakefield and the Scottish Enlightenment, with Particular Reference to Adam Smith and His Wealth of Nations,' in *Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream: A Reconsideration*, ed. Friends of the Turnbull Library (Wellington: The Friends of the Turnbull Library and GP Publications, 1997), 61.

supply the requisite profit to the shareholders of the Company, but furnishes the means for an Immigration Fund, - a Fund constantly applicable to the purpose of bringing labour to the colony, - that is in causing the best SORT of colonisation to proceed at the greatest possible rate.²⁶

The Company enticed applicants with prospects of class mobility. The ‘sufficient price’ for land

... diminishes the period during which the labourer must work for hire, and by the rapid progress which it imparts to the best sort of colonisation, it explains to the Labouring class of immigrants that every one of them who is industrious and thrifty, may be sure to become not merely an owner of land, but also in his turn, an employer of hired labourers, a master of servants.²⁷

The possibility of becoming an owner and employer would encourage ‘self-control and prudence;’ and this ‘would civilise those who in Britain were condemned to barbarism and create the basis for a more democratic polity.’²⁸

The Company’s plans to ‘civilise’ can be seen as *pedagogical*. Bernstein defined pedagogy as

a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator – appropriate either from the point of view of the acquirer or by some other body(s) or both’.²⁹

Prospective immigrants had to convince ‘providers and evaluators’ that they met their criteria.

Pedagogical devices transmit criteria for the production of ‘legitimate texts’.

A ‘legitimate text is any realisation of the part of the acquirer which attracts evaluation.’³⁰ The Company’s secretary in London urged William Wakefield to

... stimulate the Colonists to write by any opportunity to their friends at home. They may be assured that not the most trifling facts relative to the Country, - to their condition

²⁶ 'New Zealand Land Company', NZG, 2 May 1840, 1.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Olssen, ‘Wakefield and the Scottish Enlightenment,’ 48.

²⁹ Bernstein, *Pedagogy*, 78

³⁰ Ibid, xiv.

and mode of life, - and to their prospects, whether individually, or as connected with the Colony, will be received without Interest here. This remark is equally applicable to the labouring Emigrants, as to the more wealthy class of Settlers - the condition of the working people and their families will always be an object of peculiar solicitude with the Directors, and of great moment to the character of the Settlement.³¹

‘Personal’ letters were not intended to be ‘private’ in today’s sense: they were written with wider audiences in mind. Letters were read aloud, copied, circulated and passed on to newspapers established to support colonisation. Immigrants of the rural labouring class were ‘semi-literate’ at best.³² Nine letters sent from Wellington by members of the Ham group between 1841-44 have survived. One (from Jane Retter to her mother) had remained in the Philp family in handwritten form. The other eight were published in the NZJ.³³ While historians have suspected the letters in ‘propaganda’ newspapers of editorial bias or fabrication,³⁴ there is clear evidence (discussed in a previous paper³⁵) of these labourers’ authorship of the ‘originals’ and that the editors had ‘tidied up’ spelling and grammar rather than altering or inserting ‘content’.

Letters bear traces of ‘the ways in which ‘selves’ were constituted in particular social, geographical and ethnic (and inter-ethnic) settings.’³⁶ David Gerber argues that ‘Immigration has always put migrants at risk of a radical rupture of the self’³⁷ and letters meet a ‘psychological need for continuity’. However, the ‘I’ who

³¹ I. Ward, ‘Respecting the New Zealand Journal and Mr Ward’s Pamphlet with Recommendation to Frequent Correspondence.’ Manuscript NZC 102/1 (No 41), 1840, Archives NZ, Wellington.

³² For the literacy levels of this class of rural labourers in England, see David Vincent, *Literacy and popular culture: England 1750-1914*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 12. For evidence of the literacy of the Ham letter-writers, see Middleton, ‘Seven Servants.’

³³ References to the letters are in the final section of this paper.

³⁴ Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The adaptations of English and Scottish immigrants in nineteenth-century America*. (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press 1972), 4; David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of consolation: Personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1994), 26; David Gerber, ‘The immigrant letter between positivism and populism: American historians’ uses of personal correspondence,’ in Rebecca Earle, Ed., *Epistolary selves: Letters and letter-writers 1600-1945*, (Aldershot UK, 1999), 37.

³⁵ Middleton, ‘Seven servants of Ham’.

³⁶ Gibbons, ‘Far Side’, 45.

³⁷ Gerber, ‘Acts of deceiving and withholding in immigrant letters: Personal identity and self-representation in personal correspondence,’ *Journal of Social History* 39: 318.

writes to 'you' is 'not the "actual person" but an epistolary version or emanation of them.'³⁸ The 'self' of a landless labourer at the bottom of England's rural hierarchy was not the 'self' encoded in Wakefield's scripts or demanded for survival in the new environment. While writing letters did sustain old identities, it also crafted and projected new ones.

Conceiving Wellington

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre drew attention to the physical, mental and symbolic/imaginary dimensions of places:

... first the physical – nature, the Cosmos; secondly the mental, including logical and formal abstractions; and thirdly, the social. In other words, we are concerned with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias.³⁹

Te Whanganui-a-Tara had a turbulent history of tribal [iwi] and sub-tribal [hapu] migrations, occupations, conflicts and agreements.⁴⁰ Iwi and hapu had spiritual connections with its 'landscape, and to stones, rocks, insects and other things, seen and unseen.'⁴¹ In 1839 William Wakefield had negotiated with local chiefs to 'buy' the land around the harbour. His main interpreter was Dicky Barrett, a trader of little education or understanding of the legal concepts he was to translate. Barrett had married a relative of Chief Te Puni of Pito-One [Petone].⁴² Rosemary Tonk⁴³ explains that half of those who 'signed' to the sale 'were the chiefs of Te Puni's pā at

³⁸ Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolarium: On Theorising Letters and Correspondences' in *Auto/Biography*, 12: 214.

³⁹ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 11.

