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Put on the Margins?
The Mainstream Culture and the Alienated Writer in the Fifties.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Science at Lincoln University by Antje Bednarek

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Put on the Margins?

The Mainstream Culture and the Alienated Writer

in the Fifties.

by Antje Bednarek

The Fifties were the dawning of the age of the New Zealand homeowner, of prosperous families, suburbia and consumerism. Conformity and conservatism determined all aspects of social life. It is commonly believed that the dominant cultural mainstream, in an attempt to uphold patterns of conformity, has marginalised those who resisted the social norm. Writers, artists and intellectuals, according to this version of events, have been forcefully put on the margins of society. A general lack of scholarship about the Fifties does not allow one to establish how true an account of cultural relations this really is. Through perusal of two prominent periodicals this study aims to offer a more detailed picture of the relation between the writer and the cultural mainstream. Most importantly it establishes that not all writers experienced a conflict with the surrounding mainstream culture, only a handful in fact did. Those writers chose to be on the margins, and from there they rejected the mainstream culture for various reasons. Conservatism, attitudes regarding the family and conformity were main factors in creating hostility towards the mainstream. Later historians, most notably Keith Sinclair, have subsequently delivered an account of the Fifties that placed exaggerated emphasis on the opinions of those few writers.

Keywords: Fifties, writers, mainstream culture, NZ Listener, Landfall, conservatism, conformity, materialism, family, gender relations, historiography
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Introduction

As far as history is concerned, the Fifties are an unlucky decade, sandwiched as they are between two world wars and a depression on the one hand and the civil rights movements of the Sixties on the other. The common view of the decade is that it lacked significant events; 'dullness', 'conformity' and 'complacency', terms often used to describe the decade, might come to mind.

The Fifties are also thought of as the 'golden weather' decade, a mythical bucolic age of happiness and laughter. New Zealand's economic growth in post-war years accounts for this image in part; furthermore, families were re-united and formed. During those baby boom years, toddlers produced smiles on everyone's faces everywhere.

For some, however, this reiterates the 'dullness motif'. Ever-increasing and unprecedented prosperity and the resulting contentment, the birth of uniform suburban housing and the advent of a broad range of consumer goods perhaps fail to provide the ultimate meaning of human existence.

A similar clash of opinions existed on the global level. There, affluence in the west existed opposite the "socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange" (The Press, Nov. 2, 1949, p. 5). The resulting ideological struggle between east (Soviet Union) and west (USA) is of course the Cold War.

All things considered, "the Fifties have a bad press" (McEldowney, 1997, p. 11). Perhaps this partly accounts for a noticeable lack of historical research into the Fifties, in New Zealand at least. The decade is covered in general histories of New Zealand, of course. But there are only a few sources for anyone with a specific interest in this decade, in its people and its day-to-day life. On such a limited research basis a broad understanding of life in New Zealand during the Fifties cannot be attained. Not understanding the Fifties produces distorted or even incorrect contextualisations of later events in New Zealand's history.

Among the few sources that shed light on the Fifties, one in particular has become common knowledge amongst this country's
intellectuals. I am referring to Bill Pearson's 1952 essay 'Fretful Sleepers' in which he elaborates at length on the common New Zealander's fear of difference, his resulting love of conformity, his resistance to self-reflective thought and also to emotions. Pearson, in short, talks about the "torpor" and "meaninglessness" that he thought hung over these islands.

'Fretful Sleepers' main argument concerns the New Zealand artist. He does not conform, is the deviant in a society that according to Pearson abhors nothing more than deviance from a fixed norm. Consequently the artist is ostracised, put on the margins of society, made an outsider. In this scenario two cultures appear to be pitted against each other: the artist's culture and the conformist mainstream.

The conformist mainstream has not attracted much scholarly interest to this day. The intellectual's culture, in contrast, has, especially in Landfall and other literary/cultural magazines. As a result, I hold, our perception of the Fifties in this country – and consequently of the following decades as well – is greatly distorted.

This introductory section locates the study in regards to the historical events between 1949 and 1960, the stereotypical image especially intellectuals have of the Fifties, the objectives of this study and the main sources I used.

My research seeks to enhance and perhaps correct some of the ideas held among academics of all fields about the Nineteen-Fifties and to provide a brief cultural history of the decade as it unfolds between artists, writers and intellectuals on one side and the dominant mainstream on the other. The reasons that the decade enjoys such a 'bad press' will be unfolded, extreme views like Bill Pearson's put in context, and the day-to-day lives of common New Zealanders revisited.
The Fifties – A Brief History

The Nineteen-Fifties must be seen in the context of two world wars and a severe economic depression. Having survived these, in the late Forties a sense of psychological relief and hope for a better future pervaded the country. The Labour Government (1935-49) under Peter Fraser shared and promoted this optimism. It did its utmost to show gratitude to returning servicemen and their families, to provide housing for everyone and to stabilise the economy. But it retained some of the regulations that had been considered necessary during the war, censorship and rationing being two prominent examples.

Labour voters in the early post-war years hoped that "socialism would be within [their] grasp within ten years" (May, 1989, p. 66). The Labour Party itself, however, did not undertake the steps that were deemed necessary to this end. As John Beaglehole (1961) asserts, "by 1949 it was a complacent party, it was a party that feared nothing so much as a young idea" (p. 140). Short of support by its own voters, Labour lost the 1949 general election, and the National Party under Sidney Holland was voted into office.

The National Government, within the shortest time, re-introduced capital punishment, i.e. hanging for murder, which had been part of the 1949 election platform. Because this mirrored the people's acceptance of strong leadership, Redmer Yska (1993) concludes: "The no-nonsense spirit of the barracks had lodged itself in the national consciousness" (p. 16). This 'no-nonsense' attitude sometimes bordered on the paranoid but does merely mirror New Zealand's concerns with national security. The conservative National Government sought to provide security in order to overcome past turmoil and to quickly rebuild the nation's strength so that it could face the threat of Communism. For by 1949, the Cold War was well under way.

The government's handling of the 1951 waterfront dispute illustrates this point. The crisis started off as a "simple" wage dispute but was quickly turned into "a confrontation between government and union" (Woods, 2004, p. 17). The wharf-gates were locked against the workers and the wharves worked by servicemen instead. Emergency Regulations were issued
whereby the strikers were not to be given a voice in the media or support for their cause in any form. Altogether, the crisis was handled in a surprisingly tough and unforgiving manner.

The reason for this tough-mindedness lies in the fact that the watersiders were seen as a "Russian fifth column" (Oliver, 1960, p. 217) mainly because they opposed government authority. National was clearly opposed to Communism, but so was the Labour Party. In the end, there was very little support for the watersiders' cause for:

There was a wide feeling in the country that the watersiders had become intoxicated with power and had already, through their restrictive practices, damaged the economy of the country. It was felt, too, that they had allowed themselves to fall under the influence of agitators more concerned to wreck the economy than to secure a fair deal for the workers. (Oliver, 1960, p. 215)

The watersiders' union was de-registered and the most militant union workers were not allowed to return to their job once the wage dispute had been settled.

In the wake of the waterfront dispute National called a general election so that "the nation's approval of the method by which the waterfront dispute was met" (The Press, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 9) could be sought. The victory for National was overwhelming; one is led to assume that the public must have been supporters of the militaristic-totalitarian handling of the crisis. With the Emergency Regulations in place the opposition had little chance of gaining any momentum in the 1951 'snap election'.

Another illustrative example of this 'no non-sense' attitude is the 1953-54 'sexual offenders cases' in which young boys and girls 'offended' law and morality with their 'lax' sexual mores (King, 2003; Yska, 1993). What was to become of New Zealand with the next generation behaving so irresponsibly? A moral panic swept across the country. Established values especially regarding the family seemed to be jeopardised. The origins of adolescent delinquency were portrayed as connected to low income families, single mothers, alcoholism and broken homes; altogether it was portrayed as a consequence of a failure to achieve the ideal of the nuclear family.

The family, of course, was of supreme importance in all post-war societies, New Zealand being no exception. The sexual and moral attitudes
displayed by the youth therefore quickly upset the cult of "exaggerated domesticity" (Molloy, 1993, p. 2). A committee was set up to explore the lack of morality among the youth; the ensuing Mazengarb Report

... is chiefly of anthropological interest. It gives a very revealing picture of the basic assumptions and prejudices of a (presumably representative) group of well-meaning and conscientious New Zealanders in responsible public positions. It does not even begin to be a serious investigation of either the moral problems or the practical and social problems involved. (Munro, 1955, p. 80)

Instead, the report gives testimony to the morals and values held by most New Zealanders during the Fifties, especially so since it was mailed to approximately 300,000 households. It has thus from its very first moment of existence been a significant part of the New Zealand consciousness and been duly researched, as well.

As far as scholarly attention goes, the same cannot be said about Queen Elizabeth II's visit to New Zealand in 1953-54, even though it is another one of the most memorable events of the decade (Phillips, 1993). Throngs of people old and young lined the streets to see the Queen and her husband Prince Philip pass. As Jock Phillips (1993) argues in Royal Summer, the "Queen's tour was a chance to display to the world New Zealand's recovery from depression and war" (p. 16). By the end of the Forties, we must remember, New Zealand's living standard was second highest in the world (after the United States), and the Queen's visit gave ample opportunity to demonstrate and celebrate this fact.

In a more political context, "the royal visit was seen by many as a recognition of the new independence within the Empire" (Phillips, 1993, p. 53). The Queen was warmly received wherever she went and the people loved their young and beautiful monarch; but amidst all the cheering on they "did not cease to be New Zealanders" (Editorial, Listener, Jan. 29, 1954).

New Zealand's ties with Britain, as this exemplifies, remained strong, although New Zealand had signed the Statute of Westminster in 1947 and joined ANZUS in 1951. The latter event in particular reinforced New Zealand's new-won autonomy and also declared New Zealand's changed consciousness as an independent South-East Pacific nation. Nonetheless, when belligerent action erupted in Suez in 1956, New Zealand did not falter to support Britain in its aberrant military operation.
The second half of the Fifties was altogether considerably quieter than the first. One of the main problems facing New Zealand during that time was how to provide enough schools for a growing number of pupils. And not only school buildings: staffing was the connected and more serious issue:

Relatively full employment of the Second World War made teaching a less attractive option than it might have been. New members of the profession had to be drawn from a cohort born during the Depression years when the birth rate was lower. (Alcorn, 1999, p. 191)

Thus C. E. Beeby, Director of Education from 1938 to 1960, was faced with increasing demands for classroom space on the one hand and on-going pressure from the Minister of Education Ronald Algie to eliminate 'non-essential expenses' on the other. As far as education is concerned, the National Government "embraced pragmatic and utilitarian views, was committed to fewer economic controls and less support for cultural initiatives" (Alcorn, 1999, p. 181).

The National Party's support after eight years in office might have waned for this reason or others; in any case, the conservative party lost the 1957 general election. They had in fact been unable to deliver their election promises of both 1949 and 1951. The economy was still not completely deregulated – through no fault of the government's one might add as a serious sterling-dollar crisis in 1951 had necessitated a return to "minor shortages and major controls" (Chapman, 1992, p. 376).

Walter Nash, the Labour Party leader in the 1957 election, gained much strength out of National's defeat. He "represented both a resounding echo of humanitarian change and the possibility of restoring stability" (Chapman, 1992, p. 379). But his government inherited a disastrous economic situation of excessive overseas debt and also a national balance of payments crisis. The extent of the Holland administration's economic miscalculation had been unknown, and in order to stabilise the national economy Labour was forced to consider higher taxation. In consequence the cost of living for the individual New Zealander rose. This was the main factor leading to National returning into office in the 1960 general election. Controversy has evolved around a number of historical events since, and the contrast of opinions held by various groups during the Fifties is sharper than
we expect. Cold War disputes, in which the waterfront dispute was caught up, split society into hard opposition: 'decent New Zealanders' versus 'communist wreckers'; the sexual offenders case created 'moral and right' and 'immoral and wrong' New Zealanders; general elections divided the country into National Party and Labour Party voters.

Such was the spirit of the age. – Or perhaps not; it remains for this research to explore in more detail how the different social groups related to each other. Antagonism we certainly expect to find and perhaps many assumptions we have about the decade will be confirmed. But there is still more to know.

The Established Perspective: Pearson and Chapman

The above historical overview has been based on the common New Zealand histories (e.g. Belich, 2001; King, 2003; Rice, 1992; Sinclair, 1959). There are many similarities between the different accounts of the decade and many differences; ultimately, however, an extensive understanding of the Fifties cannot be obtained solely from the written histories.

One is led to suspect that a superficial treatment of the Fifties in New Zealand historiography partly accounts for the simplistic view we have of that period. A small number synoptical of ideas captures this simplified perspective: Cold War, 'bad press', 'golden weather', 'consumerism', 'domesticity' etc. Viewed from this angle the Fifties become a mythical – as in 'excessive myth-making' – age.

Amongst academics, one specific (mythical) understanding of the Fifties prevails. This circumstance can be attributed to two main sources:

When young intellectuals want to find out about the Fifties, what do they read first? Two Landfall essays, Chapman's 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' and Pearson's 'Fretful Sleepers!' (McEldowney, 1997, p. 11)

These two essays, similarly bleak in their outlook, represent a vision of New Zealand post-war society that, as my research shows, was shared by many during the Fifties and long after. Ultimately, I am setting out to explore how truthful this image of the Fifties really is.
Bill Pearson's 'Fretful Sleepers' (1952)

'Fretful Sleepers', published in *Landfall* in June 1952, bears the sub-title "A sketch of New Zealand behaviour and its implications for the artist". It is based on the premise that "New Zealand is as homogeneous in its patterns of conduct as [...] any other country" (Pearson, 1952, p. 202). This pattern Pearson endeavours to describe and criticise.

Having established this much Pearson commences his argument. For the common New Zealander (whom Pearson characterises as male), he essentially argues three things: (1) he fears difference of any kind, i.e. being different from the rest of society; (2) he is a born cynic; (3) and he is of a practical turn of mind.

Pearson begins by attempting to explain why Sidney Holland's popularity increased after the waterfront dispute. New Zealanders, he holds, are fond of strong and energetic rulers who are prepared to carry a lot of political responsibility because they themselves are extremely reluctant to carry any responsibility at all.

The reason for this lies in the New Zealander's fear of difference: he who bears more responsibility thus becomes 'different', which in New Zealand means "trying to be superior" (Pearson, 1952, p. 206), trying to rise 'above the boys'. This means that the New Zealander is a conformist by nature for:

> It is not only difference suggesting social superiority that the New Zealander fears, it is any variation from the norm. (ibid.)

By the same token the New Zealander is not prepared to reflect about himself:

> There is a dimension of experience that the New Zealander does not know. Because he is afraid of that accursed self of his that might get off-side of his norm-ridden society. (ibid., p. 213)

The New Zealander's fear of himself and connected love of the "almighty norm" (ibid., p. 214) combine with his fear of standing out to produce a general incapability of having truly intimate relationships.
'Affected insensibility' is the New Zealander's public face. Intimacy must not be betrayed to outsider, for it is "disloyalty to the rest of the gang" (ibid.).

Pearson then maintains that cynicism is the New Zealander's favourite technique to ensure that neither he nor anyone else 'rise above' their peers. Any difference in speech, education, attire or attitude is sneered upon and thus discarded. Consequently, the New Zealander's "most common facial expression is a sneer" (ibid.).

As far as attitudes on life in general are concerned, the New Zealander has a strictly materialistic outlook. Because he places such high value on money, the New Zealand life is targeted at accumulating considerable amounts of it. Pursuing one's personal profit is the one approved condition that can take men "from identity with the crowd" (ibid., p. 216).

This being the norm, not pursuing money as an end is considered a waste of time. The humanist idea of refining the individual to the utmost of his capabilities therefore does not make sense in the New Zealand environment. The New Zealander's reality is comprised of "wife and family and house and back garden and [...] a Saturday afternoon in the pub after the football" (ibid.), all of which requires money.

Even those students who do obtain a university degree do not hunger for knowledge. They also love money as an end in itself; hence their aim in acquiring a higher education is to earn a higher income. Consequently, once they leave university they "will have retired, for life, from thinking" (ibid., p. 222). Thinking will not be necessary to a large extent in their future lives for the New Zealand philosophy is a clean-cut realism.

The artist is very much the opposite of the common New Zealander. Producing works of art requires much abstraction and understanding, both of oneself and one's environment. Therefore the artist tends to be highly reflective, introspective and contemplative. He also places comparatively high value on ideals; therefore money does not enjoy such a high standing or is no priority at all.

All this puts the artist at odds with the common New Zealander who "fears ideas that don't result in increased crop-yield or money or home-
comforters" (ibid., p. 210). The artist as such is looked at with suspicion. The same holds true for young intellectuals: not sharing the dominant values, their outlook is bleak:

They are destined to grow into an artificial and alienated class living a threadbare life not so different from that of the English colony in an outpost of empire. (ibid., p. 222)

Before long, artists and intellectuals find themselves situated on the margins of society. The reason for this development, Pearson continues, is that:

They have grown to fear the philistinism of businessmen and clerks and 'retired' professional men, the narrow range of interests of the worker, and the vigour with which they all will sneer at what interests intellectuals. (ibid.)

