

**Mid08838**

**‘Emigrants of the labouring classes’:  
Capital, labour and learning in Wellington, 1840-45.**

**NOTE:** Since the abstract was written, this work has taken a new direction. If quoting this paper, please bear in mind that it is very much work in progress. A more appropriate working title under which this working paper will be revised for publication will be: *Labourers’ letters in the New Zealand Journal, Wellington 1840-45: Lefebvre and the pedagogy of appropriation*. Note that two completed papers from this research are listed in the *references* to this one.

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Questions of space and place are of increasing interest to educational researchers. A recent synopsis of “educational geography” identifies Henri Lefebvre as a particularly “overarching presence in the educational appropriation of spatial theories with many researchers referring to his work on perceived, conceived and lived space” (Gulson and Symes, 2007, p.101). Physical, or *perceived*, space is that of everyday embodied “*spatial practices*” in everyday life: “social practice, the body, the use of the hands, the practical basis of the perception of the outside world” (Lefebvre, 1974, p.38). Abstract, or *conceived*, space, a product of capitalism, “includes the ‘world’ of commodities, its ‘logical’ and its worldwide strategies; as well as the power of money and that of the political state” (Lefebvre, 1974, p.53). “*Representations of space*” are the charts, texts or maps of these rationally determined enclosures, including those of “cartographers, urban planners or property speculators” (Shields, 2004, p. 210). Enacting technologies of domination, these introduce “a new form into a pre-existing space – generally a rectilinear or rectangular form such as a meshwork or chequerwork” (Lefebvre, 1974, p.139). *Lived*, or social, space includes the realm of the imagination that “has been 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’” (Shields, 2004, p. 210). The artistic and other expressions of “lived space” are referred to as “*representational spaces*.” In capitalist societies, Lefebvre argued, the abstract appropriations of “conceived space”, and textual representations of this space, gain ascendancy.

I work with Lefebvre’s spatial trilogy in a reading of letters written in Wellington by a group of “emigrants of the labouring classes” in 1840-45, the first five years of colonisation. Their personal handwritten letters “Home” were published in the *New Zealand Journal*, a London-based newspaper allied with the commercial practices, socio-political theories, and utopian dreams of Edwin Gibbon Wakefield and the New Zealand Company he founded. The recruitment of these labourers as emigrants, the (re)production of their letters, and their internalisation and projection in writing of colonial identities “in tune” with the Company’s “representations of space”, are conceptualised as pedagogical. Here I draw on Lefebvre’s concept “pedagogy of appropriation” (1974, p.205).

Education’s multiple disciplinary vantage points are centred on the pedagogical, a concept increasingly attractive to spatial theorists. Basil Bernstein’s sociological model of pedagogy has proved particularly useful in geographical theory (Sibley, 1995; Mahtani, 2004), in particular his idea of a “totally pedagogised society with all relations almost becoming pedagogical ones” (Lingard & Gale, 2007, p11). Drawing on Lefebvre and Bernstein, this paper interleaves geographical with pedagogical concepts. It falls into four

parts. The first sketches the background to the research, the letters, and their writers. The second identifies pedagogical dimensions of the labourers' involvement with the New Zealand Company's emigration scheme. The third explores the "pedagogical appropriation" of their personal letters by the *New Zealand Journal*. I conclude with a case study of the letters by one of these published authors, Jane Retter.

### 1. Background to the research:

My project did not begin as educational research, but originated at a family reunion, where I was given copies of letters written in Wellington in 1844 by my mother's paternal great grandparents, Jane and Samuel Retter. In 1841 they had left their positions as servants<sup>1</sup> at Ham House, near Richmond in Surrey, and set sail for Wellington on the barque *Lord William Bentinck* with their two little boys, Jane pregnant with her third child, a daughter, born during the voyage. Written as private handwritten letters, addressed to family and friends, they had been selected and printed by the editors of the *New Zealand Journal* (NZJ), a London-based newspaper, allied with the commercial, political and class interests of Edwin Gibbon Wakefield's New Zealand Company.<sup>2</sup>