⁴⁰ Tara's Harbour. Tara was the ancestor from whom descended the first tribe to occupy the harbour. For a tribal history see Angela Ballara, 'Te Whanganui-a-Tara: Phases of Māori occupation of Wellington Harbour C1800-1840' in Hamer & Nicholls *Making of Wellington*, 9-34.

⁴¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonising methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. (Dunedin, London and New York: University of Otago Press and Zed Books, 1999), 74.

⁴² For details see Rosemarie Tonk, "'A difficult and complicated question": The New Zealand Company's Wellington, Port Nicholson Claim,' in Hamer & Nicholls (Eds.), *The making of Wellington*, 35-60 .

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Petone' and Te Wharepouri of nearby Ngauranga. Importantly, 'several important chiefs such as those of Te Aro, Pipitea and Kumutoto Pā – the Māori settlements along the 'Beach' - had taken 'little or no part in the proceedings.'⁴⁴

As 'conceived' space, Wellington was:

... a settlement founded as the end result of a plan devised at the other end of the world and without any knowledge of the site for which it would be applied. Indeed, the colonists set sail before the site for the town had even been acquired –which shows how influenced they were by the vision of an ideal society held out in the New Zealand Company's publicity for the colonisation scheme. Wellington began as a totally abstract idea, not as a town devised in relation to a specific site. The Company sold land orders involving 1100 town acres and then had to provide a site that would provide them.⁴⁵

'Systematic colonisation' involved the enclosure of Māori communal lands, their confiscation and/or sale as individually owned 'lots.' Lefebvre used the term '*representations of space*' to refer to codified visualisations of the conceived – maps, blueprints, charts and timeframes, noting that these often assume 'a rectilinear form such as a mesh-work or chequerwork.'⁴⁶ Confronted with the reality of Wellington's mountainous terrain, William Mein Smith, the Company Surveyor questioned orders to use a 'grid' as a template:

Based on the creation of a regular 'chessboard' of rectangles, it had been most extensively used previously on relatively flat lands. Smith recommended that it be abandoned, and that triangulation or some more simple system be substituted. [William] Wakefield would have none of it. The system had been prescribed and it was not Smith's job to question it.⁴⁷

Even before this survey had been commissioned, land orders were sold. A ballot for 100,000 acres of Wellington 'lots' was held in London on the 29th July 1939. The ballot determined the order in which each buyer would be able to choose a town acre and a country section once the survey was complete. The Tollemache

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ David Hamer, 'Wellington on the Urban Frontier,' In Hamer & Nicolls, *Making of Wellington*, 235.

⁴⁶ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 139.

⁴⁷ Brad Patterson, "'A queer cantakerous lot...': The human factor in the conduct of the New Zealand Company's Wellington surveys,' in Hamer & Nicholls (Eds.), *The making of Wellington*, 69.

family purchased 48 of the 1100 Wellington balloted lots. The eldest of the three brothers, Lionel Tollemache 8th Earl Dysart, was a recluse who lived in London, leaving his two younger brothers to run the estate. The elder, Frederick Tollemache M.P., lived at and managed Ham, and the younger brother, Algernon, managed the family's wider investments, including the purchase of land in New Zealand.⁴⁸

Algernon bought 33 sections; Frederick 12; and three other Tollemaches one each. Dudley Sinclair⁴⁹, a nephew of the Tollemache brothers, bought nine.⁵⁰

The Tollemaches would be 'absentee' landlords until 1850, when Algernon made the first of three visits.⁵¹ Sinclair sailed in the *Oriental*, arriving at Petone on 31st January 1840.⁵² A few days later he 'sold 5 sections for 1300 guineas; and he is now heartily sorry for the sale, the buyers of them now declaring they are worth £10,000, as they are mostly low numbers. Sections below No 10 are not to be bought for less than £1,000.'⁵³ 'Cartographers, urban planners [and] property speculators'⁵⁴ shaped the 'conceived spaces' of Wellington.

In mid-March 1840 the tents, prefabricated shacks and raupo huts were moved to Thorndon. Māori at Te Aro, Pipitea, Kumutoto and Tiakiwai Pā 'opposed the surveyors by pulling up survey stakes and obliterating markings. They held that the land had neither been sold by themselves, the owners, nor paid for and that the Pakeha

⁴⁸ Pritchard, *1841 Emigrants*, 96.

⁴⁹ On October 23 2008 I received an e-mail from Charles Kidd, editor of deBrett's Peerage and I thank him for his assistance. He informed me that Dudley Sinclair was the eldest son of Lady Catherine Camilla Sinclair, née Tollemache.

⁵⁰ 'List of original one-acre sections in the town of Wellington, and their purchasers' in Lois E. Ward, (1928). *Early Wellington*. (Undated Facsimile Edition, Papakura, NZ: Southern Reprints): 191-206.

⁵¹ 'Tollemache Family Correspondence, 1847-1872', Manuscript Alexander Turnbull Library [ATL], Wellington, Micro-MS-0960. Thanks to Lord Sudely, a Tollemache descendant, for sending me a photocopy of this correspondence. Also discussed in Pritchard, *1841 Emigrants*, 67-74.

⁵² Dudley Sinclair emigrated to Wellington in 1839 and served as a contact for his uncle's business. He was part of Edward Jerningham Wakefield's immediate circle, but fell out of his favour when he 'deserted' Wellington, sold all his land, and moved to the 'new capital' in Auckland as a land speculator! See Edward Jerningham Wakefield, *Adventure in New Zealand*, (Facsimile Edition, London, 1845). Sinclair wrote letters to his Uncle Algernon and the NZJ published 'Copy of a letter from Mr D. Sinclair to his uncle', February 9th 1842, NZJ, July 23 1842, 7.

⁵³ Letter from Dr Dorset, 21st November 1849, cited in L.E. Ward, *Early Wellington*, 48.

⁵⁴ Shields, 'Henri Lefebvre', 210.

should return to the land they had bought at Petone and Ngauranga.’⁵⁵ Confrontations flared when settlers attempted to enclose sacred burial grounds and cultivations.