Intellectuals and artists alike are, however, not only ostracised because they refuse to conform to society's norms. Pearson continues with his analysis stating that artists and intellectuals are in fact even feared by the common New Zealander for these non-conformists ask difficult questions, are eager to find out "what life is all about" (ibid., p. 227).

The reverse conclusion is that New Zealanders at large have no idea 'what life is all about' and that they are "frightened to find out" (ibid., p. 226). Underlying this conundrum is a lack of sense of purpose and national identity. The absence of a comprehensive founding narrative possibly accounts for this lack of identification. And not knowing what 'New Zealand' means, the individual identity as a New Zealander is not fixed enough to grant personal security either.

Thus in 'Fretful Sleepers' the marginalisation of the artist is mainly caused by the ostracising force the dominant mainstream imposes onto him. In many ways this is characteristic of young colonial societies in which practical concerns regarding everyone's material existence prevail. Cultural matters do play a role, of course, probably in institutionalised forms early on (the church, small societies of various kinds etc.) but are not seen as essential. This changes as the colony slowly develops into a nation that is conscious of its unique culture and, more importantly, needs to nurture and
sustain it. Until then, I hypothesise, artists or any other cultural producers will be ostracised.

This recognition is inherent in 'Fretful Sleepers' and shows in that despite all the harsh criticisms the ordinary New Zealander is never believed devoid of good-will or a virtuous character. He is rather 'only' a temporary product of history and geographical location. He cannot change either one but Pearson, towards the conclusion of his essay, appeals to artists and New Zealanders alike to endeavour to change their attitude towards both:

New Zealanders have far more virtues than intellectuals give them credit for and if artists can tap those virtues their work will take strength and, if they have the confidence of their intuitions, fertility. [...] Some sense of isolation is inevitable, some sense of detachment and discrimination, but that is the occupational hazard of every artist and especially of the novelist who must always be, so long as there are conflicts within his society, something of a spy in enemy territory. (Pearson, 1952, pp. 228-230)

These closing comments serve to mitigate much of Pearson's attack on the ordinary New Zealander. Because of them the reader begins to understand that Bill Pearson wishes to induce change in cultural attitudes, especially towards the artists, rather than telling New Zealanders off for inappropriate conduct. However, these last paragraphs could just as well not be part of his essay for they are continually ignored. It is his spiteful condemnation of the ordinary New Zealander that (literally) enjoys prominence among intellectuals, and we will find out why that is so.

Robert Chapman's "Fiction and the Social Pattern"
This essay, also published in Landfall two years after 'Fretful Sleepers', offers a narrowly-focused analysis of the origins and reasons behind the New Zealand writer's marginalisation. In that sense, 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' complements Pearson's view and adds to it. In particular, Chapman provides an insightful interpretation of the origins of conformity as an 'almighty norm'.

Chapman's approach is wider and narrower than Pearson's at the same time. He commences his argument referring to the historical events New Zealand had undergone since the First World War and then leads into
how literature in particular relates to these events. In a wider sense his analysis is hermeneutical.

In the absence of established literary traditions, Chapman begins, the writer must scrutinise society very carefully:

Each character must be handwrought. [...] So each author is driven to be his own sociologist, patiently observing the unrecognised majority patterns as well as the minor variations of which there will be all too few. (Chapman, 1953, p. 30)

In his perspective writers are marginalised because they unveil the shortcomings of their society, a natural consequence of having to examine their characters so closely. The shortcomings in the uniform New Zealand pattern that writers detect are, however, not obscured from the common New Zealander either. To the contrary; they create an obvious strain for adolescents to rebel against. The parents play a key role in the process of rebellion as they are part of the pattern against which the adolescents rebel, mostly with more freedom for social experimentation in view.

When young men and women reach this point in their lives, they will try to establish a way of life completely different from their parents'. The rebellion is specifically directed at married life, which adolescents wish to experience far differently. In their romantic quest they will, however, eventually be disappointed as society forces them to abandon their idealistic hopes. Marriage naturally signifies the end of rebellion — and all hope of things changing.

The same process of rebellion and lost hopes, Chapman stresses, had been undergone by the parents. They had been drawn back to 'the facts of life' themselves; they had failed in the past as well. Therefore, "to protect themselves, and, as they hope, their children, parents continue to insist on what will prevent examination and discussion" (Chapman, 1953, p. 44) which, as most New Zealanders undergo the same developmental processes, accounts for the society-wide pattern of conformity:

[...] [T]he resultant underlying and powerful frustration, loneliness, and lack of love is a reservoir for bitterness and hatred which provides the sour discontent ground-tone recorded in New Zealand fiction. Young people in their early thirties look back upon their period of revolt and see false and foolish adolescent hope.
Conformity and the enforcement of it by the older generation thus go hand in hand with defeat and lost hopes. The New Zealand writer, by reproducing this reality based on defeat, makes it much harder for the public “to forget, to ignore, to cover their defeats” (ibid., p. 53).

This accounts for the negative reception of much New Zealand writing, Chapman holds, and also for the writer's marginalised position in society. Writers according to this view become prophets, vanguards of progress. Their prophecies often remain unheard; they seem to bespeak the downfall of society:

[Hence] it is but a step to laying a further charge – that to portray, however responsible, the failures of society is in itself contributing to cause these failures.

(ibid., p. 54)

Chapman's argument in 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' proposes a culturally encompassing approach to analysing society. The writer's position in society is therefore not only determined by socio-economic characteristics in the way Pearson argued in 'Fretful Sleepers'; no, the writer's fate is even more directly dependent on the well-being of society. Responding to social developments as writers do, he will write bleak and depressing pieces during bleak and depressing times.

And this the reading public will not tolerate. In this analysis the family is assigned a crucial role for it is ultimately the family pattern that creates the dysfunctional social pattern Chapman has set out to describe. Thus his social analysis that appears so narrowly focused – onto fiction in response to social structures – is really a broad-sweeping critique of the values held in society at large.
Objectives of This Socio-Cultural Exploration

Both Pearson and Chapman argue against the dominant culture. They analyse and criticise it, if not indeed look down upon it. The fierceness with which they pursue their respective arguments bespeaks a substantial rift between the culture they themselves belonged to and the mainstream culture they oppose.

In many ways, the rift is blatantly obvious. The mainstream was perhaps more conservative, materialistic and conformist than ever before or since; writers, especially in the social realist tradition that had been established in New Zealand, naturally opposed this (Barrowman, 1991).

Intellectually satisfying as this may be, the veracity of the argument cannot at present be fully evaluated. Bill Pearson's and Robert Chapman's *Landfall* essays after all offer a very specific perspective onto the matter, one that is not matched by a similarly deep dissection of New Zealand society from the point of view of the mainstream culture.

This knowledge gap I aim to minimise. It is my intention to (1) establish the nature of the antagonism between writers and the ordinary New Zealander, (2) to identify the factors involved in creating these two different cultural spheres and to thus (3) gain a deeper understanding of the Fifties.

The period under scrutiny reaches from 1949 to 1960. Both these years had a general election that brought a political and thus social and cultural change. The attitudes displayed in the 1949 general election set the tone for the Fifties, as we will see. In terms of culture, the 1960 general election of course did not abruptly bring the Fifties to an end. But this is where my exploration stops; periodisation is, after all, always arbitrary.

The Fifties are, as I have outlined earlier, not the most thoroughly examined decade in New Zealand's history, and the implicit objective in my exploration of the cultural conflict between New Zealand writers and the cultural mainstream is to improve this condition. It is especially the dominant culture that requires attention here; not only because this creates a helpful backdrop for the subsequent discussion of New Zealand's writers but more importantly because it is this part of New Zealand's cultural history that has been most neglected.
This study seeks to give substance to a discourse that has so far been led without much factual substance: why or whether the New Zealand writer, artist or intellectual was alienated and marginalised by the dominant culture during the Fifties. A close familiarisation with the cultural mainstream is of utmost consequence to this end.

The Sources For This Study

The primary sources this study is based on are *The New Zealand Listener* and *Landfall*, both of which are valuable features in New Zealand's cultural landscape to the present day. Opinions about current affairs in particular and the country and society in general are expressed in various ways in both magazines; thus they are worthwhile keys to a more profound understanding of New Zealand during the Fifties.

Furthermore, both magazines show a strong concern for New Zealand's culture (*Landfall* as a literary magazine naturally more so). By 'culture' I mean the values, beliefs and practices that define a social group and allow for its differentiation from other groups (Baumeister, 2005; Inglis & Hughson, 2003). In this vein I hold that the intelligentsia, especially writers, constituted their own cultural sphere.

The view offered onto New Zealand's culture by the *Listener* and *Landfall* is predominantly male. When either magazine talked about 'New Zealanders' they in fact talked about New Zealand men. I therefore refer to the New Zealander as 'he' in this study. Whenever I refer to women specifically, the feminine pronoun will be used. Apart from these gender related attitudes that *Landfall* and the *Listener* had in common, each magazine, as can be expected, had its own perspective on society and thus speaks for a particular cultural group. Part of this section is to identify which these groups were and to explore the social and cultural dynamics between them.
1. The Listener

The *New Zealand Listener* was established in 1937 as the programme magazine for the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS). Until 1985 it had the monopoly of publishing programmes for all radio and later TV stations "which meant that a large circulation was assured from the beginning" (Mulgan, 1962, p. 129).

During the Fifties, an average issue featured a short leader (varying in length between 200 and 600 words), a main feature article, several shorter articles, a short story, a women's advice column, reviews of radio programmes and books and, of course, the complete broadcasting guide for all stations for one week.

Many writers of short stories and poems found an opening in the *Listener*, and New Zealand short stories became a significant feature of the magazine. Throughout the Fifties, the proportion of printing space allotted to literary writing increased. In its preoccupation with New Zealand's literary culture the *Listener* thus sided with *Landfall* without, however, reaching similar acclaim.

The *Listener*'s editorials and the correspondence pages represent revealing 'opinion pieces'; the contents of both are often a direct reaction to current affairs. The letters especially address a broad range of issues from a wide array of perspectives; on controversial topics, at least one letter for each side was printed (if possible).

Much of this balanced representation of opinions was owed to the *Listener*'s editor, Montague H. Holcroft who was a writer himself. His prize-winning essay *The Deepening Stream* (1940) offered a view of the New Zealander as largely determined in his behaviour and thought through his physical surroundings, i.e. his natural environment. It follows, for him anyways, that there is a distinct 'New Zealand type'. This conviction underlies his editorial writing in the *Listener*.

Holcroft took up the position of editing the *Listener* in 1949. From the start he "was inclined to lean rather heavily on the knowledge that the *Listener* had in general an intelligent readership" (Holcroft, 1969, p. 67). His task he saw in writing about public affairs as objectively as possible by
acquainting the reader with a variety of opinions whereupon he can then form his own.

Altogether Monte Holcroft embraced quite a liberal ethos in publishing. Indeed intellectual freedom, though not mentioned explicitly in the following quotation, was of high value for him:

I valued freedom above all other conditions of an editorial position, and I could not have gone to the *Listener* if I had known it to be restricted. (Holcroft, 1969, p. 63)

However, as a family magazine, certain limits were set for the *Listener* regarding topic and tone. Further restrictions were imposed upon the magazine through its nature as a government publication. Therefore, despite Holcroft's implicit protestations of intellectual fortitude, he was bound to be "one of the 'more timid editors'" (McEldowney, 1998, p. 669). Consequently, the *Listener* looks at New Zealand from a semi-official perspective that I hold is representative of the cultural mainstream.

2. Landfall

*Landfall* was the most influential literary (or literary-cum-social) magazine of the post-war era (McEldowney, 1998; Mulgan, 1962). It was published as a quarterly magazine with the help of a grant from the newly established New Zealand Literary Fund (NZLF). The first issue appeared in March 1947.

*Landfall*’s aim was to print original work – short stories and poems mainly, but also essays – written by New Zealanders only "so that a New Zealand tradition might develop" (Mulgan, 1962, p. 135). From the very start *Landfall*’s very "sombre and devout tone" (Oliver, 1992, p. 540) set it apart, as Toss Woollaston’s comment about *Meanjin*, the Australian counterpart to *Landfall*, illustrates:

[Here in Melbourne] I’m reading *Meanjin* in my spare time to be knowledgeable for the weekend. It’s very like *Landfall* in its earnestness. Almost a spirit of 'No
Alongside with 'no humour here' came high literary standards which altogether made for an exclusive magazine that was targeted at the cultivated and educated minority. Hence, despite *Landfall's* "utmost importance for the cultural project in New Zealand", its "demographic realities" (Geraets, 2003, p. 130) were quite different and its readership throughout the Fifties small. It was "too rarified, too perfectionist for everyday readers" (Mulgan, 1962, p. 137) but enjoyed great popularity within the artistic and intellectual community (Geraets, 2003).

*Landfall's* character directly represents its editor's personality. Charles Brasch was born into an affluent Dunedin family. Bendix Hallenstein was his grandfather and Brasch was therefore part of an influential, wealthy, cultured Jewish family network in Dunedin. He was educated in England (Oxford) where he took his first steps in his own literary career as a poet.

His intellectual scope, whilst enormous, was also highly European in outlook. This was not uncommon for a New Zealander at that time; 'home', Britain, was where many New Zealanders still hoped to be even during the Fifties (Phillips, 1993). But Brasch's literary interests were more widespread than this. He translated Rainer-Maria Rilke's poems into English, he read "Dostoievsky and Jane Austen and [...] Kafka" (Brasch, 1980, p. 174), and all this reading informed his thinking:

> All these worked together in me, for me, and the word formless, by which they led me to describe New Zealand life, had moral as well as aesthetic connotations. It meant mindless-ness and torpor; failure to distinguish and discriminate; the ugliness of living content with the second-best. (Brasch, 1980, p. 175)

This situation, seen through the eyes of a European-nurtured intellectual, had to be remedied. Brasch had in fact dreamed of publishing a periodical very much like the *Phoenix* for many years. *Phoenix* was published in 1932 by the Auckland University College Literary Club. It ran only four issues but nonetheless was tremendously influential; mostly this due to its editors' and contributors' concern about New Zealand's national
identity. *Phoenix* thus became a significant actor in New Zealand's literary nationalist movement of the Thirties (Barrowman, 1991).

In Brasch's own words, *Phoenix* signalled that some young New Zealanders were aware "of the place of literature and the arts in the life of a civilised land – of their social implications and responsibilities" (Brasch, 1980, p. 186). The same statement Brasch sought to make with *Landfall* which was essentially a "Phoenix grown up" (McEldowney, 1998, p. 666), also contributed to the national identity discourse, mainly through his editorial notes that prefaced every issue. More importantly, however, being the sole editor of the magazine Brasch had absolute power to decide what was being printed.

Suffice it to say for now that Charles Brasch' cultural ideology is generally claimed to have been "Eurocentric and elitist" (Oliver, 1992, p. 540). This attitude finds ample expression, sometimes subtle and but more often not subtle at all, in *Landfall.*

### 3. Other Primary Sources

I hold that the received opinion of the Fifties oscillates between the two formulas "golden weather" and "dullness and conformity" and that well-known historical accounts are responsible for rooting these stereotypes in the public imagination. The *Listener* and *Landfall*, main sources for this present attempt at providing a deeper understanding of the Fifties, will therefore be continually contrasted with the received opinion.

Yska's book explores the emergence of a New Zealand youth culture and is in this sense narrowly focused. Whilst it is understood that larger historical volumes devoted to discussing extensive periods cannot be too detailed in their treatment of any decade, it is surprising to also have to note the absence of special interest studies about the Fifties of a similar nature as All Shook Up. As I argued above, I deem that reputational prejudice has so far diverted scholarly attention elsewhere.

Other literary-cultural magazines that could have been included in this study are Here and Now, a more radical literary magazine which was also quite political in focus. Arachne and Numbers, besides being very short-lived, fall into the same category. Te Ao Hou is narrow in its focus on Māori literary developments and culture.

On the side of mainstream culture, the Listener and several "official" publications about New Zealand have been chosen. I might have spread my focus and included a popular women's magazine or a farmers' journal or one of the main daily newspapers. Truth, a right-wing populist weekly, might have been worthwhile to investigate as well. Whilst it would have been worthwhile to include any or all of the above mentioned magazines in this exploration, the scope of the current research did not permit such detailed investigation.

Besides, focusing on Landfall and the Listener exclusively allows for far more depth than the perusal of an additional source would have granted. Furthermore, both magazines in fact have a similar cultural focus (i.e. on New Zealand literature), as this quote illustrates:

Of course I wanted to be published in Landfall. Monte Holcroft's Listener, and Lou Johnson's Poetry Yearbook, were important starting places. But just as the young Wilfred Owen wrote to his mother when his work was admired by Eddie Marsh, editor of Georgian Poetry, 'I am a poet; I am started', so a young New Zealand poet of the Fifties whose work was smiled upon by Charles Brasch could consider himself launched. (Stead, 1997, p. 10)

This passage seems to indicate that the difference between Landfall and the Listener is a matter of degrees. Both magazines will be evaluated as they elucidate major cultural themes of the Fifties, and the differences between them are rather an advantage to this end. Landfall which printed
both of the essays sketched out above was published, at least at the outset, as an independent venture, financed entirely by its editor. It soon received an annual grant from the New Zealand Literary Fund but continued to be unimpeded in its freedom of expression by any forces apart from the editor's idiosyncrasies.