Ham House was an ancestral estate of the Tollemache family<sup>3</sup>. At the time of the Retters' emigration, the heir to the estate, the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dysart, was a recluse, charging his two younger brothers with responsibility for running it. The elder, Frederick Tollemache M.P., lived at and managed Ham, and the younger, Algernon, managed the family's wider investments (Pritchard, 1998; 1999). The Tollemache brothers were involved with the New Zealand Land Company from its beginnings. In 1840, the Company announced that it had "Capital, £100,000, in 4000 shares of £25 each, all paid up" and listed 22 shareholders, of whom Hon. Frederick Jas. Tollemache, M.P. was one.<sup>4</sup> Even before Port Nicholson (Wellington) had been surveyed, land orders were sold; the drawing of 100,000 acres of Wellington lots being held in London on the 29<sup>th</sup> July 1840. The Tollemache family

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'servant' was commonly used to refer to landless agricultural labourers and other staff contracted to work on an estate, as well as to domestic servants (Horn, 1987). Census figures fail to differentiate between the roles. Details of male emigrants' former occupations appear on the shipping lists, but their wives' occupations do not. Single women's occupations were sometimes listed.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Michael and Vivian Retter, who organised the 1999 reunion and shared their extensive genealogical research.

<sup>3</sup> Today, Ham House is run as a tourist attraction by Britain's National Trust, who have also supported research on the house, its owners and inhabitants (Pritchard, 1998; 1999; 2003). Thanks to Victoria Bradley of the National Trust staff at Ham House for sharing information, resources, and personal contacts with informants.

<sup>4</sup> 'New Zealand Company', *New Zealand Gazette*, 12 December 1840.

purchased 48 of the 1100 Wellington balloted lots: Algernon bought 33; Frederick 12; and three other members of the family one section each.<sup>5</sup>

Seven of Ham House's male servants, including Samuel Retter, were sponsored by the Tollemache brothers under the Wakefield scheme as emigrants on the *Lord William Bentinck*: three single men and four married men with wives and children.<sup>6</sup> In addition to Jane and Samuel Retter's two published letters, six further letters by members of the group were published in the *New Zealand Journal*.<sup>7</sup> Importantly for this study, the late Evelyn Pritchard, a volunteer researcher for the National Trust, had also read, and cited, an original, handwritten version of Jane's first published letter (1845c in Pritchard 2003, p.51). So, in total, there are eight available letters by members of the Ham group: seven in published form in the NZJ, and one set of extracts, transcribed but unedited, from a handwritten original. In addition to the Ham group's texts, I collected many other letters by labourers in similar circumstances published in the *New Zealand Journal*. Together, these texts comprise a rich ethnographic resource. Liz Stanley' (2004) refers to such a database of letters as an "epistolarium."

Thinking about the letters as an epistolarium encourages multiple readings of them: "as an epistolary record in their own right; as the total surviving letters with a complex and perhaps unknowable relationship to the total actually written; and as the 'ur-letters' produced by transcribing, editing or publishing activities" (Jolly & Stanley, 2005, p.100). Historians have cited brief extracts from the NZJ letters as "records in their own right", citing snippets as biographical information, snapshots of places or of social conditions (Dalziel, 1986; Temple, 2002). However, The *New Zealand Journal* itself, and its epistolarium more broadly, had received surprisingly little attention.

Some historians regard published letters, especially those in newspapers, with suspicion, McCarthy describing them as "untrustworthy for research purposes" because "they were often manipulated for propaganda purposes to promote or dissuade emigration" (2001, p.2). Wakefield has been described as a master of propaganda. Temple (2002,

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<sup>5</sup> Facsimile of 'List of original one-acre sections in the town of Wellington, and their purchasers' in Ward, 1928, pp. 191-206.

<sup>6</sup> They were John Howell (with wife Ann and 5 children under 14); William Dew (with wife Ann, 7 children under 14 and a daughter of 15), Samuel Retter (wife, Jane and 2 children under 14), John Philps (wife Catherine, 4 children under 14 and son aged 14) and three single men (Charles Stent, William Smith and Charles Brown).