Lefebvre described lived spaces as infused with symbolic meanings – personal/ biographical and cultural/ collective: ‘Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people.’⁵⁶ Māori ‘identities’ are spatially/temporally inscribed in landscape:

For Māori there are several ways of identifying one’s indigenous ‘community.’ One commonly used way is to introduce yourself by naming the mountain, the river, the tribal ancestor, the tribe and the family. Through this form of introduction you locate yourself in a set of identities which have been framed geographically, politically and genealogically.⁵⁷

Encompassing the pre-linguistic imagery, symbols and dreams of earliest infancy, lived space is the mainspring of mythology, spirituality and the imaginary - expressed in the ‘representational spaces’ of poetry, visual arts and symbols. Lefebvre wrote that ‘Ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts are students of such representational spaces.’⁵⁸ Translating lived cultural meanings into the disembodied abstractions of the conceived, the human sciences, ‘at once isolated and imperialistic – the two are surely interconnected – have specific relations with mental and social spaces.’⁵⁹ He asked ‘what intervenes, what occupies the interstices between representations of space and representational spaces?’⁶⁰

In early to mid-nineteenth century human sciences, Māori were usually conceptualised as more ‘evolved’ than other ‘native’ peoples.⁶¹ Ernst Dieffenbach, a founding member of the London Ethnological Society, accompanied William

⁵⁵ Tonk, ‘Difficult and complicated’, p. 45

⁵⁶ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 37.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*, 126.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶¹ See Pat Maloney, ‘Savagery and civilisation: Early Victorian notions,’ *NZJH*, 35 (2001), 153-156.

Wakefield's expedition. Adopting an 'environmental determinist' position, Dieffenbach argued that 'because New Zealand produced very little food that could be simply plucked and eaten ... Māori had had to develop agriculture, while the cooler climate meant they must provide themselves with protective clothing and shelter. All this required the use of mental, as well as ... physical, energy.'⁶²

Similarly, Edward Gibbon Wakefield argued: 'The New Zealanders are not savages properly speaking, but a people capable of civilization. A main object will be to do all that can be done to get them to embrace the language, customs, religion, and social ties of the superior race.'⁶³ The mistakes in other colonies had:

... in all probability, been mainly brought about from the circumstances of the natives having been *all* reduced to one level of society; namely, that of the poorest order among the colonists. The chief loses his nobility, becomes a common labourer, and is worn out as such, being wholly precluded from defending himself, his family, or his people from wrongs. The purpose of the Company has been to guard the chief families against this cruel debasement by giving them property in land.⁶⁴

Maori were to be assimilated. Communally held tribal land would be appropriated and reconceptualised as 'property.' Civilisation would result from competition with settlers to compete for wealth and status in British social hierarchies. Accordingly, one tenth of the balloted lots (110 out of 1100 sections) were set aside as Native Reserve 'as if the reserved lands had been actual purchases made of the Company by the natives.'⁶⁵ Sacred sites, gardens and other significant sites were not taken into account: the 'lived' would be overlaid with the enclosures of the conceived.

⁶² Robert Grant, 'New Zealand "Naturally": Ernst Dieffenbach, environmental determinism and the mid nineteenth century British colonisation of New Zealand', NZJH, 37 (2003), 26.

⁶³ Edward Gibbon Wakefield to Charles Torlesse 12 May, 1837, in *Copies of letters from Edward Gibbon Wakefield and members of his family, 1815-1853*, British Library Manuscript Add.35261 ff.75.

⁶⁴ New Zealand Company, 'The Third Report of the Directors of the New Zealand Company, Presented to the Annual Court of Proprietors Held on the 1st May 1841, Appendix No. 4.' London, 1842, 55.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Recruitment of emigrants was 'aimed at two groups: the hard-working labouring class, which suffered from low wages and insecure employment, and the respectable but 'uneasy' middle class, which found it difficult to maintain its position in conditions of extreme competition and vulnerability.'⁶⁶ Purchasers such as the Tollemaches were urged to submit the names of 'labouring persons ... for a free passage, for the approval of the company.'⁶⁷ Preference would be given to:

Agricultural labourers, shepherds, bakers, blacksmiths, braziers and tinmen, smiths, shipwrights, boat-builders, wheelwrights, sawyers, cabinet-makers, carpenters, coopers, curriers, farriers, millwrights, harness makers, boot and shoemakers, tailors, tanners, brickmakers, lime-burners, and all persons engaged in the erection of buildings.⁶⁸

Evelyn Pritchard describes how Algernon Tollemache

began to draw the attention of workers on the Ham estate to the advantages of life in New Zealand, particularly for their children, offering to sponsor those who would like to take the plunge for a better life and future, so that they could be sure of a free passage. We do not know how many workers he approached, but out of the 119 agricultural labourers in Ham, only 25 even approximated to the [Company] requirements ... Seven decided to go.'⁶⁹

She suggests that, while the three single men might have been attracted by adventure, the four married men with families were more likely driven by finding 'their lives in Ham well nigh intolerable to decide to take themselves 12,000 miles into the unknown.'⁷⁰

The impoverished conditions of rural labourers in the 1830s-1840s were of concern to social reformers.⁷¹ The Ham emigrants were amongst the 'lower orders' of

⁶⁶ John E. Martin, 'A "Small Nation on the Move": Wakefield's Theory of Colonisation and the Relationship between State and labour in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in *Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream*, 110.

⁶⁷ In 'Family and Kinship,' Dalziel identified similar patterns of encouragement or sponsorship of groups of immigrants by wealthy landowners involved with the Plymouth Company.

⁶⁸ 'Regulations for Labourers Wishing to Emigrate to New Zealand,' NZG 21 April 1839.