The *Listener* was considerably more restricted in regards to its contents, despite Monte Holcroft's protestations to the contrary (Holcroft, 1969). Besides being a broadcasting guide, it was and always had been intended as a family magazine. But most importantly, the *Listener* was targeted at the ordinary New Zealander's interests, whereas *Landfall* specifically aimed to reach the intellectual community.

It is not my intention to prove that the mainstream thought, lived and felt in any certain way, nor that New Zealand's artists and intellectuals during the Fifties thought and did exactly this or that. I am setting out to shed more light onto a decade and a cultural relationship (between mainstream and intelligentsia) that has, in my estimate, not received enough attention. *Landfall* and the *Listener* are two 'voices' that help achieving this end.

My research is therefore inherently qualitative in approach. It seeks to understand two different "worlds of meaning" (Baumeister, 2005, p. 11) through the expressions of different people belonging to these worlds – ordinary New Zealanders on the one hand and writers, artists and intellectuals on the other. What I will offer must be understood as an attempt at reconstructing the cultural atmosphere of a whole decade *in as far as* it is conducive to answer my main research question: Why was there such hostility between some writers and the mainstream in the Fifties?

Part I is devoted to a the cultural mainstream which will be investigated threefold: in terms of politics (1.), New Zealanders' beliefs about themselves (2.) and the most significant structural unit of post-war New Zealand, the family (3.).

Part II then proceeds to discuss the writers' culture as it is revealed in *Landfall*, the *Listener* and additional sources. The consideration of the
interaction between literature and society in the Fifties (1.) will be followed by a chapter on writers' lives and attitudes (2.).

Part III concludes this study through reference to the factors that might have accounted for writers' alienation (1.) and the nature of the sources used for its completion (2.).
This section will explore the values and attitudes held by the mainstream culture during the Fifties within the focus of my specific objectives. Politics as an arena in which values are expressed in policy-making will be investigated (1.) and points of friction such as they occurred between holders of different outlooks, political and otherwise, will subsequently be examined under the heading 'New Zealanders About New Zealanders' (2.).

The family, discussed in chapter 3, was a vital feature of post-war New Zealand. The sources, whilst not always reflecting on the topic to a great extent, all mirror its importance in society. New Zealand writers, who will be a tangential concern in this first section, will then be discussed the following second section.

Much of the following comments about the cultural mainstream refer to everyday life and its meaning to individual New Zealanders. The category of 'everyday' has not come into scholarly focus until recently; for the longest time it has been "assumed to be uninteresting by social scientists" (Edensor, 2002, p. 18). Adding to this that the Fifties are tainted with a literally "bad press" (McEldowney, 1997, p. 11) the lack of scholarship about the attitudes and values that informed the cultural mainstream's daily lives in this decade hardly comes as a surprise. In fact, it would almost be uncanny to find it otherwise.
1. PEOPLE'S VOICES IN POLITICS

One of the concerns perturbing New Zealand politicians during the Fifties was how to foster and institutionalise social stability for, by 1949, the first general election within the scope of this study, the country had still not fully recuperated from three decades of upheaval.

The Fifties took a lucky course thanks to unprecedented economic growth. Politically, these were rather tranquil, "if not somnolent", years (Hobsbawm, 1994, p. 284). Or so they appear; on closer examination, countless ruffles appear beneath the surface. New influences and social factors (i.e. post-war baby boom) created new structures and pressures that challenged the major parties as well as their voters.

Throughout the Fifties, the majority of New Zealanders identified with the political aims of one of the two leading New Zealand parties, the National and Labour Parties. No other political party, neither the Communist Party of New Zealand nor Social Credit, won seats in the general elections held in 1949, 1951, 1954, 1957 or 1960. In this sense, New Zealand had a two-party system.

In a two-party system, parties usually move to the "middle of the left-right spectrum to optimise their appeal to the median voter" (Miller, 2005, p. 161). This assumes a certain degree of ideological flexibility on the side of party policy which allows both parties to make "their ideological priorities conform to those of their targeted voters" (ibid.). We can assume that it is mostly the 'targeted voters' whose votes win elections (Chapman, 1992). Scrutinising an election's victor's election policies thus leads directly into the study of dominant attitudes in society.

1.1. The First National Government, 1949-1957

1.1.1. First Term, 1949-1951

The National Party under Sidney Holland gained political leadership in 1949. Labour's loss did not come as a surprise; it had exhausted its power
and will for reform after fourteen years in office. From the very start, National took a firm stand against Labour's proposed 'socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange' and instead supported private and co-operate enterprise, thus aiming for the middle-class voter and businessman. National argued that "no government had any right to interfere with the established concerns of private enterprise" (The Press, Nov. 2, 1949, p. 2). One candidate rallied against the Labour Government in the following manner:

In the last fourteen years this government has grabbed wherever it can. It took over private broadcasting stations, workers' insurance, and coal mines, and it stepped in the airways, which last year ran at a net loss of £250,000. The State mines formerly made money, but since they were taken over they have to be subsidised. And you are paying for all this. It is not an impersonal state that pays, but you. They are fooling you right, left, and centre. (The Press, Nov. 2, 1949, p. 2)

National promised to de-regulate the economy, lower trade barriers and steer the country into affluence whilst retaining the social welfare state, as well (King, 2003). Freeing New Zealand from war-time rationing was regarded as the biggest step towards a prosperous New Zealand (Gustafson, 1990; Miller, 2005; Sutch, 1966). 'Prosperous' was explicitly related to individual prosperity for the ordinary citizen as Sidney Holland, the National Party's second leader, was an ardent believer in that "the way to beat Communism was to create a nation of 'little capitalists' with their own property" (Yska, 1993, p. 25).

Sid Holland stood for the urban liberal wing of conservatism. He was a bulky man, "a shrewd judge of the opinions and prejudices of the average New Zealander of his time" (Brown, 2003, p. 14). He did not have strong intellectual capacities "but he knew clearly, simply, firmly and instinctively rather than intellectually what type of society he believed was best for New Zealand" (Gustafson, 1990, p. 276). Private property owners were an integral part of his vision.

Whilst, as Raymond Miller (2005) argues, a two-party system allows for much adjusting of a party's policies to voters' preferences, there are limitations as to how far a party can go without becoming opportunistic and untrustworthy and so alienated from traditional voters. In the Forties, the
Labour Party had done exactly that (Beaglehole, 1961). Furthermore, throughout its time in office Labour had aimed to reduce overseas debt whilst financing the social welfare state, a process that signified the rise in the cost of living for New Zealanders (Sutch, 1966).

National's victory in 1949 thus signified (1) the triumph of individual prosperity and (2) the loss of trust in social democracy which precipitated Labour's loss. The outcome of 1946 elections had already foreshadowed Labour's subsequent demise; whilst maintaining its majority (by four seats), Labour had lost eight seats to National.

The 1951 snap election re-affirmed National's popular appeal and increased its majority in Parliament. It was called after the Opposition had moved a 'no-confidence' vote on the government's handling of the waterfront dispute (Brown, 2003). Holland accepted the challenge and called a general election and won - his "greatest coup" (Brown, 2003, p. 15). It is hard to say how unpopular the Emergency Regulations, the main tool for handling the industrial crisis, were with the public because objections could not be voiced under the regulations, but Labour must have assumed that the public would ultimately resent the curtailment of their civil liberties and vote National out. The opposite happened.

Cold War New Zealand – Ideological warfare

In 1947, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States, announced the US's new foreign policy, proclaiming that the world is divided "in two camps – Communists and anti-Communists" (Sutch, 1966, p. 333). In crude political terms, this defined the Fifties as a bipolar decade where everyone was either one of two things, mostly 'for' or 'against'. Truman's words testified that the Cold War, a long-ranging ideological battle between east and west, had reached a phase of renewed vigour.

Across the western world, the Cold War pitted capitalism, communism and social democracy against each other. Communist parties, in accordance with communist doctrine, aimed for "the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange" (The Press, Nov. 2, 1949, p. 6) and assumed a necessary revolution in order for the proletariat to
ascend to its just position of power. With the Soviet Union in a position of
ew-gained power after 1945, the western world naturally feared for its
further expansion and the fall of all countries, one by one, under communist
rule.

Traditionalist parties, aligned with capitalist values, in all western
nations most fiercely opposed anything even remotely akin to communism.
Communism was regarded in every way as the diametric opposite of
conservative values and concepts. These values, especially in the Cold War
context, were

[…] individualism, freedom, choice, prosperity and opportunity, all of which
would be delivered by progressive and enlightened capitalism. (Kandiah, 2003, p.
35)

In New Zealand the ideological battle between capitalism and socialism was
carried out between the National Party and the Labour Party. The National
Party through its emphasis on liberating the market, private property and the
importance of the family represents conservative values whereas social
democratic parties like the New Zealand Labour Party advocate making the
capitalist system more equitable and humane (Levine, 1999). The latter
therefore advocate change as improvement towards a better future for all
citizens. Labour also aims for more solidarity in all parts of society. The
contrast between National and Labour aspirations in general is stark; the
spirit of suspicion, so characteristic for the Cold War era, exacerbated this
political contrast.

It is assumed that because part of the Labour Party's beliefs
overlapped with Communist aspirations, Labour upon recognising this
dangerous ideological proximity and reacting to the social mood too,
abandoned some of its earlier progressive policies (Beaglehole, 1961). The
following statement made by the leader of the Communist Party in
preparation of the 1949 general election supports these assumptions:

The position today is that the Labour Party and the National Party are the real
fellow travellers in New Zealand. They speak with one voice and have one
common policy on every matter which is of vital interest to New Zealand, either in
affairs at home or abroad. (The Press, Nov. 2, 1949, p. 6)
Labour's change in political attitude, its complacency and fear of new ideas, alienated traditional Labour voters (Beaglehole, 1961). Those who remained faithful Labour voters ran risk of being denounced as secretly communists:

Mr Marlow\textsuperscript{1} said he hoped electors were aware of the similarity of the objectives of the Communist Party and the Labour Party. [...] The objectives of the New Zealand Labour Party, stated at the top of the party's membership card, were the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. "I do not suggest that our Labour members are Communists, but their objectives are identical [...]" (The Press, Nov. 2, 1949, p. 6)

The National Party candidate here of course aimed at suggesting that Labour Party members were at least favourably inclined towards Communism. Such political tactics were successful, too, because in crude political, as well as cultural, terms the Fifties were ruled by a 'spirit of suspicion' (Yska, 1993). Also, as Eric Hobsbawm (1994) asserts, "the mood of the booming decade was against the Left" (p. 283).

"No-Nonsense" Spirit

With the arrival of numerous war immigrants to New Zealand and the danger of communism apparent "everywhere", New Zealand was infested with what in the American context has been called McCarthyism (King, 2003; Yska, 1993). This meant that political dissenters were denounced and hunted down for their alleged association with communism; more universally even, "anyone whose views seemed to support human rights" (Sutch, 1966, p. 374) was labelled communist.

Established traditions offered relative certainty in the face of such turmoil, and National as a conservative party leaned favourably towards traditionalism (Edensor, 2002; Kandiah, 2003; Less, 1951; Nisbet, 1986; Sutch, 1966; Tännö, 1990; Thompson, 1978; Yska, 1993). National not only offered strong leadership and with it stability as was exemplified in its proposal to re-introduce hanging for murder and its previous support in

\textsuperscript{1} The National Party's candidate for Christchurch Central.
Labour's referendum on peace-time conscription (Yska, 1993); it also appealed to the voters through promising to stop rationing (especially of butter and petrol) and open the markets to some extent.

Part of the 'no-nonsense' attitude was that people were far more accepting of the extension of government controls into their lives. Another and more tacit 'no-nonsense' feature in western post-war societies was "the development of a 'secret state'" (Kandiah, 2003, p. 30) that monitored people's movements but was itself hidden from public knowledge. In New Zealand, for instance, the miniature branches of secret services successfully aided in identifying 'dangerous subjects' (Yska, 1993).

As the 1951 waterfront dispute demonstrates, the extension of government power also signalled the severe curtailment of citizen rights as an expedient measure. Freedom of expression and opinion, including freedom of the press, was most seriously restricted. This was part of the Emergency Regulations issued by Holland's government. The waterfront dispute thus became a New Zealand expression of the Cold War.

As "it is futile to engage in public discussion when it is known in advance that only one opinion may be voiced" (Monro, 1951, p. 125), the waterfront dispute was ignored by some newspapers and journals. Others reported it in a way that reflected the government's views. The Listener's complete neglect of this dramatic issue cannot be held against it; as a government publication it was more restricted to voice its opinion than many other periodicals.

The New Zealand Journalists' Association issued a declaration expressing their view of the Emergency Regulations as "wrong in principle

2 The Emergency Regulations: "The Minister could take over union funds, suspend their awards; constables could arrest without warrant; police of the rank of sergeant and above had full right of entry and could prohibit meetings and processions. Penalties for an offence were a fine of £100, three months in gaol, or both. For the workers, an 'offence' meant being a party to or encouraging a declared strike, printing or publishing anything that was likely to encourage a strike or the continuance of a strike or anything that was a report of any such statement; being an officer of a striking union and not being able to prove he counselled against the strike (that is, guilty unless he could prove innocent); being an officer of a union in which another officer had committed an offence or where one-fifth of the members were striking (unless proof was produced of full opposition to it); being near any place of work in such a manner as would induce another to refrain from working; failing to satisfy a constable that his being near a place of work was not an offence; insulting a person (or his parent) for continuing to work; carrying, displaying, or writing on a fence insulting words about certain classes of persons; and so on." (Sutch, 1966, pp. 377-378)
and harmful in practice" (The New Zealand Journalist, April 16, 1951, p. 2). But even among New Zealand journalists support of the government's actions could be found: a letter to The New Zealand Journalist states that the previous declaration in protest of the Emergency Regulations,

[...] gave aid and comfort in the form of propaganda material to the strikers and the thugs associated with them.

The right of criticism is vital to democracy, but when the existence of democracy itself is threatened rights and principles are not the most important thing. [...] If you are not for the Government in time of danger, then you are against it. [...] If we criticise the Government at this stage we lay ourselves open to misunderstanding and resolute opposition to our proposals. (The New Zealand Journalist, May 15, 1951, p. 1)

Such reasoning bespeaks a deep-seated belief in and support of authority, whilst also succinctly summarising Cold War antagonism. The Cold War, in New Zealand as elsewhere, was a bi-polar age. In this climate, where it was illegal to express criticism of the government, 1951 helped to create the impression that "New Zealand had become a society of such relative public consensus that there was limited sense of the need to uphold minority rights" (Phillips, 2004, pp. 166-167). This spirit, as we will see, persisted throughout the Fifties.

The Listener and Landfall – Images of Cold War New Zealand

The Listener as an overall non-political magazine referred to the Cold War but refrained from taking sides. Musing about the origins of the Cold War it said that "we are still children in politics" (Editorial, Listener, Sept. 16, 1949) and therefore "still have to learn how to be free" (ibid.); the Listener seemingly aimed to contribute to that end.

In a similar vein the Listener appealed to the readers not to let fear rule their lives – a highly pertinent comment since in late 1949 the Soviets had commenced with their nuclear testing programme which indeed created hitherto unknown fears in the hearts of men. These fears had the potential to stimulate thoughtless acts of offensive defence. Upon these events the Listener again called for gaining more knowledge before rash action on a
thin factual basis. "Every little victory over ignorance and prejudice is a gain for peace" (Editorial, *Listener*, Oct. 7, 1949), Holcroft stated with conviction.

As was to be expected under the Emergency Regulations, the *Listener* at no point in time referred to the waterfront lockout. On August 17, however, the subject of communism was discussed in an editorial. "Attitudes to Communism" explains why western peoples in general reject communism:

> [...] it is revolutionary; it can be established only by destroying the organs and institutions of democracy, so that it could not be removed except by counter-revolution; it replaces our objective code of law with a subjective practice which becomes the expressed will of a ruling group; it rests on materialist dogma; and it repudiates the rights of the individual. (Editorial, *Listener*, Aug. 17, 1951)

Holcroft here addresses the reader quite directly. By using 'our' and 'our objective code of law' in relation to communism he openly appeals to the readers' patriotism and love of a common way of life. This aimed to stir the reader into instant opposition to communism which, as everyone knew, sought to destroy the western way of life. An emotional reaction of this kind, once procured, might not be mitigated much by the subsequent assertion that communism as a political theory comes in various shades and modifications depending on local (i.e. the communist country's) context.

Communists all over the world have often declared that in order for a communist society to be established, the existing order must be completely overturned. The only way to the proletariat's deserved position of power is through a revolution. Viewed in this light, Holcroft's soft-spoken rejection of communism is far from extreme; indeed, he retains a cheerful note in the light of such a dismal topic:

> A little more knowledge may help us to separate fact from fiction, the truth from legend – and in so doing to keep in focus the dangers that are real, and to free them from dangers that are solely in the imagination. (Editorial, *Listener*, Aug. 17, 1951)
Taking the waterfront dispute and the related Emergency Regulations into consideration and with the next general election within sight, Holcroft seems to call for a more sensible handling of anti-communist tendencies.