<sup>7</sup> In addition to Jane Retter's two letters (J Retter & S Retter, 1845; J. Retter & S. Retter, 1845), there were two from the Dews (1843a, 1843b), one from the Philps (1843), and one from the single man Charles Brown (1843). In addition, - and importantly for this study, - Pritchard had

p.195), estimates that Wakefield and his allies produced around 200 books that, collectively, created “a propaganda image of New Zealand as a green and pleasant and fertile land, sparsely populated with friendly natives and ideally suited for the foundation of an antipodean Britain”. In 1843, some of the Ham group’s NZJ letters were included in one of these publications: a book-length compilation of reprints of letters from the NZJ.<sup>8</sup>

It is in these printed contexts, as editorially over-written “ur-letters,” that the NZJ letters are of greatest interest here. In *The production of space*, Lefebvre refers to: “a pedagogy of appropriation (the appropriation of the body, as of spatial practice)” (1974, p.205). The recruitment of rural labourers, their relocation (the appropriation of bodies) in what were seen as “new lands,” and their formation as colonial subjects according to Wakefield’s design, were pedagogical processes. The production and reproduction of their letters in print can usefully be conceptualised in pedagogical terms. First, the letter-writers had acquired at least a modicum of literacy in England (Middleton, 2008a). The second pedagogical dimension was the Company’s (and the Journal’s) transformation of the letter-writers into published authors (Middleton, 2008b).<sup>9</sup> To understand the logic and the fantasies of the architects of this scheme, and to understand how the labouring emigrants became complicit in them, it is necessary review the Wakefield’s ideas and to identify the pedagogical mechanisms of the Company’s emigration scheme.

## 2. The pedagogy 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” (2000, p.78). Pedagogical practices “provide for acquirers the principles for the production of what counts as the legitimate text. The legitimate text is *any* realisation on the part of the acquirer which attracts evaluation” (Bernstein, 2000, p. xiv). Writing a letter, and having it selected for publication, is to have produced what counted as a “legitimate text.”

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read, and cited, a third handwritten, and previously unpublished, letter from Jane Retter (1845 in Pritchard 2003, p.51).

<sup>8</sup> See: (*Letters from settlers and labouring emigrants in the New Zealand Company’s settlements of Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth from February, 1842, to January, 1843* 1843). The letters in this volume by the Ham emigrants were: Brown (1843); Dew (1843a; 1843b); Philips (1843). Evelyn Pritchard (1843) had not been aware of the letter by Brown in this volume.

<sup>9</sup> At the time of writing (November 2008), this paper is still under review for the *Journal of New Zealand History*. Copies available from the author.

These letter-writers were semi-literate at best (Middleton, 2008a; Pritchard, 2003). Although we do not have access to personal records of their schooling, studies of the charity, church, or monitorial schools available to them as rural poor describe them as teaching the lower orders to “know their place” (Horn, 1978; 1987). Some reading, (usually of Biblical texts, or pious tracts), was permitted. However, as Hannah More expressed it, curricula were generally limited to “such coarse works as may fit them for servants... I allow of no writing for the poor. My object is not to make fanatics, but to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety” (cited in Horn, 1978 33).

Applying to, and being accepted by, the New Zealand Company for a (sponsored) free passage to a new colony offered a more autonomous and enterprising identity: “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”.<sup>10</sup> The Company projected clear bodily and character requirements for labouring emigrants, whose selection was contingent on evidence from referees and/or backing from sponsors (Phillips & Hearn, 2008). In physique, demeanour, habits, and sociability, they had to convince the Company, (“providers and evaluators” in Bernstein’s sense), that they met the criteria for Wakefield’s colonial society.

Lefebvre conceptualised a society as “a space, an architecture of concepts, forms and laws whose abstract truth is imposed on the reality of the senses, of bodies, of wishes and desires” (1974, p.139). Wakefield’s “conceived space” (his rational plan), was designed to emulate the better features of British society, and not to import its pauperised or aristocratic extremes. 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” (Martin, 1997, p.110). Divided into “lots”, formerly collectively-owned Māori land would be sold at a “sufficient price” that was “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.”<sup>11</sup> Purchasers such as the Tollemaches were urged to submit the names of “labouring persons ... for a free passage, for the approval of the company.”<sup>12</sup> Preference would be given to:

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<sup>10</sup> 'New Zealand Land Company', *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, May 2 1840.