⁶⁹ Pritchard, *1841 Emigrants*, 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷¹ Pamela Horn, *Life and Labour in Victorian England, 1760 1850*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan 1987), 26-46.

a 'three-tiered system of landlord, farmer and landless labourer'.⁷² In Surrey, as elsewhere, 'most of the land was owned by the gentry, rented by the farmers, and worked by the landless labourers.'⁷³ The Tollemache family owned three large farms that were run by tenant farmers and 'the majority of the agricultural workers had no landholding of their own, but were employed as labourers by these three men.'⁷⁴ During the 1830s-40s, in Surrey⁷⁵ (as elsewhere in Britain) agriculture was depressed. The end of the Napoleonic Wars had seen around 350,000 soldiers discharged into the economy; there was widespread underemployment, especially in the winter months, and increasing rural unrest.⁷⁶

Reforms of the Poor Laws discouraged outdoor relief work and encouraged confinement of paupers in feared workhouses.⁷⁷ The workhouse for the Ham area was in Kingston, a nearby village.⁷⁸ Jane Retter's (unpublished) letter to her mother expressed both a fear of staying and an attraction to the new: 'My da Mother i hope you will make you self comfortable about us for we are getting a good living which perhaps if we had staid in England we should been in some workhouse before this. I have no person to come to ask me for rent or rates or taxes for the ground that i live on is my own bought and payed for.' In Wakefield's vision, emigration 'would civilise those who in Britain were condemned to barbarism.'⁷⁹

FIG 1: Extract from Jane Retter's letter to her mother, Mrs Philp, Malden, Surrey, dated October 8th, 1844

⁷² Rollo Arnold, *The farthest promised land: English villagers, New Zealand immigrants of the 1870s*. (Wellington: Victoria University Press with Price Milburn., 1981), 18.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Pritchard *Portrait of Ham*, 16.

⁷⁵ J. Hill, and M. James, 'Swing Riots in Surrey', in M. Holland, ed., *Swing Unmasked: The Agricultural Riots of 1830 to 1832 and Their Wider Implications* (*London, 2005), 26-61.

⁷⁶ M. Holland, 'The Captain Swing Project', in *Swing Unmasked*, 1-25.

⁷⁷ Horn, *Life and Labour*.

⁷⁸ Pritchard, *Portrait of Ham*, 57.

⁷⁹ Olssen, 'Wakefield and the Scottish Enlightenment,' 48.

The Company had initiated settlement as a commercial venture, against the wishes of the Colonial Office and philanthropic groups.⁸⁰ Britain annexed New Zealand, first as a dependency of New South Wales, then as a Crown Colony early in 1840. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed by Governor William Hobson and 40 northern chiefs on February 06 1840, included Hobson's earlier proclamation that the Queen would acknowledge only land titles derived from Crown grants. In future it would be illegal for Europeans to buy land directly from Māori.⁸¹ Hobson appointed William Spain to head a Commission of Inquiry into the Company's 'purchase' of Māori land and it proceeded throughout 1841-1843.

The colony's capital was Auckland, hundreds of miles north of Wellington. With no overland route connecting these places, communications were slow and by sea. When Hobson sent officials to Wellington to secure settlers' political allegiance and dissolution of the Company's town governing system. This made Hobson an object of contempt amongst Wellington's 'gentlemen.'⁸² Through financial inducements, Hobson enticed some of Wellington's labourers to Auckland. Dudley Sinclair also moved north. Edward Jerningham Wakefield described Sinclair as 'led by the Government puffery to desert his fellow colonists and to exchange the industrious life of a settler in Cook's Strait for that of a mere dealer in land in Auckland.'⁸³

Contempt for the colonial government intensified as Hobson's successor Captain Robert Fitzroy concurred with Spain's opinion that Māori had never intended

⁸⁰ Philip Temple, *A sort of conscience: The Wakefields*. (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003), 242-303

⁸¹ Tonk, 'Difficult and Complicated,' 35.

⁸² See Diana Beaglehole, 'Political leadership in Wellington, 1939-1853,' in Hamer & Nicholls, *Making of Wellington*, 166-168; Temple, *Conscience*, 267-281.

⁸³ Edward Jerningham Wakefield, *Adventure*, Vol 2, 26,

... selling their pa, cultivations, and burial ground at the time of the “sale” and would now strenuously oppose any attempt to shift them. Moreover, the reserves allotted to the Māori by the Company were unsuitable as many were too far from the Pā and too hilly for good potato grounds.⁸⁴

Hostility to Māori erupted amongst some of the Company elite.⁸⁵ In Jerningham

Wakefield’s words, ‘the noble system of Reserves was smothered in its birth.’⁸⁶

Writing home: A rhythm analysis

Nine letters written by members of the Ham group survive: one handwritten ‘original’ and eight in the pages of the *New Zealand Journal*. In 1843 four of these were

included in a book of reprints.⁸⁷ There are four written between November 1841 and

July 1843 by William Dew: three to his brother James and one to ‘Hon. F.A.

[Frederick] Tollemache.’⁸⁸ There are three written by Jane Retter in 1844: two in the

NZJ (one to her mother and one to her brother Henry)⁸⁹ and a third (to her mother)

survives in handwritten form.⁹⁰ One letter by John Philp (Jane’s brother) was to his

⁸⁴ Tonk, ‘Difficult and Complicated’, 50.

⁸⁵ Jerningham Wakefield was so severely reprimanded by Fitzroy for making ‘defamatory’ statements about Natives in the NZJ that he was forced to return to England. *Adventure*, Vol 2, pp. 506-511.

⁸⁶ *Adventure*, 466.

⁸⁷ Four of the L=Ham group’s NZJ letters were reprinted in a collection entitled *Letters from Settlers and labouring emigrants in the New Zealand Company’s settlements at Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth, from February 1842 to January, 1843*, London, 1843. Because this publication is more readily available and more legible than the earlier versions in the NZJ I have cited these in preference to those in the journal. They are identical in all but typeface and font.