Taken for what it is, and seen in the context of the passages related above, the *Listener* intimated that ignorance accounts for many mistakes in the world of politics and opinion-making in general. This echoes of humanitarian ideals which normally entail an objection to totalitarianism such as found expression in the events of 1951. Holcroft himself, whether justly or not, "was inclined to lean rather heavily on the knowledge that the *Listener* had in general an intelligent readership" (Holcroft, 1969, p. 67); if this was true his subtle criticism might not have been lost on the reader.

Altogether reference to the Cold War was rare between 1952 and 1956. The year 1957 brought a change: not only did the Soviet Union launch the first Sputnik but Britain also abandoned its imperial ambition to build a "Fourth Empire", thus leaving the Dominions in political "no man's land" (Reynolds, 2003, p. 139). In combination of these events, the *Listener* declared that "a new phase of anxiety" (Editorial, *Listener*, Nov. 1, 1957) had begun. Despite its previous arguing that the ultimate strike would not be led by any of the super powers for as long as there were atomic bombs on all sides (e.g. Editorial, *Listener*, Oct. 7, 1949), by 1957 the *Listener* was convinced that

[...]

This editorial ends on a comparatively less hopeful note than the previous opinion pieces on the topic had. It was perceived that Russia would use the Sputnik for war-purposes if necessary – a grisly thought. The disclosure of the extent of Stalin’s great purges and the brutal silencing of student protests in Budapest, Hungary in 1956 have further enhanced the 'red scare'.

Whilst no open support of highly marginal or radical opinion was ever printed in the *Listener*’s correspondence columns, some variety of opinion was still represented. For example: A letter published in response to
the above-quoted editorial takes the discussion into a surprisingly different direction:

As long as we maintain the "negotiation from strength" attitude there can come no conceivable point in time when our distrust of others will disappear. [...] The only way is by a blazing act of faith in God for one nation, undaunted and undismayed, unilaterally to disarm itself. (Listener, Letters, Nov. 29, 1957)

This particular argument was pursued no further even though reference to God and the church was not uncommon in the letters. Another of the few letters addressing communism pleaded to correct factual blunders that had been broadcast. The correspondent, in fact, suggested that on many occasions New Zealand news was deliberately faulty and ended by proclaiming:

Whatever our views about Communism, it is important that we should be clear about the official attitudes in a Communist country with which we do co-exist and seem likely to do so in the future. (Letters, Listener, Dec. 13, 1957)

This is one of many appeals directed, on the one hand, to the government urging it to provide New Zealanders with more (and more profound) information about daily events and, on the other hand, for New Zealanders themselves to educate themselves. This notion testifies to the overall spirit of progress which reigned in all parts of society.

A retrospect of the year 1957 declared that the Cold War altogether left New Zealand untouched, explaining that "the ordinary citizen stood resignedly in much the same place he's always been" (Listener, "1957 in Retrospect: Stars and Satellites", Dec. 27, 1957). In New Zealand, instead, living standards had risen, full employment been reached, wages increased and health standards increased as well (Sutch, 1966). These developments were not directly influenced by the Cold War and the ordinary New Zealander indeed 'stood in the same place he's always been'; however, the back-drop of the Cold War has most certainly accentuated these national achievements and the sense of social stability they helped to create. Landfall also aimed for a balanced portrayal of issues relating to communism and anti-communism. In comparison to the Listener, however, Landfall was
more lenient toward communism, which it seemed to view as a philosophy like any other.

The degree of abstraction with which *Landfall* treated subjects was quite marked. For instance, in 1949, commenting on the referendum on peace-time conscription, the editorial held that "new dangers cannot be met automatically by old methods" (Notes, *Landfall*, 1949, p. 206). 'New methods', so the argument lead one to believe, required people who "are alive, enquiring, and inventive" (ibid.). These could not at that time be found in New Zealand.

The same editorial compared the National and Labour policies for the upcoming general election and asserted that it

> [...] is less the actual results of elections and the adoption of one policy or another than the attitude of mind that leads to them. [...] The two attitudes may lead to different policies, but the difference between the attitudes is more important than the difference between the policies [...]. (Notes, *Landfall*, 1949, p. 203)

Other comments on daily events were fortunately less detached, if equally reflective in character. Two pieces by T.M. Lees, for instance, discussed the political landscape in reference to the Cold War *en detail* (Lees, 1950, 1951). In 'The Crisis in Social Democracy' (Sept. 1950) he proclaimed that Communism was significant for New Zealand society not as a threat, but as a challenge:

> Its challenge to the democratic society is to find a way in which the case for revolutionary change can be argued, and if supported can be effected, without destroying democracy itself. This is what Social Democracy set out to do, but forgot on the way. (Lees, 1950, p. 203)

The kind of change Lees advocated here is 'revolutionary'; after 1945, most social democrats had distanced themselves from the idea of abolishing capitalism through a revolution of the proletariat and rather embraced a policy of slow adjustment of the capitalist system in order to make it more humane. So, even for someone who simply bemoaned the abandonment of social democratic principles by parties who can be assumed to support those, as Lees seemed to be, his argument was quite radical.
In his later article, 'Democracy and Reaction' (1951), this radicalism became more obvious. Lees (1951) argued that "our obsession with Communism blinds us to other dangers" (p. 45), dangers coming from the Right. Conservatives, for instance, in his opinion often 'over-react' on minor offences because they hang onto symbols more than to the ideas and principles they represent:

By a sort of process of association, the sanctity [of the symbol] then attaches itself also to the thing the symbol represents: thus it becomes equally improper to harbour doubts about the perfection of the British Empire as to fail in due respect to the Union Jack [...] (Lees, 1951, p. 46)

This explained the tough-mindedness exhibited by the National Government; Lees continued that "in the end only force remains" (ibid., p. 47) for upholding conservative power. He concluded that "the most potent quality of force is the pervasive influence of fear" (ibid., p. 51). Brasch argued in a similar vein that a prolonged sense of fear "acts as a partial immuniser, a narcotic" (Notes, Landfall, 1959, p. 208); he continued:

This long-continued sense of crisis has affected governments, it seems in a similar way. [...] How else can one account for the disconcerting passivity of most individuals and complacency of most governments in face of the danger of nuclear war and the preparations for it? (Notes, Landfall, 1959)

Again, as we can see, social, political and cultural conditions are portrayed as inseparably intertwined, and analysis of the underlying attitudes is always the first step to a better understanding of daily events. Brasch's anxieties over the national character and identity are always implied. In most cases, analysis came back to where it started with the New Zealander himself.

The above quotation also sheds a very critical light on the National Government. According to this analysis the government used fear, by using the Cold War to engender irrational fear of Communists, to advance its political agenda. Charles Brasch, in the editorial in the following issue, added to this line of thought that one could see quite clearly how "the possession of power can blind its holders [...] to matters of principle" (Notes, Landfall, 1951, p. 164).
There was some comment on the waterfront dispute and the Emergency Regulations in Landfall, not of a critical nature of course for that was illegal. Walter Brookes (1951) held that the waterfront dispute "was a political fight, with the persistent suggestion that it was against communism" (W. Brookes, 1951, p. 142) when it was really 'only' a political fight. D.H. Monro in the same issue maintained that smear tactics and an antagonistic attitude similar to 'if you are not with the government you are against it',

[...] is of course the prevailing spirit in international affairs; it is I suppose too much to hope that it should not also prevail in domestic matters. (Monro, 1951, p. 126)

So the Cold War did not leave New Zealand unmarked; in this regard Landfall and the Listener differ. Where the Listener had to be subtle in its criticism of politics to the point of risking not having a voice at all, disappointment with the press for not putting up any resistance to the Emergency Regulations was expressed openly in Landfall throughout the Fifties. Philosophical arguments for enquiry and independence of mind and action, legal disputations and socio-political pieces all made the same point: that there was no serious political thought to be found amongst the New Zealand public, that fundamental rights such as "free elections and the right to criticise the government" (Orr, 1952, p. 54) must exists – and that New Zealanders simply fail "to look steadily at the realities of politics and behaviour" (Oliver, 1955, p. 341).

Also in Landfall, A.R.D. Fairburn (1951) had the daring to explicitly refer to the Emergency Regulations as a "piece of parlour-fascism" (Fairburn, 1951, p. 217). We can assume that the events of 1951 have severely exacerbated the New Zealand Left's disappointment with their times. Those same intellectuals shared many of union workers' concerns and sided with the working class movement:

During the dispute the wharfies had against them the Government, the shipping companies, the Federation of Labour, the exasperated middle classes, many other workers, and the extreme radicals. They were supported only in certain points by intellectuals interested in freedom of speech and by workers who saw them, not as
an over-favoured, but as the shock troops of the working class movement. (W. Brookes, 1952, p. 150)

Two significant observations follow: (1) both intellectuals and union officials tended to be social democrats rather than conservatives and therefore believed in industrial regulation, i.e. a social market economy rather than a free market. Through this commonality, (2) intellectuals and workers both stood opposite the mainstream who believed that the watersiders had become "intoxicated with power" and, together with their supporters, were "a Russian fifth column" (Oliver, 1960, pp. 215-217). Landfall, in publishing such writing, thus stood opposite the mainstream.

Concluding, on the basis of what has been written in Landfall, the Cold War did have a massive effect on those New Zealanders who deviated from the political norm: the intellectuals and the working class movement. The ideological dimension of the Cold War years sat particularly uneasily with them, especially because during the Fifties all political idealism was reduced to suspect motive (Thompson, 1978).

1.1.2. Second and Third Term, 1951-1957

The waterfront dispute was the decisive issue in the 1951 election. A pre-election pamphlet that National had delivered to all homes read "The People versus the Wreckers. A Choice YOU must Make" (Gustafson, 1986, p. 60). Prime Minister Holland declared that

[... the issue today was whether law and efficiency were to prevail, or anarchy organised by a group of wreckers. (The Press, Aug. 15, 1951, p. 7)]

In what must be regarded as a strategic move, the Emergency Regulations were maintained for longer than necessary, thus considerably restricting Labour's freedom of expression in their election campaign. Furthermore, when they were lifted with five weeks left to Election Day the Opposition was left with precious little time to consolidate their election program (Sutch, 1966).
The public voted for 'law and order', for the safety of their property from socialist tendencies and against the 'wreckers'. The 20 seat majority for National came about partly "because some former Labour voters did not vote" (Sutch, 1966, p. 395); apart from that, it can hardly be called a 'fair election' to begin with, both in practical (i.e. time for campaigning) and ideological terms. Walter Nash, the Opposition leader, had on one occasion in fact been banned from the venue where he was scheduled to speak and "was not allowed to speak on the radio" (Sutch, 1966, p. 394), the key means to reach and inform people.

The National Party had promised to protect 'the people' from the 'wreckers', won public favour, the election, and subsequently set out to ensure industrial upheavals would not occur again. The Police Offences Amendment Bill of 1951 was seen as a primary means of crushing union activism and thus keeping New Zealand safe (Sutch, 1966). By the Bill, a defendant was viewed as guilty until he proved himself not guilty; by a similar perversion of justice, the original version of the Bill avoided trial by jury (Oliver, 1960; Orr, 1952; Sutch, 1966). It sought to establish that it was an offence

[...] to criticise ministers of governments outside New Zealand [...] complete proof of innocence had to be established by one accused of seditious statements; seditious intention included seditious 'tendency'; occupation or possession of premises where a printing press was found was proof of the commission of the offence; there were powers to search without warrant; a prosecution could be brought at any time in the future after the alleged commission of an offence; a strike included any action which might have a tendency to interfere with production [...] (Sutch, 1966, p. 397)

The amended Bill was considerably softened but that does not alter the fact that the Holland Government did propose such a piece of legislation. The object behind such legislation was of course to protect 'the people' from 'the wreckers', and draconian measures were sought for this end.

The National Party's leadership was confirmed in the 1954 election, although at a loss of five seats. Interestingly, the 1954 election has not received much comment in either Landfall or the Listener. If therefore the impression was produced that this was a dull election, then, in the opinion of
one observer, "this was largely the wish of the parties" for neither party offered "clear alternative programmes, or even intelligent discussion of the problems facing the country" (Durrant, 1955, p. 73). National mainly praised its past achievements – rescuing the country from danger in 1951 and bringing prosperity to every New Zealander – without, however, pointing to the future; Labour made it a 'cost of living election' (Durrant, 1955).

Living standards had risen hugely since National came into office, largely due to the combination of a rise in overseas prices, higher export rates, overseas borrowing and the greater use of New Zealand's own resources. The accruing foreign exchange was largely spent on consumption goods which signified a jump in the availability of an unprecedented large range of products (O'Donnell, 1992; Sutch, 1966). Charles Brasch's (1980) reminiscences illustrate this most vividly:

The plenty and ease – for some at least – were astonishing. At Kate's in Amberley they seemed to live on eggs, butter and cream – I could hardly believe my eyes and palate; and I encountered for the first time that luxurious national dish the pavlova, a kind of quiche, a pasty meringue with fruit and whipped cream. Once during the war I had met such plenty, on a farm in Norfolk only a few months earlier where there was unlimited farm butter, fresh eggs, milk and cream; but that was altogether exceptional; here it was a matter of course. (Brasch, 1980, pp. 408-409)

With more consumer goods available, advertising became much more sophisticated (O'Donnell, 1992). This helped to further National's goal of turning New Zealand into a nation of little capitalists.

If one were a cynic one would assert that there is nothing that stifles political interest as much as full bellies or, in another observer's words, "brains have no inducement to function till bread and circuses run short" (R. H. Brookes, 1958, p. 67). Viewed in this light it is hardly surprising that election campaigns were openly based on the cost of living. For the 1957 election, both parties' election advertisements openly proclaimed this fact: one of the National Party's posters states
New Zealand under NATIONAL has never enjoyed GREATER PROSPERITY! Never has there been greater progress. Never have living standards been so high. (Listener, Nov. 15, 1957)

Labour's election propaganda reads:

Thank the Nationalists for the highest food prices in history! Here are the facts...See how these foods have increased in price since 1949! [compares prices for butter, sugar, sirloin and eggs 1949 and 1957] Soaring prices...skyrocketing cost of living...we can't afford any longer the expensive luxury of a Nationalist Government! Vote Labour for your family's sake. (Listener, Nov. 15, 1957)

Apart from appealing to the purely materialistic side of life, National again sought to win votes with its handling of the waterfront dispute. Keith Holyoake, National's new leader in the 1957 election, said in a campaign speech:

There are only a few survivors of the blood and thunder old guard of socialists. I have a feeling that the world has passed by the old leaders of their party. These old socialists are trying desperately but gallantly to breathe new life into the dead corpse of an outworn socialist-cum-communist theory and philosophy. [...] the wreckers are waiting for the return of a weak socialist government. (The Press, Nov. 5, 1957, p. 2)

Indeed it appears as if the waterfront dispute had set the agenda and provided the political raison d'être for the National Party throughout the Fifties. Formed in opposition to the Labour Party, New Zealand's National Party embraced a strongly "anti-collectivist, anti-unionist, anti-interventionist and anti-welfare ideology" (Miller, 2005, p. 155). The watersiders' role in the waterfront dispute thus epitomised everything the National Party opposed which gave it ample opportunity to proclaim its policy.

Also, as a liberal-conservative hybrid, National passionately upheld the "rule of law, personal freedom and initiative, private property and enterprise" and the (more or less unfounded) "belief in a harmonious and economically prosperous society" (Miller, 2005, p. 155), to the extent that commentators have accused the Holland Government of a singular disregard for political realities (R. H. Brookes, 1958; Olssen, 1957). The first National
Government was altogether quite totalitarian in its handling of internal affairs, in part, it seems, in a unified effort to protect "private ownership of production, distribution and exchange" (King, 2003, p. 422). For one commentator,

No amount of discomfort or distress, or of offended aesthetic sensibility, ever caused the conservatives to soften for a moment their tenacious regard for property — along with rank in polity their most obsessive and durable heritage. (Nisbet, 1986, pp. 14-15)

Indeed, as J.C. Beaglehole (1961) holds, National "fell upon power" in 1949 with a "naive, almost childish brutality" (p. 140). Its subsequent political ingenuity and cunning, exemplified in the waterfront dispute and the following snap election, "left the Labour party, speaking politically, nowhere" (ibid., p. 141). Labour later in the decade fought two 'cost of living' elections, the latter (in 1957) successfully so; whether that brought the party 'somewhere' remains for each observer to decide.

Beaglehole's critical stand towards the National Government under Sid Holland epitomises Landfall's position on the matter. The general political tenor in Landfall is a serious cautioning against the accumulation of too much power in the hands of the government. The early Fifties saw a massive change in the government's handling of public affairs, not least through legal amendments such as the Emergency Regulations Act and Police Offence Amendment Bill of 1951. The Emergency Regulations with their vague underlying definition of 'strike' had given the government virtually unrestricted power, which did not remain unnoticed or uncommented on.