<sup>11</sup> 'New Zealand Land Company', *New Zealand Gazette* (NZG), 2 May 1840.

<sup>12</sup> Dalziel, 1991, identified similar patterns of encouragement or sponsorship of groups of immigrants by wealthy landowners involved with the Plymouth Company.

Agricultural labourers, shepherd, 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.<sup>13</sup>

The seven male Ham servants met these criteria, the Lord William Bentinck's shipping list inscribing their names, occupations, and endorsements by sponsors (the Tollemache brothers).<sup>14</sup>

After five months at sea, they landed in Wellington on May 18, 1841. The *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator* of May 22 reported the arrival of the barque and her cargo of 240 emigrants. It classified them according to Company design as being "chiefly of the agricultural classes, and eight cabin passengers". The former had been "steerage passengers", (63 men and 54 women, 65 male and 52 female children under 15). William Wakefield, (the Company's agent in Wellington), wrote to its Secretary in London, reporting the safe arrival of the *Lord William Bentinck* and his delight at: "the high order in which I found her immigrants." He commended the Company's recruitment practices, describing the new group as "very well selected" and added that their fit condition "testified to their care and discipline."<sup>15</sup>

This story exemplifies what Judith Butler described as the "reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates" (1993, p.2). The ideals of Wakefield and the Company were embodied in the "well selected" labourers landing on that beach. Successful "outputs" of the Company's "pedagogy of appropriation," they were living specimens of the Company's "projected official identities" (Bernstein 2000, 204). These labourers' new identities as immigrants of the "right type" were recorded in Wellington and London. Externally projected and internalised identifications, "including those of place, are forged through embodied relations which are extended geographically as well as historically" (Massey, 2004, p.10).

When read as "performative, textual and rhetorical" (Stanley, 2004, p. 211), the labourers' letters are more than monadic creations of autonomous authors; they are also citational of the Company's scripts. A prolific reader and writer, Wakefield was regarded as a reputable contributor to the social-scientific theories of his time (Olssen, 1997); his utopian

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<sup>13</sup> 'Regulations for Labourers Wishing to Emigrate to New Zealand,' NZG 21 April 1839.

<sup>14</sup> See note 1. For details of the occupations of individual letter-writers' and their families see Pritchard (2003); Middleton (2008a; 2008b).

<sup>15</sup> William Wakefield, 'To the Secretary of the New Zealand Company,' Wellington June 8 1841. Archives NZ (Wellington), NZC 3/1.



fantasies fuelled by his reading of political economy and ethnology. Lefebvre's account of these disciplines distinguishes between "representational spaces, and representations of space" (Lefebvre, 1974, p.299). *Representational spaces* are those of the social, or collective unconscious, the mainsprings of mythology, imagery, symbols and art and "Ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts are students of such representational spaces" (Lefebvre, 1974, p.37). The textual "outputs" of "students of representational spaces", (of whom Wakefield was one), are abstractions harnessing the "lived" to the "conceived." Lefebvre wrote, "These areas of specialised knowledge, at once isolated and imperialistic – the two are surely interconnected – have specific relations with mental and social spaces" (1974, p.103).

I have demonstrated that tropes of class (capital/labour) were elaborated in Wakefield's theory, cited in Company policy, and "performed" in the pedagogical practices of the labourers' recruitment, transportation and management. Closely intertwined with tropes of class, were racialised binaries of civilisation and savagery (McClintock, 1995; Maloney, 2001; Olssen, 1997):

Beyond the spatial limits of civilisation, there were untamed people and untamed nature to be incorporated into the imperial system. Attitudes to people on these peripheries were ambivalent however. While they were regarded with disgust or fear if they violated the space of the colonisers, they were also idealised or romanticised (Harvey, 1996, p.49).