⁸⁸ Of the four surviving letters from William Dew, three were to his brother John, and one to ‘Hon. Frederick Tollemache:’ ‘Copy of a letter From William Dew to His Brother, Port Nicholson Nov 7 1841’, NZJ, 1 May 1842, 103; ‘From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, Gardner, Ham, near Richmond, Surrey, Wellington, 2nd October, 1842’, in *Letters from Settlers*, 35-38; ‘From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, Ham, Surrey 25th December, 1842’, in *Letters from Settlers*, 58-60; ‘Letter to the Hon. F.A. Tollemache from a former servant’, Wellington, New Zealand, July 9, 1843,’ NZJ 106, Jan 20 1844, 352

⁸⁹ Both Samuel and Janes names were appended to these letters, but the text makes it clear that Jane wrote them on the couple’s behalf. S.J. Retter, ‘Letter from Wellington, May 15, 1844’, *New Zealand Journal* (NZJ), 18 January 1845, 21; S Retter, and J Retter, ‘Extract of a Letter from Wellington’, 8 October 1844’, NZJ, February 15 1845, 6. The unpublished

⁹⁰ A .pdf image of Jane’s handwritten original was kindly supplied to me by a descendant, Barbara Hindle-Owen of Madrid. Her uncle had found the original among her late grandmother’s effects (e-mail: Hindle-Owen to Middleton, February 27, 2009). For a detailed discussion of this letter, and of differences between it and the published letters in the NZJ, see Middleton, ‘Seven Servants.’

‘brothers and sisters’ in 1842⁹¹ and one by Charles Brown⁹² to A.G. [Algernon] Tollemache the same year.

Earlier in this paper I identified ‘systematic colonisation’ theory’s organising tropes as civilisation and savagery, capital and labour, thrift and hard work. In a previous article,⁹³ I argued that the labourers’ letters ‘cited’ these tropes, ‘performed’ the Company’s scripts. I showed how in letter-writing they sustained and their former English identities and projected new personae as the enterprising, socially mobile, adaptable colonial subjects the Company required. The following discussion will extend this argument by adding a spatial dimension. How might a ‘rhythm analysis’ of the letters ‘bring us closer to a pedagogy of appropriation (the appropriation of the body, as of spatial practice)?’⁹⁴

As manual labourers, the Ham group were engaged in the reinscription of landscape: denuding the hills of wild forests, domesticating them with English crops and farm animals, sprinkling their surface with neatly fenced cottages. Their letters appeal for capital to advance this project: ‘Please to send me a few furze seed, and some damson, and some white bullace’.⁹⁵ William Dew was a sawyer; Jane Retter, John Howell and William Dew subsistence farmers; John Philps opened his own brick works and employed William Smith and Charles Brown; John Howell was a bullock driver.

Lefebvre writes, ‘what we live are rhythms – rhythms experienced subjectively. Which means that, here at least, ‘lived’ and ‘conceived’ are close: The laws of nature and the laws governing our bodies tend to overlap with each other – as

⁹¹ John Philps, ‘To his brothers and sisters: From J. Philps, Brickmaker, Wellington, December 12, 1842’, in *Letters from Settlers*, 1843, pp. 54.

⁹² Charles Brown, ‘From Charles Brown, Bricklayer, to the Hon. A. Tollemache Ham, Surrey. Wellington, 10 October, 1842’, in *Letters from Settlers*, 44-45.

⁹³ Middleton, ‘Seven Servants’.

⁹⁴ *Production of Space*, 205.

⁹⁵ Retter to her brother, October 8th, 1844

perhaps too with the laws of social reality.’⁹⁶ I begin with the ‘laws of nature governing our bodies.’ I then trace the rhythms through which the ‘conceived’ abstractions of civilisation and savagery, thrift and hard work, capital and labour were inscribed in their bodies and mapped on the terrain.

Rhythms of the Body and of Nature

Lefebvre argued that

Perceived spaces, those of bodily and everyday social practice, have their own rhythms. Some of these are easy to identify: breathing, the heartbeat, thirst, hunger and the need for sleep are cases in point. Others, however, such as those of sexuality, fertility, social life, or thought, are relatively obscure. Some operate on the surface, so to speak, whereas others spring from hidden depths.⁹⁷

The rhythms of ‘sexuality and fertility’ ran deep in the family economy. Jane Retter gave birth to a daughter during the voyage out. She then had a ‘dear little boy since I have been in New Zealand, but I am sorry to inform you that I lost him at nine months old’.⁹⁸ The fertility of ‘other’ (ruling-class) women provided poorer women with employment. John and Catherine Philps had brought a teenage son and four children with them. By October 1842 ‘Mrs. Philps is practising nursing, attending upon the ladies, and getting £4. to £5. per month.’⁹⁹ This employment was ‘at Evans’ Bay, about three miles north from Port Nicholson, at a large dairy.’¹⁰⁰ Six months later ‘Mrs Philps, Rutter [Retter] and Howell are all three lately confined with a son each and they are all doing well’.¹⁰¹

The growing strength of children’s bodies was a matter for celebration.

William Dew ‘did not hold any situation on board [*Bentinck*], as my little family

⁹⁶ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 206.

⁹⁷ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 205.

⁹⁸ Retter to her mother, May 15th, 1844

⁹⁹ Brown to A. Tollemache, 10th Oct 1842

¹⁰⁰ Philps to his brothers and sisters, December 15, 1842.