Landfall calls the legal enforcements of the Holland Government "the legal source for repressive legislation of the most dangerous kind" (Orr, 1952, p. 60) which was viewed as especially disconcerting "in the face of an increasing concentration of power in the hands of the political executive" (Olssen, 1952, p. 322). A 1956 commentary on civil liberties further states that New Zealand governments, especially Sid Holland's, have of late displayed a tendency "to arm themselves with legal powers that they don't need or don't use directly" (Scott, 1956, p. 42). According to editorial
opinion, this happens because "government by its nature tends everywhere towards autocracy" (Notes, *Landfall*, 1958, p. 100).

New Zealand parties' competition for power deserves serious attention as well. Power, according to editorial opinion, is what political parties are after and what ultimately will corrupt them:

[But] what form does the corruption of great power take? [...] It blinds in that it makes power itself (national and personal power being identified) the overmastering concern of its possessor: to win, to keep and to assert power. But power for what end? The very question becomes treasonable: the possession of power is its own raison d'être. (Notes, *Landfall*, 1958, p. 3)

The possession of power for its own sake can lead to and subsequently end in "criminal madness" (Notes, *Landfall*, 1958, p. 3). The same editorial asserts one of the direst consequences of the resulting totalitarian possession of power is the curtailment of the writer's freedom. The significance of this will be discussed in section II; in brief, Charles Brasch believed that

The business of the imaginative writer under any system [...] is to keep society open, open to new ideas, new ends, new techniques; to persuade the holders of power that for the sake of their own survival and in the interest of society they must allow for change, for conflict of views, for the difficult pursuit of truth however disturbing truth is [...]. (Notes, *Landfall*, 1958, p. 100)

I believe it is fair to extend this manifesto from the imaginative to all writers. The writer, or more broadly the artist, is the central concern of Charles Brasch and *Landfall*. That *Landfall* strongly criticised the National Government under Sid Holland, which viewed most fields of culture as unnecessary encumbrances and was generally undisguisedly philistine, is therefore hardly surprising. As we will see later, however, the ideological difference goes much further than that.

Judging from the *Listener*, the Fifties were a quiet decade as far as politics were concerned. The *Listener* itself evokes and supports this impression. As a government publication it had to, and did refrain, from much critical political comment. Whilst elections were not ignored totally, mention of them was so devoid of political discussion that some have concluded that the *Listener* was "of course non-political" (Warburton, 1954,
p. 180). If 'non-political' here means 'not critical of the government', then this statement is certainly right.

If, however, the statement purports to argue that the *Listener* absolutely and on all occasions abstained from political commentary of any kind whatsoever, then it certainly fails to give a true picture of the magazine. As discussed in the previous section (1.1.), the *Listener* did in fact make political statements. If, however, these were ever critical of the government, they were so only in the subtlest of ways. D. H. Monro's (1951) word of the futility of engaging in public discussion "when it is known in advance that only one opinion may be voiced" (p. 125) comes to mind. Besides, for public servants like Monte Holcroft to voice critique of the administration was considered a serious offence (Alcorn, 1999; Clark, 2003; Templeton, 1993).

The *Listener* offers insights into one problem that perturbed authors in *Landfall* in the early Fifties as well: the low general interest of New Zealanders in politics. Radio is a contributing factor to low participation rates in local politics, Holcroft asserts because "most people now take their politics at home instead of seeking it abroad" (Editorial, *Listener*, Nov. 11, 1949). When in previous decades New Zealanders would have crowded halls to hear a speaker, they now obtained the necessary information predominantly at home.

Furthermore, it was asserted that with rising levels of education, voters were not in need of political education targeted at a specific election as much as they had been in previous decades. Rather than attending many meetings and public gatherings close to election time, therefore, they participated in politics over many years "by public and private action" (Editorial, *Listener*, Nov. 25, 1949). Holcroft conceded that this was a somewhat idealised view when he added: "Casting a vote is not, or should not be, an isolated tribute to democracy" (ibid.).

Holcroft also pointed to a certain complacency in the New Zealand voter when he explained the low interest in politics:

Perhaps there would be a change of attitude if the people were divided by major issues. If men feel strongly about national affairs, if they are mourning intolerable grievances or frustrations, they tend to go out for public discussion. The old
instinct to argue and protest, shared even in quiet times by an active minority, becomes the mass excitement. It seems unlikely that the militant note will be sounded during the present campaign. (Editorial, *Listener*, Nov. 11, 1949)

The 'militant note' indeed was not sounded at all in the 1949 election campaign of either party, whereas the 1951 snap election sounded hardly any other tones, something that remains uncommented on in the *Listener* for reasons I have outlined above. No substantial comment was made on the 1954 election.


The National Government had struggled to keep inflation rates low; public expenditure was high as population growth required infrastructural improvements. Prices for primary produce, formerly negotiated under bulk contracts with Britain, were now regulated by the free market, and consequently rose and fell with it. Bank loans, necessary even in times of prosperity and growth, were harder to come by for the ordinary individual, and thus many of the post-war expectations of National voters remained unfulfilled.

Labour's victory in 1957 was narrow: with 48.3% of the public vote Labour carried the election with a majority of two seats. Though at times struggling to unite the Labour Party under his leadership, Nash "represented both a resounding echo of humanitarian change and the possibility of restoring stability" (Chapman, 1992, p. 379). Labour offered a £100 tax rebate on income tax due in the next year when the new PAYE taxation system was planned to commence and also promised to abolish peace-time conscription (Sutch, 1966).

The National Government had created enormous overseas debts and set "a pattern of consumption which later governments would have to try to sustain" (Sutch, 1966, p. 418). The incoming Labour Government, on fully understanding the extent of the disaster that was New Zealand's economy, took drastic steps. Increased direct taxation through PAYE and a comprehensive system of indirect taxation were meant to finance both the
social welfare system and also provide a buffer for possible economic crises. Indirect taxation reduced the excess purchasing power in the community by raising taxes on petrol, tobacco, and beer.

The scheme was widely lauded by economists but understandably failed to win much favour with the general population. The opposition lost no time dubbing Labour's financial plans the 'Black Budget'. The public began to think of the Labour Government as over-thrifty and puritanical and the reputation of Arnold Nordmeyer, the Finance Minister, was forever tainted (Gustafson, 1990). The Labour Party's defeat in the 1960 elections was sealed.

National regained office in 1960, according to some mainly because of the issue of the 'Black Budget' (Gustafson, 1990). Keith Holyoake led the National Party into an era that was characterised by the "slowing down of every process which, if speedily dealt with, might have represented change and political harm" (Chapman, 1992, p. 381).

In the eyes of most commentators the 1957 elections were an unpleasant event. According to Landfall, the election represented "a failure of the democratic process" (R. H. Brookes, 1958, p. 59) and, in a similar vein, "marked the nadir of the democratic process in New Zealand" (Beaglehole, 1961, p. 142). Labour had 'sold' itself to the public in what could only be called a "gross and grotesque competition in financial benefits to the individual" (ibid.); this was said in reference to the party's election offer of £100 in income tax rebates.

Another commentator explains Labour's victory as 'bribery' by arguing, firstly, that New Zealand is "consumption- rather than production minded" (R. H. Brookes, 1958, p. 62) and concluding, therefore, that New Zealanders were an easy prey because their "willingness to abstain from current consumption is potential rather than actual" (ibid.). As it turned out Labour's time in office was an embarrassing affair, mainly because the party had simply "wanted to get back into office" (Beaglehole, 1961, p. 143) but really lacked a "sense of purpose" (ibid.). Charles Brasch's comments on the blinding effect of power (Notes, Landfall, 1958, pp. 3-5) stress the same point.
Much fault was also found with Labour's leader, Walter Nash. His pleasure in being busy was interpreted as inefficient behaviour and even a way to escape political realities:

The tremendous energies, so often spent in running away from reality; the moral fervour and the grand statement, so often carrying an escape clause as appendix; the unwillingness to face the paper that is the daily fuel of administration together with that extraordinary devotion to the detail that is its least important aspect; the refusal to make decisions, or the decisions made so late that they seem extorted and not intended [...] all these characteristics, added to a great deal more, made up a certain quality that had to be respected, even while it could not be entirely approved. (Beaglehole, 1961, pp. 143-144)

Beaglehole and Landfall here are characteristically cynical in their commentary. The ridicule is so much more acute because it is concealed under a veil of politeness and respectability. Landfall's position in criticising political events is that of a superior passer-by who will not get involved in the 'tom-foolery' he witnesses but at the same time cannot really leave the fools alone either.

In contrast to Landfall's smug subtleties the Listener straightforwardly informs us that the 1957 election "has come rather quietly; but in this it has been true to the mood of recent years" (Editorial, Listener, Nov. 29, 1957). Holcroft then proceeds to reiterate his musings about why elections are increasingly conducted without much controversy:

Have we become too polite in these matters? And is the explanation simply that it is easier to be polite when feelings are not deeply stirred? If some large issue divided the nation, there might soon be sound of anger and recrimination. Yet we are less sure today what issues would divide the people – apart of course from economic hardship. (Editorial, Listener, Nov. 29, 1957)

Judging from the Listener, New Zealanders had increasingly become materialistic in outlook throughout the Fifties. The passage quoted above does not stand alone declaring that material hardship was the only event capable of disturbing the ordinary New Zealander. The same is said in under the header 'The Hesitant Voter' about the 1960 election which brought the National Party back into office:
Uncertain votes are of course more numerous in quiet and prosperous times. Economic hardship gives an edge to the democratic temper more quickly than anything else. (Editorial, Listener, Nov. 25, 1960)

Since party identification is much more subject to shifts in times of social or economic upheaval (Lamare, 1992), it was difficult to determine which way the floating vote would drift in the 1960 elections. Holcroft here also alludes to the similarities between National's and Labour's election platforms which made it difficult for individual voters to see the "difference of policy sharp enough to make their choice irresistible" (Editorial, Listener, Nov. 25, 1960). Both parties sought to propose policies and measures that would enjoy the greatest popular appeal because (apart from the waterfront dispute) there were no serious issues over which the population was divided (Miller, 2005).

The Listener further offered the opinion that elections were held in a far more civilised and thus quieter manner than only a few decades previously and that only economic issues kindled an interest among the voting public. The New Zealander was characterised as highly materialistic in outlook. Landfall supported such reasoning, if more aggressively. In contrast to the Listener, however, Landfall is far more critical of the materialistic attitude and the public's blindness in the face of first, a totalitarian government and, later, attempts at 'buying' votes by the Labour Party.

In 1949, the National Party had promised to de-regulate the economy and make New Zealand a prosperous nation. With considerably lowered import barriers, a broad range of consumer goods became available. Electric household appliances such as vacuum-cleaners, washing-machines, refrigerators and irons represented a massive transformation of New Zealand families' daily life (O'Donnell, 1992). There was virtually no unemployment; women joined the workforce in rising numbers (Nolan, 2000); wages were higher in relation to the national income (Sutch, 1966) – altogether the First National Government did indeed steer New Zealand into a Golden Age of unprecedented individual prosperity.
This was largely achieved through overseas borrowing which, however, the National Party was willing to do in order to satisfy the public's desire for quiet, stable and prosperous lives. After three decades of social upheaval New Zealanders had perhaps deserved some peace and affluence, or so many might have thought. In accordance with this attitude, the National Party would then have tailored their policies so as to satisfy these wishes and to thus remain in office.

According to this view New Zealanders are inherently materialistic which the parties respond to positively in their election campaigns. But were New Zealanders truly materialistic, and at the expense of what other part of life? During the Fifties many New Zealanders did ask themselves such questions. In a more general way, the following were also pondered: Who are we? We know where we come from, but where are we going now? What does 'New Zealand' stand for? As the next chapter shows, the discussion of New Zealand's and New Zealanders' identity was led with some urgency and fierceness in the Fifties.
2. NEW ZEALANDERS ABOUT NEW ZEALANDERS

Peace and quiet after three decades of more or less social upheaval, political autonomy from 'Home' – Britain – and thus the end of colonial times, a change in political leadership, economic growth – all these factors allowed for more leisure time and thus created a favourable environment for reflecting about New Zealand. This chapter, in many ways a continuation of the discussion of values in the previous section, specifically discusses opinions as they were held by New Zealanders about New Zealand.

I assume that people's values induce certain attitudes and actions that later become a material reality in the polity. The material reality for the cultural mainstream can thus be expected to be vitally different from the one lived by writers and artists which in turn gives testimony to differing world-views. The discourses on materialism, conformity and the state of New Zealand's culture, led with much fervour on both sides, serve to highlight the ideological differences.

2.1. Materialism

All sources agree that during the Fifties the New Zealander had a materialistic outlook on life. For Monte Holcroft, for instance, this attitude explained the lack of interest in local and national politics. 'Economic hardship,' he argued in relation to the 1957 election, was the one thing that is capable of dividing the public. The dual nature of materialism is referred to here: firstly, materialism's superficiality or absence of a certain dimension of (spiritual, intellectual) depth; and secondly, its strong emphasis on material possessions as an end in itself.

The availability of a broad range of both necessary and luxury consumer goods which, thanks to higher wages and full employment were also affordable for many, established a welcome sense of contentment and security and consequently reinforced materialistic tendencies. These are an inherent part of the New Zealand character, as a correspondent to the *Listener* argues:
New Zealand today was said to be more materialistic than yesterday. Nobody observed that low incomes of the past kept people completely preoccupied with the difficult gaining of material things, and that better incomes of today allow time for other things. (Letters, Listener, Oct. 14, 1949)

Judging from this statement, New Zealanders during the Fifties harboured no more materialistic sentiments than they ever had. The enormous difference was that what had been more potential before now became actual; after years of deprivation (through war-time rationing and the slump) many New Zealanders were proud of being able to afford to buy things like refrigerators and other household appliances and cars (May, 1989; O'Donnell, 1992; Phillips, 1993).

Closer scrutiny of the Listener's attitude on materialism reveals that the comments such as Holcroft's referred to above are therefore not necessarily a negative critique. The Listener is in fact highly sympathetic to the materialistic attitude as the following passage illustrates:

The satisfied and happy settler has nothing to say: he is too busy earning his living and making himself at ease in his new surroundings. Men and women with grievances are usually more vocal: they feel that the world should hear of their disappointments. We may be certain that such people would want to cry out against their destiny if they were set down in the fairest land which can exist in imagination. (Editorial, Listener, Oct. 28, 1949)

Holcroft here reviews the image of labour as its own reward according to which happiness and 'ease in one's surroundings' are the result of hard work. It follows that unhappiness is either the product of laziness or a latent condition. 'Men and women with grievances', in this particular context people who are highly critical of New Zealand, must belong to the latter category of unhappy people, Holcroft concludes. This is a striking illustration of Weber's Protestant work-ethic. Because there was virtually no unemployment in New Zealand during the Fifties, Holcroft also implicitly makes a claim for nation-wide happiness.

As the American writer Mark Slouka (2004) demonstrates, keeping people busy effectively prevents them from reflecting about their lives. Idleness, Slouka argues, allows us "time to figure out who we are, and what
we believe" (Slouka, 2004, p. 58) and also what we think about the society we live in. 'Lazing around' and using time-out for introspection is therefore a constitutive factor for any democracy to function -

Which is precisely what makes idleness dangerous. All manner of things can grow out of that fallow soil. Not for nothing did our mothers grow suspicious when we had "too much time on our hands". They knew we might be up to something. And not for nothing did we whisper to each other, when we were up to something, "Quick, look busy." (Slouka, 2004, p. 58; Italics in the original)

Whilst this praises leisure time, the Listener, in contrast, shows the positive sides of absent reflection through ceaseless work. Again we must recall that for three decades reflection and introspection had probably meant nothing more than revisiting pains, worries and sorrow about absent loved ones and all kinds of major (i.e. food and other) shortages. In the early Cold War fear of imminent demise of the western world would have been similarly discouraging of introspection. Therefore, despite Holcroft's repeated wondering about why New Zealanders do not find more interest in politics, much positive can in fact be said about this circumstance. In an interesting reference to social hierarchy, the virtues of Prime Minister Holland's ideal of a nation of small capitalists are explained in the following manner:

The small farmer is in many respects an estimable man, but he hasn't the power or the prestige or the property, generally speaking, to encourage him in undue eccentricity of opinion. Nothing is more inhibiting to dangerous thoughts than is the combination of the freehold and a large mortgage. (Civil Liberties in New Zealand, Listener, 1. Nov. 1957; my Italics)

The significance of the last sentence cannot be over-estimated. Slouka's (2004) argument directly relates to this to show the suffocating effects of material possessions, or, what Durkheim called 'the iron cage of materialism'. 'Dangerous thoughts' especially of a kind that embraced social change were indeed widely feared in New Zealand. Political conservatism and conformity thus are directly connected with materialism which becomes a necessary means to a desired end: social and political stability.
Another healthy effect of a materialistic outlook and way of life is a low crime rate. Juvenile delinquency as it occurred throughout the decade was therefore even more shocking (and indeed this is one of the very few reasons for why it is shocking at all) "because there seems to be no reason for it in a quiet and prosperous community" (Editorial, *Listener*, Feb. 21, 1958).