Because Māori were generally believed to be more highly "evolved" than most "other" native peoples (Maloney, 2001), Wakefield planned to assimilate them, distributing them equitably throughout the strata of his new society: "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."<sup>16</sup>

At the 1839 Wellington land sales, (at which, as noted previously, the Tollemache family were major buyers), 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."<sup>17</sup> The Company offered Māori 'equality' with the British by

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<sup>16</sup> Edward Gibbon Wakefield to Charles Torlesse 12 May, 1837, in *Copies of letters from Edward Gibbon Wakefield and members of his family, 1815-1853*, BL Add.35261 ff.75.

<sup>17</sup> 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, p. 55.

replacing their traditional tribal, or collective, “lived space” with the capitalist enclosures of “conceived” (abstract) space. The “melancholy condition” of Natives 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.<sup>18</sup>

The possibility that chiefly Māori might attain superior status to ‘the poorest order’ of white colonists opens up.

The Company’s land “purchases” from Māori in 1839 were negotiated before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the annexation of New Zealand by the British crown (Temple, 2001; Moon, 2006). Before the Constitution Act of 1852, there was no state or system of government in any recognisable form. Shortly after the *Lord William Bentick’s* arrival, the legality of the early land purchases was questioned, Company titles challenged by the British crown, and a lengthy judicial process of inquiry set in motion. During the years of the “Crown Colony” (1840-52), Wellington was cut off, and its inhabitants asserting their independence from various crown appointees resident hundreds of miles north, over impenetrable mountains or rough seas (Moon, 2006; Ward, 1928). It was in these conditions that the letters by the “seven servants of Ham” were written, and selected for publication in the *New Zealand Journal*.

### 3. The New Zealand Journal

The London-based *New Zealand Journal* (NZJ) was not owned directly by the New Zealand Company. However, its founding editor-proprietor, Mr H.S. Chapman had personal, political, and financial interests in the Company and the colony. The NZJ’s purposes, outlined in its 1839 Prospectus<sup>19</sup>, were threefold. The first, was “To enforce and illustrate the great principles which distinguish the New British System of Colonisation;” the second, “to make known in England, and the Colony, reciprocally, whatever it most concerns each to learn about the other,” and the third, “to insert original contributions from persons in the Colony, or connected therewith”. Although not explicitly mentioned, the inclusion of emigrants’ personal letters would, if expressing views favourable to investment or emigration, be in keeping with this journal’s mission.

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<sup>18</sup> New Zealand Company, 1842, p.55.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Prospectus of the New Zealand Journal’, *New Zealand Gazette*, 4 July 1840, p. 4.

The commercial and political value of emigrants' letters was well understood in Company circles. Its secretary in London, Mr. I. Ward, urged William Wakefield, the Company's agent in Wellington, 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 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.<sup>20</sup>

The arrival of letters was a significant event; they were "read with care, read more than once, often passed from one hand to another, and kept" (Macdonald, 2006, p. xv). Private letters freely circulated through the familial, political, commercial and professional conduits of the NZJ's readers: "noblemen, gentlemen and others, who are either personally interested in the colonies; or at least indirectly so."<sup>21</sup> It was well understood that "gossip, or to put a less judgmental face on it, social intelligence, circulated in the international mails with alarming rapidity" (Gerber, 2005, p.323). The editor of Wellington's first newspaper, Samuel Revans, regularly rebuked Mr H.S. Chapman, the editor of the *New Zealand Journal*, for its unauthorised, and damaging, publication of "social intelligence" in the personal letters of influential colonists (Middleton, 2008b).

Although the pedagogy of appropriation of the labourers' letters for publication remains hard to detect, understanding it is crucial. A letter is "written with a specific audience in mind: the addressee" (Macdonald, 2006, p. xv). Whether or not the labourers knew they were, or could be, speaking publicly (to bourgeois/ capitalist readers "above" them in the English social order), as well as privately (to family and friends of their own class) will have significantly affected their letters' contents. We know that the Company encouraged immigrants to write, but we do not know how the NZJ's letters were acquired, or whether or not there was "informed consent." However, there are indications that this might have been the case.

The N.Z. Co. chartered its vessels, so could have offered cheap or free postage as an incentive to share letters with a wider public. In the case of the Ham group, personal loyalties, gratitude, and affection for their benefactors, the Tollemache family, would have

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<sup>20</sup> I. Ward, 'Respecting the New Zealand Journal and Mr Ward's Pamphlet with Recommendation to Frequent Correspondence.' NZC 102/1 (No 41), 1840, Archives NZ, Wellington.