¹⁰¹ Dew to A, Tollemache, July 9th, 1843

required a great deal of attendance, which took up the whole of my time'.¹⁰² In November 1841, Dew was pleased to report that that his girls were growing 'tall and stout': 'Anne is growing a fine girl, and has got a very good place. Harriet is out at a little place; the boys are grown very fast; they go to school on the same terms as at home.'¹⁰³ Children attended a school¹⁰⁴ only when they were too little to work. A year later Dew described how these boys 'will very soon be very useful, as they take great delight in using the axe, which is the pride of the colony.'¹⁰⁵ He asks his brother to negotiate with Algernon Tollemache for a contract to clear bush. Unable to commit to the usual standardised annual rates of clearance, Dew wants to adapt the rhythms of his labour to those of his children's physical development, asking 'Mr. A'

... not to bind me down to clear so much the first year, as I cannot do so much, as my family is so small. ... I could clear about an acre the first year, the second year two acres, the third year four, and so on, as when I cropped the first, I should be able to work the whole of my time on the ground, with my family, which, as they will in a short time be very useful to me on the ground.¹⁰⁶

Jane Retter's sons were aged 6 and 8 when she wrote: 'My dear Mother if you was to see my two little boys you would not know them they grow two fine boys they mind my cows in the bush.'¹⁰⁷

The rhythms of animal reproductive cycles were also important. The Retters relied on two cows to supply milk, not only for their own consumption but also to sell and make butter for trading: 'my cows are within three months of there caffing and

¹⁰² Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹⁰³ Dew to his brother, Nov 7, 1841

¹⁰⁴ For an account of the schools in Wellington, see MacMorran, *Some Schools*; Sue Middleton, 'Schooling the labouring classes: Children, Families and Learning in Wellington, 1841-1845, *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 18 (2008), 135-147.

¹⁰⁵ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹⁰⁶ Dew to his brother, 25th December 1842

¹⁰⁷ Retter to her mother, October 8th, 1844

my efer grows a fine little beast'.¹⁰⁸ Loss of a calf was a serious blow: 'we can buy cows from £8 to £10 each. - bought one for £8, but she has slipped her calf.'¹⁰⁹

The rhythms of everyday social practice interweave those of 'Nature' with those of British social organisation: 'daily, monthly, yearly, and so on'.¹¹⁰ The geographical shift from the northern to the southern hemisphere was disorienting: 'You may grow pease all the year... We sow the wheat in July [New Zealand Winter], and reap in January [New Zealand Summer].'¹¹¹ There was a severance between the 'natural' cycle of seasons, and the European calendar of commemorative ritual: 'Christmas is in the middle of summer. We have for dinner the roast beef of Old England, new potatoes, cauliflowers, plum puddings, elderberries;- we have none to make wine'.¹¹²

As outdoor workers, their livelihoods were at the mercy of weather and vicissitudes of seasons: 'there is a great deal of rain, and wind in this country, which causes me to lose a deal of time, by being obliged to work out of doors'.¹¹³ Writing was best left for times when work was not possible: 'I take this opportunity of writing, as it is a very wet day, as I have but very little time; for when the weather is fine I am at work, from daylight till dark.'¹¹⁴

Although far from England, immigrants' daily routines were affected by its 'rationalised institutions and urban networks.'¹¹⁵ Political, commercial and cultural survival was contingent on the schedules of ships. An exchange of correspondence

¹⁰⁸ Retter to her mother, October 8th, 1844

¹⁰⁹ Philps to his brothers and sisters, December 15, 1842.

¹¹⁰ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 206.

¹¹¹ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹¹² Dew to his brother, 25th December 1842

¹¹³ Dew to his brother, Nov 7, 1841

¹¹⁴ Philps to his brothers and sisters, December 15, 1842.

¹¹⁵ Simonsen, 'Bodies, Sensations', 6.

could take eight or nine months. Letters went missing, were delayed or ‘crossed’. As in Fitzpatrick’s research¹¹⁶, letters provided immigrants with an emotional lifeline:

My dear mother, I heard from you when my brother John received a letter from Henry, and was very sorry to hear that you had been very ill. My dear mother, I shall not send you much news in this letter, for here we are not as you are at home; we can write when we like, what we like, but we cannot send when we like, and in this vessel we had but few hours notice. But I think it very unkind, I have written home twice before, but have received no answer; but I think "out of sight out of mind." You think you shall never see us again, and you do not care for writing to us.¹¹⁷

Civilisation and Savagery

Lefebvre writes:

Rhythms differ from one another in their amplitude, in the energies they ferry and deploy, and in their frequency. Such differences, conveyed and reproduced by the rhythms which embody them, translate into intensity or strength of anticipation, tension and action. All these factors interact with one another within the body, which is traversed by rhythms rather as the ‘ether’ is traversed by waves.¹¹⁸

Associated with the Company’s conceptions of ‘civilisation and savagery’ were multiple rhythms of varying amplitudes, regularities, frequencies, predictabilities and intensities. Many of these are evident in a letter Charles Brown wrote to Algernon Tollemache:

As for the natives, they are a very civilized sort of people: they come and sit in your house, and talk in their language as if the place belonged to them; but will take nothing without asking for it. We was, soon after our arrival, put under arms, in consequence of a native being found dead in the flax, all owing to the Chief, Wara Pora; [Wharepouri] but he is now Matu Matu, (that is, meaning dead) [mate]. There are great many of them dying, and others leaving for the bush, since we first landed.¹¹⁹

In their visits to Brown’s home, Māori demonstrated the courtesies associated with ‘civilisation.’ Similarly, Jane Retter writes: ‘None of you need be afraid of the natives, for they are civilized’.¹²⁰ The Ham group had close contact with Māori, as

¹¹⁶ *Oceans*, 1844, 20.

¹¹⁷ Retter to her mother, May 15th, 1844

¹¹⁸ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 206.