The pursuit of material goods is generally supported in the *Listener*, not least of all through advertising which increased markedly in 1953/54. House ownership is strongly encouraged; in fact living in a tenement situation is openly opposed. In this vein, a short article in 1956 argues that:

Believe it or not, there is a definite health hazard in big blocks of residential flats, but it concerns families. [...] This tenement and flat life has broken the patriarchal family system and scattered family units geographically. [...] I'm sure we can't avoid blocks of flats and tenements in the future, but for the sake of healthy family life, let us leave such apartments for old people, and folk without children. (*Family Health in Flats and Tenements, Listener*, Aug. 10, 1956)

Owning one's home had several connotations: caring for one's family, respecting the patriarchal organisation of the family and respectability as such. The significant point here is not that house-ownership is valued but that *not* owning one's own home is de-valued because it is believed to indicate a failure to conform. Materialism is in this way connected with conformity.

*Landfall*, in contrast to the *Listener*, noted the negative effects of materialism. Bill Pearson's essay 'Fretful Sleepers' (1952) is *Landfall*'s most prominent critique in this matter (as in many others). Pearson laments the absence of a spiritual dimension in his compatriots and describes its effects on the artist who, by profession, must be introspective and reflective. Fundamentally opposing the mainstream in this way, Pearson concludes, the artist is destined to become "something of a spy in enemy territory" (Pearson, 1952, p. 230).

Robert Chapman (1953), the other all-time *Landfall* laureate, critically affirms Monte Holcroft's talk of the intrinsic rewards of work. He shows that in relation to the 'social pattern' Puritanism which he understands as "work, deny yourself and you will be prosperous and saved" (Chapman,
1953, p. 36) is to blame for the "misplaced demands and guilts" (ibid., p. 58) that the family displays. Much of the disappointed hopes which are so crucial in his analysis of the 'social pattern' result from a materialistic outlook.

Generally speaking, Landfall pays attention to the intellectual and abstract, rather than practical, side of materialism. For example, A. R. D. Fairburn refers to New Zealand under that head as a "hedonistic society living under the protection of the H-bomb" (Fairburn, 1956, p. 199). 'Hedonistic' is used in the meaning of senseless pleasure seeking rather than the Epicurean ideal of a simple and moderate life. For the Fifties, such attitudes have been circumscribed in this way:

Horses, motorcars, divorce cases, sport, crime, pornography and alcohol are still the main interests of the majority of people. (Fairburn, 1956, p. 203)

The majority of people' are viewed as shallow and superficial, easy to please by momentary pleasures. A commentator in 1961 directly refers to the New Zealander's "pride on being practical" (Matheson, 1961, p. 61) and continues that

[...] competence in physical exploits has not been balanced by ability to think about fundamentals and to plan for the future. (Matheson, 1961, p. 61)

Numerous other mentions-in-passing of the New Zealander's practical turn of mind, passion for fact or disregard of abstract thought (e.g. New Zealanders "do not bother their heads about political or economic theory, for [them] the proof of the pudding is always in the eating" (Monro, 1950, p. 70) consolidate the impression that the cultural mainstream was by the intellectual community seen as predominantly materialistic in outlook.

Contributors to Landfall, who were mostly university educated (60% of them; Geraets, 2003, p. 131) and thus in sum quite erudite, sought to point out the defects of materialism in many ways. Brasch's concern was the state of New Zealand's national and cultural identity and the role of the arts within this framework (Oliver, 2003; Sharp, 2003); in an age where for the first time ever consumer goods that made life easier and more comfortable were available and people enjoyed living standards far superior to those of
most other western countries, *Landfall's* preoccupation with culture was almost radical in itself (Phillips, 1993; Sutch, 1966).

### 2.2. Conformity

The National Government under Sid Holland was far less inclined to support the arts and culture than its predecessor. Instead it "embraced pragmatic and utilitarian views" (Alcorn, 1999, p. 181), which made them in the eyes of some at least appear as "short-sighted and simplistic" (ibid.). Sidney Holland himself was rather a 'bloke's bloke', 'the good guy next door' who "had a confident command of New Zealand idiom" mingled with a "sharp, shrewd, basically provincial cast of mind" (Brown, 2003, pp. 13-14).

These same qualities generally commend the New Zealander. His adaptability, "high standard of physical courage", "kindness and generosity" (Near Enough is Good Enough, *Listener*, Apr. 20, 1951) are attributes to the New Zealand character that were well-established even in 1951. But so were the New Zealander's "lack of self-confidence", his conventionalism, his "lack of imagination and individuality" and his overall mediocrity (ibid.). At the same time the Fifties were a conservative decade, and accordingly the emphasis was more on "the social bond, the relative insignificance of the individual, love of tradition, hierarchy and heroism as part of authority" (Nisbet, 1986, p. 39).

The conclusion therefore drawn from the literature is that New Zealanders, as far as the post-war years are concerned, were a nation of conformists and philistines:

Of course, my friends and I are not average New Zealanders; we dislike being placed on the norm. We pride ourselves on being individuals, but, mind you, there is a limit to being different, and we have a horror of eccentrics. Why can't they live like decent, self-respecting New Zealanders? Appearance may not be everything, but they do count. Take 'A', for instance. He may be an artist, but why doesn't he find a steady job? In a country like New Zealand, whose hallmark is equality, anyone can better his position provided he has enough push. But these foreigners are a bit bohemian and flippant about serious matters. (Near Enough is Good Enough, *Listener*, Apr. 20, 1951)
The question that immediately arises is 'What is the decent, self-respecting New Zealander like'? Judging from this short comment, he works hard in a 'steady' job, he is serious and he is not bohemian or flippant about life. He is what some might like to call intolerant of difference; slightly more positively one could say he has a provincial attitude.

The seriousness attributed to the New Zealander can be explained in reference to New Zealand's colonial past. In this vein, because New Zealand was colonised "at a time when evangelical respectability was at its height in England" (Are New Zealanders too Serious?, *Listener*, Sept. 27, 1957) a certain sternness had been brought to New Zealand with the first settlers. This was the 'successful' attitude in the early colony, and it has remained "as an uneasy conscience in many New Zealanders" (ibid.).

Seriousness of this kind paired with a certain evangelicalism (devoid of its spiritual connotations) makes for a conformist attitude, that is the enforcement of the right way of doing things opposite one's peers. In terms of one's behaviour, attire, speech or way of life, remaining within the framework of 'decency' and 'respectability' was the general expectation.

'Respectability' as a cultural concept resounds strongly of conservative values held in Britain throughout the nineteenth century. As Getrude Himmelfarb (1995) shows, the British then believed in the "intimate relation between the character of the people and the health of the polity" (Himmelfarb, 1995, p. 9), an idea that was shared by New Zealanders in the Fifties. During the nineteenth century, the British did in fact define and fix the exact values that were thought to ensure a healthy polity: "hard work, thrift, cleanliness, self-reliance, self-respect, neighbourliness, patriotism and appreciation of the family" (ibid., p. 5). Much stress was on good manners which were thought to be a reflection of the values held.

Ultimately, however, the stress on displaying good manners gained supremacy over possessing the related virtues in one's character. The result is called 'respectability', the maintenance of the *appearance* of a virtuous character by all means possible. Respectability became an ideal especially for the working classes and within those more importantly for the poorer
workers who "were the most vulnerable without it" (Himmelfarb, 1995, p. 32). Conformity followed as a consequence of respectability:

As the standard of living of the working classes rose, which it undeniably did by the turn of the century, so any deviation from that standard became less acceptable. And as the ideals of morality and respectability became more pervasive, so any lapse from those ideals became more conspicuous and intolerable. (Himmelfarb, 1995, p. 44)

In an uncannily similar vein it is commented about New Zealanders in 1957 that "a man who neglects his garden is almost in the same class as one who beats his wife" (Are New Zealanders too Serious?, Listener, Sept. 27, 1957). "Small morals" (Himmelfarb, 1995, p. 22) like "table manners, toilet habits, conventions of dress, appearance, conversation, greetings, and all the other 'decencies' of behaviour" (ibid.) were outward signs of an inward morality, and any deviation from those – like not tending one's garden – was consequently a sign of a much more general and serious moral deviance.

If we believe that part of the colonial attitude was alive and active in the post-war years, then the recourse to Victorian values explains the phenomenon of a high degree of conformity most aptly. Values such as 'hard work, thrift, cleanliness, self-reliance, self-respect, neighbourliness, patriotism and appreciation of the family' engender social stability if promoted and adopted on a large scale, and in the Fifties this was what was required (Belich, 2001). Conformity, whilst not always a negative phenomenon, still poses certain strains:

I'm not suggesting we change the values behind these practices, but I am making the plea that we must not expect people to conform to these all the time. Yet there is little doubt that in general this is what we do. We are recognised as a highly-conforming society [...]. (Are We a Nation of Conformists?, Listener, Nov. 15, 1957)

New Zealanders in fact even aim to "over-conform to society" and generally attempt "not to be conspicuous or different" (ibid.). This is precisely the situation Bill Pearson (1952) described. Together with values from New Zealand's colonial past, the deep-seated belief in egalitarianism is
responsible for these attitudes. Egalitarianism stresses the moral, social, economic and political equality of all citizens.

Egalitarianism was thought a 'hallmark' of this society apparently referring to the absence of a social hierarchy in comparison with England. For in most other ways, as different observers ascertain, egalitarianism did not truly exist in the Fifties. For even while New Zealanders displayed an "almost bellicose egalitarianism" (Some Are More Equal Than Others, Listener, Feb. 7, 1958) they showed a "deference for English ranks and titles that's almost religious" (ibid.). The same author holds that there is a "mystic entity of the Best People" (ibid.) even in New Zealand. The real and only difference between New Zealand and England might possibly be that "here people of all kinds mix far more readily and unselfconsciously than they do in England" (ibid).

New Zealand educationist Phoebe Meikle, writing as Leslie M. Hall, emphasises the conflict between egalitarian myth and socially stratified reality as well. There truly is no class in New Zealand "to which most men are legally or socially inferior, and there is none to which they must look up; none to humble them" (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 50). Consequently, there is also no class to which men can feel themselves superior. Instead, however, of dwelling satisfied in such an egalitarian state, dissatisfaction develops in the heart of man:

[... as the human need to feel superior and its complement, the need for power over others, are among our strongest impulses, the management and patronage of women – treatment of them as an inferior 'class' – which was originally the result of biological and economic factors, also satisfies a deep need in most men. (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 50)

And neither were women the only inferior 'class'; as Jim McAloon (2004) convincingly demonstrates, there always have been different classes in New Zealand. The middle class in New Zealand might have been far more extensive than anywhere else in the Commonwealth, but this by no means meant that the whole of New Zealand was middle-class. Such a statement can only hold true with the exclusion of Māori, Polynesian, impoverished elderly on the one hand and, in more general terms, those who do not share the mainstream (arguably) middle-class consciousness on the other. As we
will see later, the proportion even of the latter is considerable, and "class consciousness cannot exist independently of class" (McAlloon, 2004, p. 17).

Inequalities did indeed exist and, whilst the belief in egalitarianism to a degree contributed to bring about a conformist attitude, egalitarianism was itself enforced by conformity. Because New Zealand was believed to be an egalitarian society, no one was supposed to rise over their peers and everyone was expected to conform to one standard of decency and respectability.

So far two causes for New Zealanders' conformity have been suggested: (1) a particular understanding of respectable and decent behaviour and (2) the egalitarian myth. A third cause lay in the feeling of insecurity that most New Zealanders shared. Insecurity and immaturity were frequently attributed to New Zealanders in connection with the state of New Zealand's culture as young and immature. This slighter broader issue will be explored in the next section.

2.3. Maturity or: The State of New Zealand Culture

Conformity is really just another expression of a deep insecurity (Are We a Nation of Conformists?, Listener, Nov. 15, 1957). It follows that a 'highly-conforming society' is a very insecure society. Both Landfall and the Listener affirm this view, commenting on New Zealanders' culture-consciousness, insecurity and immaturity. Holcroft for example remarks in 1949:

It may have been noticed that New Zealanders have become a little self-conscious in their use of the word "culture". They mention it diffidently, and writers have been known to apologise for a term which seems to them to imply a narrow and rather precious enthusiasm for the arts. (Editorial, Listener, Sept. 9, 1949)

Another example, quite unlike in tone, describes the same condition:

We are hypocritical [in terms of appreciation of art work], and suffer from a vulgar inferiority complex in this respect. (One Person's Opinion, Listener, Jan. 6, 1950)
Some of the controversy about New Zealand's culture centres on the use of the word 'culture'. As Holcroft suggests above, 'culture' was understood in its high-brow form, and this type of culture had not yet been developed. Rather, New Zealand's culture was still perceived as colonial. In this vein, Charles Brasch claimed that "the colony is always less distinguished" (Notes, Landfall, 1953, p. 82) than the mother country which was still referred to as 'home' even by New Zealand-born New Zealanders (Phillips, 1993).

Brasch argued that New Zealand was still very much dependent on Britain because it did not yet "live by the light of an imaginative order of its own" (Notes, Landfall, 1953, p. 248), and he continued:

The creation of such an order is generally slow; it may proceed as the society discovers and establishes an identity which, from shadowy beginnings, has been taking form and assuming personality until it becomes mature and distinct [...] (Notes, Landfall, 1953, p. 248)

Before this ultimate point of mature personality is reached, a nation's culture cannot help but be sub-standard and mediocre. These conditions are both duly commented upon in Landfall:

Ours is a society which seems today to have lost its sense of individuality, of living for some 'idea' of itself which could give its life significance, and to be stagnating in mediocrity. [...] And we are at present a society without ends, without an idea of itself. More, we are intolerant of people who live individual or corporate ends of their own, pursuing a lonely perfection in face of our indifference or hostility. We demand that everyone shall conform to the general mediocrity, that no one shall insult us by having a private purpose. (Notes, Landfall, 1951, p. 243)

The idea of New Zealand at that time being not clearly defined due to its youthfulness, New Zealanders lacked direction and were highly susceptible to doubting themselves and their nation. Mediocrity, a certain 'near enough is good enough' attitude, offered itself as a refuge from such uncertainty. Ultimately, however, the awareness that New Zealand failed to be the 'better Britain' it had aspired to, dawned dismally on New Zealanders.
The reality of New Zealand's youthfulness could not be denied or ignored, and neither could the related absence of higher degrees of cultivation of New Zealanders' minds. By 1949, however, frustration about this situation was voiced. At that point, New Zealanders could have rested contentedly in the assurance that they were a young nation which, in time, would develop its own customs, traditions and standards. Alternatively, they could have claimed that they already had a culture of their own which was different from Britain's.

Instead, however, the frustration about the dismal state of New Zealand's culture grew louder throughout the Fifties; that Australia in its cultural nationalism had proclaimed its culture loudly and proudly probably did not help (White, 1981). Even in 1961 James Matheson stated that "competence in physical exploits has not been balanced by ability to think about fundamentals and to plan for the future" (Matheson, 1961, p. 61). Whilst with some commentators such remarks were accompanied with spite and ridicule, others state them just as facts, even till the present day.

Not only had New Zealand not found a sense of purpose and been living on the mother country's capital (Pearson, 1952); but most New Zealanders were acutely aware of the smallness of their islands and the thinness of the population. Holcroft often referred to a certain 'village atmosphere', meaning that everyone knew everyone else, a situation which was experienced as restrictive. The "threat of an immoral reputation" (Baumeister, 2005, p. 349) was much greater in a village scenario, and overcoming insecurity would have been made more difficult in such conditions.

But smallness of nation is a condition which ultimately cannot be remedied. And neither could New Zealand's geographical isolation, a fact that was dealt with in most obscure ways:

Although most indigenous New Zealanders were content throughout the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth to regard themselves as transplanted Britons, and New Zealand's location as a geographical anomaly, New Zealand's leaders from the very earliest days of colonisation envisaged for the country a wider Pacific role. (Templeton, 1993, p. 3)
From the country's leadership the notion of accepting one's lot and making the most of it without whinging trickled down. Being a small far-away nation need not be viewed as a disadvantage. Holcroft accordingly appeals in 1956 'to leave the village':

[...] [T]he time has come when we in New Zealand should ask ourselves if we can afford indefinitely to excuse our timidities by pointing out the smallness of our population. (Editorial, Listener, Aug. 24, 1956)

As regards timidity or insecurity through lack of wide and varied life experience, New Zealand's geographical isolation always sets certain limitations. But by 1960 it seems that New Zealanders had slowly become used to 'themselves'. Less self-consciousness is displayed in both the Listener and Landfall; less comparing oneself with either Australia, Canada or Britain and less 'complaining' about the defects of New Zealand create the image of a higher level of 'national maturity'. Several national accomplishments might have helped to bring about a quelling of doubts and hence of insecurity: the conquest of Mt Everest in 1953, the Queen's tour of New Zealand in 1953/54, the Antarctic expedition by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1956/57, and not least of all remarkable developments in the arts. In 1960 the Listener expressed the new-found confidence with these words:

It is now too late, much too late, for entrepreneurs to see this country as a place where the simple inhabitants will welcome third-rate plays and casual productions. Too many people have gone abroad, and come back again; too many books have been read—and written; too much acting has been done by devoted amateur groups. [...] They are learning now that standards of appreciation have moved beyond the level of the village concert. (Editorial, Listener, Feb. 19, 1960)

Charles Brasch confirms the change in attitude stating:

Today, in 1960, it is clear that the English-speaking world has several centres and sources of culture, and that for most educated New Zealanders who live at home their own country, if the poorest of these, is also perforce the most important. (Notes, Landfall, 1960, p. 211)

Whilst Brasch is far from enthusiastic about the degree of maturity and sophistication New Zealand culture had reached over the previous decade, at
least he conceded that New Zealand was on equal ground with other English-speaking cultures.