<sup>21</sup> 'Our Journal, *New Zealand Journal*, 11 October 1845

encouraged consent to publication. This is borne out in surviving letters between Algernon and Frederick Tollemache from the 1850s, the time of the first of Algernon's three lengthy visits to New Zealand. These show Algernon's continuing concern for, contact with, and support of the Ham emigrants.<sup>22</sup>

The Tollemache brothers subscribed to the *New Zealand Journal* (Middleton, 2008b). Whether or not the Ham letter writers knew about the journal, or their letters' possible publication in it, they knew that their hand-written texts would be shown to the Tollemaches. As with other early New Zealand towns, the Wellington emigrants sustained village, as well as kinship, ties through correspondence (Dalzeil, 1991). Some letters were addressed directly to, or requested that family members pass on messages to, "Mr. Tollemache." They wanted their letters to be read by their former employers and sponsors, with whom they sustained personal and, in some cases, economic, relations (Middleton, 2008a; 2008b). So, at least some of the letters, including Jane Retter's were written with family (labour) and ruling class (capitalist) readers in mind.

Aware of the Ham labourers' limited literacy, Pritchard suspected that their original texts "had been heavily edited for publication in the *New Zealand Journal*, as it would have been virtually impossible for farm labourers or their wives to have written with such good grammar or spelling" (Pritchard, 2003, p.52). This was confirmed when one of Jane Retter's mother's descendents<sup>23</sup> showed Pritchard a photocopy of the a handwritten letter Jane had sent to her mother, and which was later edited and published in the journal (Retter, 1845a). The contents of this first version (reproduced in part in Pritchard's book), offered little new information about the family's life in Wellington. But, riddled with grammatical and spelling mistakes, it spoke in Jane's own voice, giving "a much better idea of the personality of the writer of it," conveying the sense of "the real words of a real person, a genuine human being" (Pritchard, 2003, p.52). It provided evidence that, in their published form, shaped to inform a wider public with personal or financial interests in emigration, "irrelevant" personal inquiries or information had been edited out.

A few other editorial interventions can be seen. Editors made direct interjections about some of the letter-writers, as in the case of one of the Ham group, William Dew:<sup>24</sup> "The writer of the above letter is a respectable and most industrious man, who was for some

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<sup>22</sup> 'Tollemache Family Correspondence, 1847-1872', ATL, Wellington, Micro-MS-0960. Also discussed in Pritchard, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> To date, I have been unable to trace this informant or view this handwritten original.

<sup>24</sup> My research on the NZJ drew substantially on the correspondence between its founding owner-editor in London (Mr H.S. Chapman) and his friend Samuel Revans (editor of Wellington's first

time in the employment of the Honourable F. Tollemache, and his statements may be relied on.”<sup>25</sup> No doubt there were other interventions, but without access to the originals, these are untraceable. It is reasonable to assume, however, that only those judged to advance the interests of the NZJ’s readers would have been selected. And the letters had been (at least lightly) super-inscribed by the editorial hand.

#### 4. Jane’s three letters.

In Lefebvre’s terms, “The concept of space denotes and connotes all possible spaces, whether abstract or ‘real’, mental or social. And in particular it has two aspects: representational spaces, and representations of space” (Lefebvre, 1974, p.299).” The letters were written in, and also depict, the “perceived” spaces, and spatial practices, of everyday, embodied, routine, activities – making bricks, minding children, milking cows. They tell stories of negotiations of the “conceived” spaces of money and property ownership. As “representations of space,” the letters often echo the tropes of the imperial project.

Jane’s first letter (1845a), written on May 15, 1844, (and published in the *NZJ* nearly a year later), begins:

MY DEAR MOTHER,-With pleasure I once more take my pen in hand to write to you, hoping it will find you in a good state of health, as, thank God, it leaves me and mine at present. 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.