¹¹⁹ Brown to A. Tollemache, 10th Oct 1842

¹²⁰ Retter to her mother, May 15th, 1844

Dew describes: ‘the principal delight of the children is to learn the native language.’¹²¹

In his statement that ‘Natives’ act ‘as if the place belonged to them,’ Brown aligns himself with the Company’s belief that land ownership had been transferred. At the time Brown wrote this, the Company was attempting to secure ‘clearance’ of Māori out of their ‘lived space’ at Te Aro Pā, their relocation and enclosure in the ‘conceived space’ of a ‘Native Reserve.’ On August 05 1841, ‘The dead body of a native at Te Aro was found by two Europeans.’¹²² Company medics arranged a post-mortem (a procedure offensive to Māori custom). Echoing the ethnocentricity of some of settlers, Louis Ward later wrote that ‘Wharepouri arrived, furious and bent on mischief.’¹²³ Consistent with tribal tangi [funeral] procedure, Māori flooded into the Pā. Fearing an uprising, the settlers declared a military emergency. Brown was ‘called up’ to fight with guns to protect Company ‘conceived space’. Ward reports, ‘Two days later the natives met and performed their funeral ceremonies, after which everything remained quiet and the excitement subsided.’¹²⁴

From 1841 and into 1844, there were waves of Māori resistance by to surveying, fencing, planting, and road building on lands they considered unsold. Their anger erupted in bursts of intensity and ‘strength of anticipation, tension and action’. When Dudley Sinclair paid a visit to Wellington to check on his uncle’s land investments, he approached William Dew: ‘Mr. Sinclair wished me to take some of Mr. Algernon's land, but it is so far off; the natives will not allow any one to go there at present. They are very civil in the neighbourhood of Port Nicholson.’¹²⁵ In June 1843, the Government brig *Victoria* brought news of the ‘murder’ of militia the

¹²¹ Dew to his brother, 7th November, 1841

¹²² L. Ward, *Early Wellington*, 90

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ L. Ward, *Early Wellington*, 91.

¹²⁵ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

Company had sent to arrest the chiefs resisting the Company's appropriation of land near Nelson.¹²⁶ In 1900, George MacMorran interviewed men who had been children at the time of this 'Wairau Massacre':

There were dark days felt to be full of dread even by the irresponsible youth of the time. ... These were days of great peril, days when mothers charged their children not to stray into the scrub or bush, when boys in the twilight scarcely dared to run out for the necessary firewood lest the dusky foe should dart out, when the report of a gun, used in pigeon shooting, was construed into the threatening attack of the Maori.¹²⁷

The Spain Commission had for months been stalled by William Wakefield's refusal to pay the amount it demanded as compensation to the Māori of Te Aro and the other four 'city' Pā. 'Emigrants of the labouring classes' were dependent on Māori for trade and supplies in what had become a largely subsistence economy. Jane Retter writes: 'Dear brother, we have found the natives very civil, but some have found them very troublesome. Where the land is not fairly purchased, we cannot get anything of the natives without the money. If we can get the land claim settled, we are in hopes that the place will flourish both for the poor and rich'.¹²⁸ As a result of the Wairau incident, the amount Spain demanded on behalf of the Māori claimants (£1050) was paid and the claims were settled in 1844.¹²⁹

Thrift and hard work, Capital and Labour.

The Company's blueprint of a balance between capital and labour went awry from the beginning. The majority of the immigrants were labourers without capital. Survival depended on employment. However 'as 592 out of 1000 town allotments had been purchased by absentee speculators and the local terrain and dense forest were

¹²⁶ A useful account of the 'Wairau Massacre' is in Temple, *Conscience*, 211-22.

¹²⁷ George Macmorran, *Some Schools and Schoolmasters of Early Wellington*, (Wellington: S. & W. MacKay 1900), 6.

¹²⁸ Retter to her brother, October 8th, 1844

¹²⁹ Tonk, 'Difficult & Complicated', 52-56.

unsuitable for labour-intensive farming, there were few employers of labour.’¹³⁰ In Ham the seven sponsored male ‘servants’ had been manual workers dependant on wages.¹³¹ In Wellington they were thrown on their own resources. William Dew wrote: ‘we have a great deal imported, but nothing exported, which robs us of all the ready money.’¹³²

Within nine months Dew had mastered a new trade as a pit-sawyer: ‘I am getting master of the saw, which I find great delight in’.¹³³ The technique was as follows:

A pit was dug near the felled log which was rolled onto a frame built over the pit. One sawyer, the ‘top notcher,’ stood on top of the log, and the other, the ‘tailer’, under it in the pit. They worked their way the full length of the log with a ten foot long rip saw, first squaring the log and then progressively taking planks of the required thickness. It was heavy and skilled work. It was also well-paid.¹³⁴

Dew writes: ‘I have had two different partners; they were men who understood the saw’.¹³⁵ Projecting an entrepreneurial persona, Dew’s letters are complicit in the Company’s drive to recruit capital and labour:

My dear brother, if you come, mind and bring all the money you can with you, as tools can be bought here as cheap as at home, and other things reasonable. Pit-saw files very dear - at 1s. and 6d. each, would be a very good speculation to bring some. If you should have an opportunity, send a few dozen, as they would pack in a very small compass. A

¹³⁰ Beaglehole, ‘Political Leadership’, 173.

¹³¹ The occupations of the male ‘heads of household’ being sponsored and of any of their male or female children of 15 or over travelling with them were listed in the Company’s emigration lists New Zealand Company, ‘New Zealand Company Emigration Lists 1839-41 Part 2’, (Archives New Zealand Wellington, 1841), pp. 338-40. Charles Stent, John Howell, Samuel Retter, John Philp and his son Henry were all listed as labourers, farm labourers or agricultural labourers. William Smith and Charles Brown were bricklayers. Ann Dew, aged 15, was a seamstress. Pritchard writes that ‘although when his children were baptised, William Dew’s occupation was given as labourer, in 1841 he was a servant at Ham House,’ *1841 Emigrants*, 13. The term ‘farm servant’ was often used interchangeably with ‘agricultural labourer’. See A.J. Gritt, ‘The census and the servant: a reassessment of the decline and distribution of farm service in early nineteenth-century England,’ *Economic History Review* 53, (2000): 87-90.

¹³² Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹³³ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹³⁴ Chris Cochrane, ‘Styles of sham and genuine simplicity: Timber buildings in Wellington,’ in Hamer & Nicholls, *Making of Wellington*, 109.