Brasch's on-going disappointment with the state of New Zealand's culture surprises at times. There is no doubt that he loved New Zealand, but it was also undoubtedly insufficient for him. New Zealand "excited and moved and depressed" Brasch (Brasch, 1980, p. 174). Oxford-educated and well-travelled as Brasch was, one would still expect that he was aware of how different a scene New Zealand was and how different its cultural development therefore had to be. But this expectation is not met. For Brasch, New Zealand indeed had not woken up to an 'imaginative order of its own'. In hindsight it seems reasonable to assume that it had woken up but to a different 'imaginative order' than the one Brasch had hoped to see.

Brasch's and *Landfall*'s writing in favour of the development of a humanistic new Britain in the Antipodes underscores this point. Expressing this attitude shows how much out of joint with the a) the spirit of the post-war years and b) the New Zealander's rather materialistic consciousness Brasch and *Landfall* were. The cultural maturity Brasch envisaged was not, and could not, have been an organic product of an evolving New Zealand culture because it belonged to another time and place. The 1830s have been suggested by many writers as the time from which Brasch's ideals originated (Calder, 1997; Jones, 1998; Sargeson, 1954; Sharp, 2003); the reasons behind this suggestion remain to be explored (II.2.1.).

What matters most is that Brasch was a visionary idealist with the will and necessary means to advance his ideals in the real world. In terms of writing, his strong-minded idealism made him a singularly imposing editor. Quite frequently he demanded of authors seeking publication in *Landfall* that they submit their writing to very specific changes that he himself advised (McEldowney, 1998). The same ardent striving for a transcendent truth underpinned his nationalism. He had an *idea* of New Zealand and he sought to further the cultural progress towards this ideal.

I hold that this national idealism was much to blame for Brasch's frustration with New Zealand's culture. The problem with ideal nationalism is that the point of clear-cut identity and openly stated national purpose never comes; nations are far too complex and changing for that. Seeking to
provide clear definitions of national character must therefore end in infinite regress. But striving to define one's own culture the way *Landfall* set out to do is also excessively vain, as H. Winston Rhodes (1955) held. He stated that much has been overlooked in so many writers' preoccupation with cultural identity:

New Zealand criticism has been chiefly concerned with the vain and unrewarding attempt to discover signs of national characteristics and the influence of local environment in our literature, rather than with the search for meaning and the examination of the moral climate which may be related more to Western man than to the accident of locality. (Rhodes, 1955, p. 26)

Allen Tate (1959) has called such preoccupation with oneself at the expense of the wider picture, 'the new provincialism'. For him it was an attitude that emerged in the west during the wars. He distinguished provincialism from regionalism; regionalism describes people's focus on their immediate surroundings. As an intellectual attitude, it is therefore "limited in space but not in time" (Tate, 1959, p. 286). Provincialism is slightly but significantly different:

The provincial attitude is limited in time but not in space. When the regional man, in his ignorance, often an intensive and creative ignorance, of the world, extends his own immediate necessities into the world, and assumes that the present moment is unique, he becomes the provincial man. (Tate, 1959, p. 286)

The provincial attitude is caused by a forceful rejection of the past. It is based on a narrow view on life in terms of time; the provincial man is ultimately "locked in the present" (Tate, 1959, p. 287). Patrick Evans (1990) holds that provincialism is precisely the attitude that befell the *Phoenix* generation "by presenting them with events of such historic moment that they lost their sense of perspective" (Evans, 1990, p. 149) and began to believe that their nationalistic aspirations were unique. Brasch's comments induce me to believe that at least was lost in the past, and along with him other New Zealand writers might have been.

The problem of provincialism presents itself, especially for former colonies, as they seek to find an identity of their own that is not wholly dependent on the colonisers' identity. Cutting oneself off from the colonial
past might be viewed as a necessary step to total independence, even at the expense of forfeiting the "benefit of the fund of traditional wisdom" and therefore approaching "the simplest problems of life as if nobody had ever heard of them before" (Tate, 1959, p. 286). Cultural continuity, according to Tate (1959), is the one safeguard against provincialism. In the New Zealand context, the only cultural dis-continuity concerns high culture.

The discourse about New Zealand's cultural maturity is therefore actually a quite restricted one. At no point has it been argued that New Zealand was devoid of any culture; in the Fifties, it was rather the miniscule extent of high-brow cultural achievements that gave rise to concerns among a few leading intellectuals. The way it was carried out, through lamenting one's immaturity and insecurity, does indeed suggest a high degree of both. In general, one wonders how ruminating is supposed to aid in bringing about maturity. A. R. D. Fairburn (1956), to offer just one opinion, did not think too highly of it. He simply wished that New Zealanders would be "less vulgarly self-conscious about our effort at cultural advancement" (Fairburn, 1956, p. 211).

It might not be surprising to hear New Zealand in the Fifties called 'provincial' or 'parochial'. It was much more besides; such generalised comments do not (and are not meant to) present the complexity of a country. Before I explore the cultural opposite to parochial New Zealand – the literary community – I would like to have a closer look at one phenomenon that characterised the Fifties: the nuclear family.
3. "GOLDEN WEATHER" AND FAMILIES IN NEW ZEALAND

As in most western countries, the end of the Second World War meant the return of men to their homes and a subsequent baby boom. Within a short time span society changed dramatically and there was no sphere and no one that was not affected by these changes: the age at which people married decreased, housing for the many young couples was in high demand, political parties competed over the young families' votes, women were increasingly viewed as mothers and yet became part of the labour force in rising numbers (Nolan, 2000; Olssen & Levesque, 1978).

The perception of the family reverted to pre-Great War standards and thus a well-defined set of values and norms. The Fifties were not a time for change; after three decades of unrest everyone longed to have stability restored. A letter to the Listener illustrates this longing:

Where, however, our economy is unquestionably in the doldrums is in the virtually total absence of a well regulated social pattern which is a condition precedent to an orderly life. (Listener, Sept. 9, 1949)

The family was the key factor for returning 'orderly' conditions to New Zealand. Strong "psychological relief of knowing where everybody was" (May, 1989, p. 64), mixed with the emotional "hunger[...] for a period of quiet suburban life" (Olssen & Levesque, 1978, p. 18) furthered the reinstatement of conservative family values.

3.1. The Cult of Domesticity

"The age of the housewife has arrived!", proclaimed a correspondent to the Listener in 1950 (Jan. 27). In Paradise Reforged, James Belich (2001) describes the historical precursors to this event. The period from 1880 to 1920 is described by him as a large-scale 'tightening' process, the harmonisation of social, political, cultural and ideological matters to one social norm. This harmonisation was connected with a period of religious
revival which brought its own value system with it (Olssen & Levesque, 1978). In this period of society-wide change,

Mother became the cult figure, her temple the Home. She became by definition a moral redemptress, a figure of purity and chaste love, the home a place of refuge and moral elevation. (Olssen & Levesque, 1978, p. 6)

The ensuing 'cult of domesticity' was concomitant with the separate spheres ideology according to which men inhabit the public sphere and women the home, i.e. the private sphere. As regards capitalist countries, the separation of spheres commonly followed an industrialisation-cum-urbanisation process that entailed commuting from home to work for the male breadwinner. Cityscapes, instrumental as working areas, subsequently became connotated with clear rationality, alienation and amorality (Tosh, 1998), whereas the home was stylised as 'a place of refuge and moral elevation'.

The period 1880 to 1920 in New Zealand's history established and rooted the cults of domesticity or, alternatively, 'true womanhood', in the national consciousness (Belich, 2001; Nolan, 2000; Olssen & Levesque, 1978). During the Fifties, "the cult of domesticity was restored to pre-eminence" (Olssen & Levesque, 1978, p. 18). The family became the cornerstone of society, thus providing "respectability and [...] a moral stronghold amidst the bewilderment of life" (D. Hall, 1966 [1955], p. 41). A personal reflection illustrates this notion:

The general feeling was that there was a lot of satisfaction in having children and having a home that was 'nice'. [...] I think [men returning to New Zealand from the war] did see themselves as settling down and starting a family. Certainly the women felt that way. It was the rebuilding of everything. The picking it up again. (May, 1989, pp. 64-65)

The family during the Fifties was nuclear: mother, father, two or more children, but usually without grandparents or boarders. It offered the parents "refuge and emotional fulfilment in a hostile world" (Olssen & Levesque, 1978, p. 18), a place for everyone to be oneself. Therefore, "the New Zealander is seen at his best in his own home" (D. Hall, 1966 [1955],
p. 41), with the home again being placed in opposition to the rest of the world.

In 1951, the NZBS planned a series of six talks on *The Family and Society*, written by a certain A.J. Nixon, lecturer in Philosophy at Auckland University College. In a preview article published in the *Listener*, Nixon argues that "stability is among the most desirable features of family life" and that "stability of the New Zealand family is satisfactory at the present moment" (*The Family in Perspective, Listener, June 15, 1951*). Nixon held that

> Following a formula which was popular about fifty years ago the New Zealand family could be classified as monogamous, mobile, and faintly patriarchal. (*The Family in Perspective, Listener, June 15, 1951*)

The aim of his talks, so Nixon states, is strictly conservative:

> In every theoretical and practical decision on the family we should adopt a policy of resolute conservatism. (ibid.)

The ensuing correspondence regarding these programmes reveals even more about the intensity of moral sentiments in support of a conservative understanding of the nuclear family. Nixon's talks were not broadcast in full but discontinued after two or maybe three sessions, for unknown reasons, and letters in protest of this were published in the correspondence columns of the *Listener* throughout August 1951. In sum, the correspondents praise the talks for their scientific character, their timeliness, and the morality Nixon professed. His understanding of the family as 'monogamous, mobile, and faintly patriarchal' resounded well with the correspondents who appreciated his "efforts to maintain the integrity of the family" (*Letters, Listener, Aug. 3, 1951*).

The curtailment of the *Family and Society* talks gives evidence to an opposition to the narrow value system that lay behind the cult of domesticity. It has been suggested that domesticity was re-instated as a social norm and reinforced as such with a certain degree of militancy (Andrews, 1999; May, 1989; Olssen & Levesque, 1978; Phillips, 1996; Smith, 1990). Domesticity as a social norm was strengthened by the wide-
ranging conformity which was based on reputational pressures so that in the end, "if you weren't married with children there was something wrong with you in the eyes of your family as well as your peers" (Smith, 1990, p. 119).

Mothers had a crucial role in guarding and perpetuating the 'cult of domesticity'. Their attitude can be best described in the statement "I'll only be able to rest when I know all my three daughters are married and have settled down, then I'll know I have done my job" (Smith, 1990, p. 119). There is something inherently invigorating in instructing children in moral terms: imparting one's own childhood lessons connects one's past with the future which can foster a strong sense of identity.

That mothers' identities were exclusively fixed to the home did not give rise to concerns to most women because this was quite in keeping with the social norm. A 'true woman' was defined through her services for the man and the family. Her intellectual capacities were not crucial for domestic happiness, and little attention has been directed at women as thinkers in the Fifties. However, the very fact that women bore the "dull everyday of the housewife's routine" (I Like Soap Opera, Listener, Dec. 16, 1949) seems to have worked against them. The belief that housewives are not intelligent indeed finds open expression in the Listener. For instance, as regards romantic radio series, it holds that whilst those shows might be amusing or ridiculous for an academic audience, "the majority of listeners are not as critical" (I Like Soap Opera, Listener, Dec. 16, 1949). This is because such programmes "appeal to the emotions, not to the intellect" (ibid.), and this is enough to brighten the housewife's dull routine:

Many women look forward to the morning serials when they can put their feet up and relax with a cup of tea and a cigarette. One busy neighbour of mine does all her knitting and darning during the serial hour. (ibid.)

Romantic serials, for that is what women most enjoyed in the daily 'hour off', served several purposes. First, they provided romantic escape routes, if in dreams, from women's daily lives. Second, because these romantic serials strictly adhered to the moral code of 'true womanhood', they reinforced moral standards.
For example, should a woman in a radio serial decide to leave her husband for another man she must, in some way, come to realise her folly and return to her husband. The "baddies" might have their day, just to make things difficult, but they must either reform or come to a sticky end. Wickedness is punished, virtue rewarded. That is the script-writer's "must". (ibid.)

'Virtue rewarded' is a well-known theme in English culture and literature of the nineteenth century. Women did face several limitations in their gender roles; to me the fact that women were overall not recognised as persons weighs most heavily. But, within the bounds of true womanhood, women did actually enjoy a superior moral standing. Men's innate animal nature, so it was believed, could only be harnessed by women. They made sure that the husbands did not spend all their money on drink and came home early; they "kept the husbands pure and the children virtuous" (Phillips, 1996, p. 223). It was in women's bosoms that morality lay.

It must be noted that 'I Like Soap Opera' at first reads like a rebuttal directed at all those who assume that housewives are unintelligent. But instead of defending the housewife in this way, 'I Like Soap Opera' in fact confirms the stereotype of the endless drag of daily routine which consumes all of the housewife's capacities, even her intellectual ones.

And yet the woman was her man's moral keeper. Even such positive attributes actually only pertained to women's roles in society. Whilst by 1950 it was seen less as a freakish undertaking for a woman to join the work-force, take up university studies, or remain unmarried and to thus assume different roles, such conduct definitely deviated from the norm of true womanhood.

3.2. Gender Relations

A natural consequence of the separate spheres ideology is the segregation of men and women. Within their different spheres, men and women are assigned a number of different roles, or social functions, to fulfil. Thus, women are housewives, mothers and moral guardians, whereas men are breadwinners, fathers and trouble-makers.
Melanie Nolan (2000) argues that this is too general a claim in that more women joined the work-force after the war than is commonly admitted. Women were needed as part of the work-force, as a severe labour shortage afflicted New Zealand in the immediate post-war years. Consequently, the ban that existed on employing married women was lifted in 1946 (Nolan, 2000).

Industrial conscription had, to a limited extent, forced a small number of women to work during the Second World War, a development that had the potential to further the emancipation of women from their traditional roles. But this step, as Deborah Montgomerie (1992) argues, was met with considerable reluctance even by the government itself, let alone the conservative public, as ultimately, in "compelling women to work the government crossed the boundary between the public and private spheres" (Montgomerie, 1992, p. 189). The recognition of women in "extra-familial roles" (ibid., p. 203) remained limited during the Fifties.

Men, meanwhile, were just as limited in their freedom to assume different roles. The same system that had brought up girls to be wives and mothers, had raised boys to be good at sports and courageous under all circumstances. Men did of course have one advantage over women: they traversed both spheres, private and public, whereas women were mostly confined to the home and activities associated with her role as housewife or mother. Thus far the general situation; how did men and women relate to each other?

Phoebe Meikle offers an insightful discussion of gender relations in New Zealand during the Fifties (L. M. Hall, 1958). She proclaimed that

Antagonism between the sexes, present, at least recessively, in every society, has become one of this country's dominant post-war characteristics. (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 47)

The groundwork for such antagonism was laid in New Zealand's primary schools. Because boys were expected to be the breadwinners, much pressure was put on them to excel in mathematics, the sciences and sports. History, foreign languages, poetry, drama, and art were not valued as highly, for
"what possible 'use' can History have" (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 54)? Meikle shows that boys were raised for future success in the material world:

Today, the material world is based on scientific study and achievement. It would be folly to deny this or to contest the need for scientific training for a good many of our most gifted boys. But every boy is a human being first, and a potential scientist second. He will, in the course of his life, encounter eternal human problems and try to satisfy universal human longings. Science may bring him rich, personal satisfactions of various kinds but no amount of scientific study will illumine for him the mysteries of the spirit or the springs of human impulse. (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 55)

In contrast girls, of whom nothing much is expected in the first place, were free to learn foreign languages, develop their spirituality by engaging in the arts, and thus in general were more cultivated than the average New Zealand male. Some young women consequently viewed marriage as "mental narrowness and cultural barbarism, [...] boredom and [...] indulgent patronage" (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 53); for the majority of women, however, getting married, having children, buying a section and building a house was 'doing the right things' (Smith, 1990).

I have suggested before that there must be drawn a line between a person as a full-fledged individual and women's and men's roles in society. A respondent in Gwendoline Smith's (1990) study about New Zealand men explicitly refers to 'role-playing' when he talks about his school years in the Fifties:

When we went to school all the boys went to woodwork and metalwork and the girls did cooking. Once a year we would swap over. We used to cook scones and the girls made something like a piece of wood with a nail in it, then it was back to role-playing. (Smith, 1990, p. 130)

As women seized the opportunity to work and obtain higher education in increasing numbers during the Fifties, the cultural gap between the sexes widened and women increasingly perceived themselves as persons in their own right. Men were intimidated by women's growing sophistication, partly, so Meikle argued, because of the supposedly egalitarian structure of New Zealand society (McAloon, 2004; Phillips, 1999). With everyone being
equal, the "human need to feel superior and its complement, the need for power over others" (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 50) cannot be satisfied in any other way but by treating women as inferior.