Jane’s brother, John Philps (and her sister in law Catherine Philps), had emigrated from Ham to Wellington with Jane and Samuel on the *Lord William Bentinck*. Another brother, Henry, had written to John who had told Jane about their mother’s illness. Invoking kinship bonds within and between her old and new “perceived” worlds, Jane addresses her “psychological need for continuity. Immigration has always put migrants at risk of a radical rupture of the self” (Gerber, 2005, p.318).

In addressing her mother, Jane projects herself as her dutiful adult daughter, (mother to her grandchildren). She urges her mother, her recently widowed brother, George, and his little son to join her in New Zealand. She offers to support her mother “without any need of work,” and, having recently lost her own baby son, to bring up her motherless nephew:

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newspaper). This, and related correspondence, is held in Wellington’s Alexander Turnbull library. For details, see Middleton (2008b).

<sup>25</sup> H.S. Chapman, editorial comment, NZJ 1 May 1842.

Please to give my kind love to my brother George, and tell him if he would like to come to New Zealand, he shall have my place as a home, and I will be a mother to his little boy, for I love my brother George as I love my life. I have had one 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.

Enacting older traditions of extended family obligations, Jane cites, (or recites), terms on which her sense of personal identity was previously constructed.

But this was not the same “self” who had sailed away from English shores. Jane and the other letter writers had left tightly structured “places” as servants in the ordered rooms and fields of English aristocratic stately homes, for strange and empty windswept beaches, wildly forested hilltops, and unknown “savages.” To make sense of it all, they drew on the linguistic and conceptual resources, the “representations of space” available. These allowed her a new identity or “self” as an owner-proprietor of an acre of land – unthinkable in the English social order. Citing the Company’s scripts, she explains this success as a result of “thrift and hard work.” And, complicity in the Company’s pedagogy of appropriation, she urges her brother to take advantage of this opportunity for social mobility:

I think if my brother George should come he would do very well, if he is but steady; but I will not persuade him either way --let him and every one else please themselves; but I can assure you that I do not repent coming out, for I have now two cows and a heifer, and one acre of land, which cost us twenty pounds. (1845a).

At the time of writing (1844), the legality of the Company’s enclosures of Māori land (its capitalist appropriation) were being challenged in a judicial inquiry. Insecurity of land title slowed investment, and opportunities for well-paid work depressed:

Times are not so good as they have been, although my husband has been very lucky since he has been here for work; he is at present in a constant place, in the employ of the sheriff at Wellington, as groom, with £1. 1s. per week wages; he has been in it one year and six months. Wages are lowered from five a shillings a day to three shillings and three and sixpence. We have a good garden, and grow beautiful vegetables, and my husband won the first prize for barley in the place, and the sample was sent home to England (1844a).

Prizes for barley in Wellington, and sending samples home to England, invoke familiar associations between rural life in Wellington and Surrey. Jane’s physical space was a “meeting up of histories”, not a surface (Massey, 2005, p.4).

The second letter (1845b), dated 8 October 1844, and published five months later, bore Samuel’s name, was addressed to his brother, but written by Jane on his behalf. Like the first, it includes the story that, although opportunities for waged work had deteriorated,

Samuel was still in his “constant place, where he has been these two years, under the sheriff of Wellington.” But, she wrote, “I am happy to inform you that I am happy and comfortable.”

Despite a depressed economy, Jane was accumulating capital:

my husband gets only a pound per week, but we have not lately interfered with his weekly money, for we have made the produce of the two cows keep us. We sell new milk at 6*d.* per quart, skim milk at 4*d.* per quart; fresh butter at two shillings per pound. Both our cows are within three months of calving: my heifer grows a fine little beast.

Erik Olssen argues, “Only by excavating the tropes of nineteenth century language can we start reconstructing the immigrants’ psychic and mental maps and relating them to their new landscapes” (Olssen, 1992, p.73). Jane’s “representation of space” is scripted by the Company’s promise to labourers that “every one of them who is industrious and thrifty may be sure to become ... an owner of land”.<sup>26</sup> Her spatial practices as a dairy farmer, a domestic producer, a trader and a gardener, guaranteed self-sufficiency. Their (privately “owned”) acre of land could provide all their needs. She could accumulate capital by saving Samuel’s wages, and breeding her dairy cows. If Jane’s brother were to emigrate, and exhibit “steady” qualities, he too would prosper. Jane holds out a promise of class mobility and gender equality.