¹³⁵ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

quantity of shoe-nails would be a good speculation to bring, as they are is. 6d. per 100. Bring all the seeds you can: pack them up very carefully.¹³⁶

Sawyers had to move frequently as forests were cleared. By December 1842, 'Our trade is not quite so good as it was, the timber is getting farther off.'¹³⁷

The Company's promise of land ownership to 'industrious and thrifty' immigrants of the 'labouring class'¹³⁸ eventuated sooner than envisaged and 'after a period of unemployment many labourers were permitted to lease from two to ten acres at low rentals.'¹³⁹ By the end of 1841 Dew reported: 'I and Howell have taken an acre of land between us, and have got a good garden.'¹⁴⁰ A year later, he wrote 'Me and my partner have taken ten acres of land three miles from the town, with plenty of timber and a good road to get to the town ...it is very good land, but requires a great deal of labour as the bush is so thick.'¹⁴¹

In 1841, a country section belonging to Messrs Watt and Wade 'was divided into one acre and two acre lots.'¹⁴² The Retters purchased one acre at Wade's Town.¹⁴³ Jane wrote: 'I have now two cows and a heifer, and one acre of land, which cost us twenty pounds.'¹⁴⁴ Louis Ward described Wade's Town's owners as 'working men, who worked at their patches of ground after a day's toil was over'.¹⁴⁵ However, at least in the Retter household, the wife farmed while her husband worked for wages. From early in 1843, Samuel Retter was employed 'in a constant place, in the employ

¹³⁶ Dew to his brother, 25th December 1842

¹³⁷ Dew to his brother, December 25th, 1842

¹³⁸ 'New Zealand Land Company', NZG, May 2 1840, 1.

¹³⁹ Beaglehole, 'Political leadership, 173.

¹⁴⁰ Dew to his brother, Nov 7, 1841

¹⁴¹ Dew to A, Tollemache, July 9th, 1843

¹⁴² L. Ward, *Early Wellington*, 312.

¹⁴³ L. Ward, *Early Wellington*, 312.

¹⁴⁴ J and S Retter, Letter to Jane's mother, May 15th, 1844 J and S Retter, Letter to Jane's mother, May 15th, 1844

¹⁴⁵ L. Ward, *Early Wellington*, 312.

of the sheriff at Wellington, as groom, with £1. ls. per week wages.’¹⁴⁶ Jane was able to save Sam’s money ‘for we have made the produce of the two cows keep us.’¹⁴⁷

During the voyage, John Philp had ‘held the situation as cook, which he received £10 for.’¹⁴⁸ This enabled his rapid rise in status to ‘an employer of hired labourers, a master of servants.’¹⁴⁹

Henry [his teenage son] and myself is making bricks, for it has been a hard task for me, for it has cost me twenty pounds for the fitting up the place and tools; but, thank God, I have burned one kiln of bricks, and have another made, and I hope in three months more I shall have more time to myself, as I intend to have a man to help me, if things go on as I expect.¹⁵⁰

Charles Brown informed Frederick Tollemache that he and William Smith were each earning 10s a day laying bricks made by Philps:

we had the pleasure of building the first brick-house in the colony. We are happy to say there are plenty of brick-houses going on at present, and there will be more yet. John Philps has got a brick-yard of his own; and as he makes them, we lay them. If you should come out, I hope we shall have the pleasure of building you one.¹⁵¹

Around 1.00am on 9th November 1842, a bake house caught fire.¹⁵² Philps wrote: ‘the town is almost at a stand- still at present, for we have had a dreadful fire, upwards of sixty houses burnt, and a great many stores of all kinds.’¹⁵³ Dew ‘lost very little flour; the wind was dreadful violent from the north-west that night, which swept the whole of the beach, which looked awful. They are building up again more substantially with brick’.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁶ J and S Retter, Letter to her mother, May 15th, 1844.

¹⁴⁷ Retter to her mother, October 8th 1844.

¹⁴⁸ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹⁴⁹ 'New Zealand Land Company', NZG, May 2 1840, p.1.

¹⁵⁰ Philps to his brothers and sisters, December 15, 1842.

¹⁵¹ Brown to A. Tollemache, 10th Oct 1842

¹⁵² L. Ward, p. 112

¹⁵³ Philps to his brothers and sisters, December 15, 1842.

¹⁵⁴ Dew to his brother, 25th December 1842

Capital and Labour

It is no good for people to come out here unless they mean to work, for there is nothing to be done without it. Most part of the people who come out here are afraid of the bush, which they will be obliged to take to, for there is no employment on the roads now, We want you and a few other good gentlemen like you, to support the cultivation of the land, which is very beautiful.¹⁵⁵

Very many of the young gentlemen which come out, walk the beach and smoke their cigars, and spend their money in the grog shops which are very plentiful. If every one was to try a little, the colony would very soon support itself.¹⁵⁶

Kirsten Simonsen describes how:

As part of the lived experience, the body constitutes a practico-sensory realm that is performed in the spatio-temporal rhythms of everyday life. In these rhythms, constituting and constituted, different modalities of social spatiality and social temporality are incorporated as cyclical and linear repetitions, and as the conjunction of the perceived, the conceived and the lived.¹⁵⁷

The following extract from William Dew's letter to his brother is indicative of rhythms of differing amplitude and intensity:

I have sent this letter by the *Clydeside* that has been under repair at Wellington, which is come direct to England. She has brought with her a handsome present for the Queen, a sideboard, which is a specimen of our New Zealand woods: me and my partner sawed the stuff for it. I should like Mr. T- to see it, as it is worth any one's while to see it, as there is no wood in England to equal it; it surpasses every thing. We have the most choice wood of any island in the world.¹⁵⁸

We sense the erratic schedules of ships, the regular push and pull of the saw, slow and interrupted textual interchanges with kin, the mediated nature of messages across the class divide to the Tollemaches, the loyalty to Queen and Empire extended across oceans and given commodified form:

¹⁵⁵ Dew to A, Tollemache, July 9th, 1843

¹⁵⁶ Dew to his brother, 2nd October 1842

¹⁵⁷ Simonsen, 'Bodies', 11.

¹⁵⁸ Dew to his brother, 25th December 1842

spatial practice “a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, ‘private life’ and leisure.’¹⁵⁹

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¹⁵⁹ Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, 38.