Similarly, the racialised binary, of “civilisation and savagery,” infused Jane’s texts.

Samuel’s need not fear the ‘savagery’ he may have heard rumours about:

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 (1845a).

Writing during the British Crown’s inquiry into the Company’s appropriation of Māori land, Jane believes that some of it was “not fairly purchased.” This injustice affected embodied spatial practice because money, rather than bartered goods, was being demanded. But, echoing Wakefield’s theory, this as a matter of according to “natives” equal (capitalist) private property rights. To ‘civil-ise’ Māori (render them civil) meant locating them equitably in the systems and hierarchies of capitalism.

Jane requests seeds for familiar English crops: Don’t forget the seeds I mentioned in my other letter: “Please to send me a few furze seed, and some damson, and some white bullace.” In Lefebvre’s terms, space is produced. She is inscribing Wellington’s hills with English flora and fauna according to Company policy. Jane is eliciting capital investment.

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Herself pedagogically appropriated to the colonial project, she attempts the pedagogical appropriation of others:

Dear brother, please to tell Mr. Warner that we have not got many wheelwrights: here we have so many barbers, tailors, ribbon- weavers, button-makers. Please to tell Mr. Tollemache they are not farmers, and we want farmers in a new colony; these are useful members. We have far too many lawyers; I believe some of them are going home in the same ships they came out by. Retter says he should like to see Mr. Tollemache at New Zealand. (1845b).

She appeals to her “betters” across the English class divide, asking her family to pass on information to ‘Mr Warner’ and ‘Mr Tollemache’, (her former employer), her use of ‘Mr’ indicating persons ‘above’ her in the English social hierarchy. Critical of the composition of recent groups of immigrants, Jane intervenes in immigration policy by describing the kind of workers needed, valorising manual over professional skills, inverting customary status hierarchies of England, but citing the scripts of Wakefield’s “designed society” (his conceived space).

The “perceived space” (spatial practices) of Jane’s everyday practical activities included calving cows, beautiful mountains with rocky but fertile soil. As “representations of space” her letters perform the scripts, echo the tropes, the “conceived spaces” of Wakefield’s colonial project. Her messages and requests within her own class and to her “superiors” in the English village hierarchy show how her everyday spatial practice embodies what Lefebvre described as “a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine)” and the “routes and networks which link” places (Wellington and Surrey) (1974, p. 38). The linguistic tropes of the Wakefield scheme’s representations of were cited in the scripts of Jane’s letters as published in the *New Zealand Journal*, offering glimpses of what Olssen referred to as the “psychic and mental maps” with which she interpreted her new landscape (1992, p.73).

Lefebvre writes, “That the lived, the conceived and the perceived realms should be interconnected, so that the ‘subject’, the individual member of a social group may move from one to another without confusion – so much is a logical necessity” (Lefebvre, 1974, p.40). But what of Jane’s *lived* world, her imaginary, visionary, world of dreams and fantasy, that outside the scientific, technical, bureaucratic reach? The discarded fragments of Jane’s original, handwritten text show much more emotion than the “rationalised” version in the *New Zealand Journal*: “there is a great deal of distress in the place although thank god the

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<sup>26</sup> 'New Zealand Land Company', *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, May 2 1840.



distress of the place have not made any difference to me for my Husband is in a constant place...” She reveals a terrible fear of the conditions that had driven them from England: “My dear Mother I hope you all will make yourself comfortable about us for we are getting a good living which perhaps if we had staed in England we should b in some workhouse before this.” And there is pleasure and excitement in their shared motherhood: “ My d 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.” And great pride in her freedom from “bondage” in Britain: “I have no person to come to ask me for rent of rates or taxes for the ground I live on is my own bought and payed for.” Lefebvre asked, “what intervenes, what occupies the interstices between representations of space and representational spaces?” (1974, p.43). In the case of the labourers’ letters, what intervenes is the superimposition of the printed inscriptions of capital (the mental or abstract) over those penned by labour.

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