The recognition of women's treatment as inferior beings was not wholly new as not all New Zealand women strove to be 'homemakers'. Indeed the correspondence columns reflected some tension between three significant parties: housewives, working mothers and men. Each of these parties had its own understanding of how family life should be organised. (As we will see later, writers and artists had a different perspective again.) The cult of domesticity was, after all, not embraced by all New Zealand women.

Most aptly this point was made by Margot Roth in the Listener in 1959 (Roth, 1959). In "Housewives or Human Beings?", Roth argued for women to get "out of the mould of inferiority in which they're settling themselves more and more firmly" (Roth, 1959, p. 6). She talked about the "myth of the over-worked housewife" (ibid.) and that the "social code says a mother must stay at home regardless" (ibid.). Against this she held the many and easy opportunities for women to extend themselves, to do something for the community at large, to look beyond their immediate family surroundings.

The institutional infrastructure was certainly in place for women to be more than housewives. As a result of the explosive post-war population growth, large numbers of nurses, teachers and public servants – traditional areas of women' employment – were desperately needed (Alcorn, 1999; Macdonald, 1993; Nolan, 2000); and yet most sources agree that domesticity, meaning "marriage as a career" (Roth, 1959, p. 7) remained the predominant social norm for women. Margot Roth therefore concluded that "once again, times have changed, and once again our attitudes haven't changed with them" (ibid., p. 6). The blame to a large degree lay with women themselves.

According to this account then, not only did men and women inhabit strictly separated spheres in society, and not only did men by an inherent human need to be superior treat women as inferior, but also (and worst of all) New Zealand women themselves contributed to reinforce their
inferiority in contrast to men. Hence Roth's scorn for those housewives who embraced marriage 'as a career'.

This leads to the conclusion that instead of contrasting men and women as is customary under a gender focus, a tripartition into housewives, working women and men seems to be much more valuable for the New Zealand mainstream in the Fifties (Nolan, 2000). In the usual view of the Fifties the housewife is of course of supreme importance; in fact it sometimes seems as if working mothers and men had not survived the Fifties, so quiet is it around them.

The cult of domesticity was made a 'social code' easily enough due to New Zealand's social structure during the Fifties. Small communities allowed for the convenient enforcement of social norms through law and morality. In this setting, morality

[... ] can have sufficient force to restrain selfishness and to promote socially desirable behaviour within stable, long-term relationships, especially among kin and friends. (Baumeister, 2005, p. 348)

After two wars and the intervening depression close relationships were valued highly, and it was concern about maintaining these that made morality a well-working social mechanism (Baumeister, 2005). The desire for close bonds became increasingly connected with romantic ideals, a fact that was displayed in the increasing numbers of marriages but also of divorces during the Fifties (Chapman, 1953; L. M. Hall, 1958; Nolan, 2000; Olssen & Levesque, 1978; Yska, 1993).

The two hopes for social stability on the one hand and companionship and romance on the other were welded together in the cult of 'true womanhood' and domesticity. As illustrated above, domesticity was not every New Zealand woman's ideal; the hostility it met with was, however, not just marginal either. The *Listener* reports two heated debates on the issue of homemaking as an ideal to aspire to, and *Landfall* is exceptionally outspoken in its rejection of it as well. A brief investigation of debates carried out between housewives reveals considerable tension between different social fractions. The cult of 'true womanhood' was
rejected by some women, but it will ultimately remain difficult to stipulate how large a group these comprised.

'Women's sessions' were a common feature on all radio stations throughout the Fifties. Journalism in general devoted more attention to women's issues than it had done in previous decades. In 1949, a controversy arose in the _Listener_ over the value of such special attention on women-related topics. Initially a correspondent complained that she "does not care for verse mixed with her potato peelings" (Letters, _Listener_, Dec. 16, 1949), a simple critique of the contents of the 'women's hour'. Ruth France responded, "Why have sessions for women at all?" (ibid.), and continued:

Women are human beings, with a human being's diversity of interests. Why not take it for granted that they appreciate any intelligent discussion, whether by men or women, at any hour of the day? (Letters, _Listener_, Dec. 16, 1949)

'Housedwives are Human', as the ensuing series of correspondence was called, debated women's status in society over many weeks. Political feminists recommended establishing a women's party (esp. Letter, _Listener_, Feb. 3, 1950) which would ensure women's equal representation in government. Various this women-only party was envisaged as "check or balance on the activities and top-heaviness of the male political parties" (Letters, _Listener_, April 6, 1950) or meant to be a vehicle for furthering inter-gender communication (esp. Letters, _Listener_, May 5, 1950).

This first discussion of 'the housewife' was friendly in tone. It objected to old beliefs of women's and specifically housewives' inferiority by proclaiming that they are people like everyone else. Therefore, they did not require specific attention in a tri-weekly radio programme that is tailored to their 'special needs'. Margot Roth (1959) took up much of this debate but went a tremendous step further by questioning housewives' humanness.

The correspondence regarding 'Housewives or Human Beings?' reveals deep animosity between different factions of women. An English woman who had lived in New Zealand for six years at the time when she wrote to the _Listener_, had the following to say in support of Roth's argument:
Never have I lived in a community where the role of woman, since time began, has been sentimentalised to such a nauseating degree. [...] No one would deny that rearing a family of young children and running a house is hard work, part physical labour and part monotonous mental grind, probably in about the same proportions as the husband's effort in the business world to maintain his family. Whether the housewife seeks outside interest or not is a matter entirely for the individual but as for this myth of the overworked housewife - come off it ladies! Few women in the world ever had it better and the vast majority never had it so good. (Letters, Listener, Dec. 18, 1959).

The correspondent here leaves the responsibility to extend oneself up to individual housewife's personal choice. Margot Roth (1959) had not been this liberal in her article; hers is a straight-forward attack on the housewife. For her, homemaking

[...] produces nothing that is directly useful to society. It opens no door to the future. Domestic chores should take their proper place as a background necessity, like brushing our teeth. (Roth, 1959)

The 'homemaker' thus becomes a dupe, an idiot, a failure. Such arguing has resulted in much resentment, not least of all from Monte Holcroft himself. The 'Housewives or Human Beings?' correspondence thus fell into two categories: those supporting women's activism and progress a la Roth and those in support of the housewife's traditional role.

Holcroft agrees that there is a certain gender imbalance, but a necessary one that is tied to New Zealand's "short history" (Editorial, Listener, Nov. 20, 1959). The New Zealand environment, he holds, is "still too masculine" (ibid.) for women who are therefore restricted in their opportunities of how to 'contribute to society'. He then proceeded to powerfully support the housewife as a social institution:

It is true that 'family planning' has made the reproductive function less demanding than it used to be; but the function is still there, and even two or three children must – or should – keep a mother engaged at home while her husband is earning his place outside. [...] Whatever may be said about the 'false glamour' of the home-maker, it is still true that the 'creative role of wife and mother' offers women the best work and the deepest satisfaction. (Editorial, Listener, Nov. 20, 1959)
These comments describe the 'social code' Roth referred to and received much support in subsequent issues. One correspondent claimed that the New Zealand housewife gets busier with housework than others because she "maintains a very high standard of work in her home – perhaps to the detriment of outside interests" (Letter, Listener, Jan. 15, 1960). Another contribution cautioned to "never despise the true New Zealand home-maker" (ibid.), be she educated or not.

The 'home', as this illustrates, did indeed enjoy an extremely high regard and the cult of domesticity much support. Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that either side of the debate truly listened to what the other side had to say. The debate was conducted in increasingly aggressive tone; furthermore, both sides appear very insistent and inflexible in their argument and did, in fact, not shy away from a certain meanness, as this passage demonstrates:

If 'Another Point of View' [the English correspondent quoted above, A.B.] finds New Zealand such a paradise for married women, why is she returning to England? Keeping in mind my experience of other English housewives in New Zealand, I ask myself, could it be that she cannot face the effort required to attain and maintain the high New Zealand standard of housekeeping and child care? (Letters, Listener, Jan. 22, 1960)

For someone like Margot Roth who despises home-making, such an attempt at bringing a woman into disrepute over her home-keeping skills might be at least comical, and certainly a wasted effort. But the above passage did not commend itself merely for humour's sake; more importantly it seems to illustrate the militancy with which housewives defended the saliency and significance of their way of life. This passage also shows how little understanding there was between the opposing sides. Ultimately it appears as if two world views battled for supremacy.

Landfall underlined this ideological battle succinctly, with Robert Chapman's (1953) essay emphasising this more strongly than most other writing. Chapman struggled to find much positive to comment about the New Zealand family in 1953. For him, the family as New Zealand's "basic institution" was not "functioning properly" (Chapman, 1953, p. 54). Filled with discontent, it was "serving as a centre of constrained conformity
instead of willing cohesion" (ibid.). The housewife-mother was the central factor in this "domestic tragedy" (ibid., p. 50). The husband, Chapman explained, had little possibility of making a home that was better than lower middle class (i.e. compared with England). In the egalitarian society that New Zealand was and, in the Fifties, still claimed to be, the country was therefore dotted with multitudes of uniformly lower middle-class homes. The development of suburbia after the Second World War intensified this development, which signified that

Mother now stepped into her own. The exact grade the family would occupy was fixed increasingly by mother's skills in spending to the greatest advantage a nearly fixed income. Mother 'managing' the household succeeded to father 'making a home'. (Chapman, 1953, p. 38)

According to Chapman then desire for material distinction spurred families to an exclusive focus on the home. Against such materialistic attitudes Chapman pitted the writer whose values were those of humanitarian liberalism, and who desperately sought to reach beyond the narrow confines of the "puritan tradition" (Chapman, 1953, p. 58).

It must be noted that 'humanitarian liberalism' such as that professed by Chapman to be the writer's pedigree made it impossible for him to appreciate the role of housewife in its own right. Phoebe Meikle, Margot Roth and Chapman fundamentally agreed that much was left unexplored for housewives, much potential untapped (Chapman, 1953; L. M. Hall, 1958; Roth, 1959). They openly opposed the fixation on the home that was otherwise a praiseworthy characteristic of post-war New Zealand. Other New Zealanders like them who also did not share in the favourable view of the 'home' as a concept had ample reason for annoyance during the Fifties.
3.3. Men and Children

All sources agree that in the post-war years women were encouraged to "return to their domestic roles" (Nolan, 2000, p. 193) and that the ideal of the nuclear family became the social norm for New Zealand's mainstream culture (Olssen & Levesque, 1978; Phillips, 1993; Roth, 1959; Yska, 1993). When the Queen visited New Zealand in 1953, the nuclear family "with the woman at home looking after a growing brood of children" (Phillips, 1993, p. 83) was displayed as the national ideal. It was defended as a national ideal in Monte Holcroft's rebuttal to Margot Roth's (1959) article, as well.

The unprecedented number of children almost forced this ideal to be formed. Viewed from this perspective, the primordial cultural significance of the home, and the mother managing it, was linked directly with the baby boom. With such a large segment of New Zealand social life geared towards the home and child rearing, one wonders how men, comparatively less significant in childrearing, experienced this time.

Neither *Landfall* nor the *Listener* provide much information on this head. Indeed, the established opinion still is, as far as I can tell, that women's issues were relatively insignificant during the Fifties and consequently men's issues even more so. This, I presume, points to the obvious fact that the everyday experiences of neither sex and neither of the genders aroused much interest until recently.

A number of social roles were assigned to women, and where they previously had remained obscured in their 'tucked-away' homes in the suburbs, the rising importance of family and home brought them to the forefront of society as never before. Women had also been 'discovered' as consumers – with the advent of electric appliances – and voters, as well (Nolan, 2000; O'Donnell, 1992). One could say that the sphere encompassing (everything related to) the home expanded considerable during the Fifties. The Fifties with their strong emphasis on the home, which belonged to the woman's sphere, was therefore a comparatively feminine decade.
This resulted in some anxieties on the part of New Zealand men. In New Zealand's early history, masculinity was commonly assured through the display of manly vigour and brute physical strength (Andrews, 1999; Jensen, 1996; Phillips, 1980, 1984, 1996; Smith, 1990; Tosh, 1998). This male role model depended on close interaction with nature and is therefore common in the frontier stage of colonial development. In the Fifties, with urban spaces extending, this role model became far less available. Hence men "faced the post-war period with some confusion and uncertainty about their place in it" (Andrews, 1999, p. 204).

Masculinity most obviously expresses itself in the exercise of control and power. In post-war New Zealand, the white-collar worker became the most likely stereotype in which to invest these attributes. He was connected with the previously idealised type of blue-collar worker; the result is a dashing-looking business man with square chin, broad shoulders, strong arms and slim lower body (Andrews, 1999). The world of professional business became the new man's sphere of masculinity which explains the hostility against female co-workers that Meikle has referred to (Andrews, 1999; L. M. Hall, 1958). Women in the workplace posed the threat of feminisation of white-collar work.

But men did not only worry about their own manliness. As the home grew to assume a pivotal social role, a "special anxiety over the 'manliness' of sons growing up in a predominantly female environment" (Tosh, 1998, p. 83) grew as well. Could manly virtues such as "independence, energy, endurance, straight-forwardness" (ibid.) or, in another scholar's words, "physical toughness if not violence, [...] stamina and emotional control" (King, 1999, p. 34) really be instilled in a family that was matriarchally organised? Doubts about this were often quelled by sending boys off to boarding school or, more prominently, supporting them for a journey overseas. Boys' schools were an important aspect in the preservation of masculinity because there young men could play rugby and generally learn about 'being a man' (Tosh, 1998). Michael King (1999), for instance, reminisced about his school days in Auckland in the Fifties:

The atmosphere was rugged and masculine, as if school authorities had decided that boys brought up by nuns needed in adolescence a strong antidote to female
role models. [...] Sports results and commentaries dominated the school magazine. Scholarship was not despised, but it came a poor second to physical activities in school esteem. [...] If sport represented an aristocracy of activities, rugby was king. It was a sport; but it was not just a sport. It was an arena in which we were expected to display manly qualities by being fearless, by going into rucks hard, by tackling hard, by going down on the ball in the face of on-rushing opponents, and by playing as a team. (King, 1999, pp. 34-35)

'Being a man' meant being tough, being strong, resisting much hardship, enduring in the face of adversity, be it natural or in the form of an attacker. It also meant not showing one's emotions lest one should be perceived as a 'ninny'. Stephen, a participant in Gwendoline Smith's (1990) study and born in Napier in 1952, described this attitude succinctly:

"When I look back on the relationship with my father, particularly as a boy, I could see that there were certain behaviours that my father had that were standard behaviours for a 'bloke'. They were things like emotional distancing, being aloof, being non-responsive. The sort of behaviour that I thought was ok." (Smith, 1990, p. 90)

This was the 'bloke's bloke' role model which is often shortened to the formula 'rugby, racing and beer'. The other role model available for boys and men relates to the white-collar worker who was uptight, inexpressive, unemotional and controlled (Jensen, 1996). Because "children do not have their own value systems" (Smith, 1990, p. 61), they model themselves on the images of being a man or a woman that are available to them (Smith, 1990). This is how they inadvertently perpetuate their parents' and teachers' values.

Holcroft in his conviction that the New Zealand environment had shaped the New Zealand character showed his affinity to the 'bloke's bloke' role model. Thus he proclaimed that "most New Zealanders now live in cities and towns; but the mountain type is still the ideal" (Editorial, Listener, Jan. 27, 1950). Men who lived and worked in the mountains "are tested more often and their standards become higher" (ibid.). In the mountains man could be a hero again, something that had become impossible in a home-oriented society:
The emphasis in the heroic life is on the courage to struggle and achieve extraordinary goals, the quest for virtue, glory and fame, which contrasts with the lesser everyday pursuit of wealth, property and earthly love. (Featherstone, 1992, pp. 164-165)

In niches such as boys' schools, rugby clubs and the army heroic behaviour became again possible and continued unabated (Phillips, 1983; Tosh, 1998). But, during the Fifties, it was of course the 'lesser everyday pursuit of wealth, property and earthly love' that counted. Bearing this in mind it appears that these niches, while offering freedom also provided a secure environment where a man could relax amongst his 'mates'. Meikle (L. M. Hall, 1958) suggests that New Zealand men were afraid of women which is why a male environment was perceived as secure. In mixed company, however, men appeared "uncertain and troubled" in the face of women's "lightness and sparkle and sophistication" (L. M. Hall, 1958, p. 51). Therefore, not only has the pre-eminence of the cult of domesticity created in men the longing for a "rigorous life full of adventure and free of home ties" (Tosh, 1998, p. 86); they were supposedly even driven away from women by their fear of them.

The fear of woman, as Andreas Huyssen (1986) discusses, has been an innate characteristic of modernism. Modernism embodied many 'female' characteristics; it was a hostile paradigm for men because of their deep "fear of nature out of control, fear of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity and stable ego boundaries" (Huyssen, 1986, p. 52). Misogyny in fact abounded in New Zealand in the interwar years and indeed was very much alive in the Fifties as well, if more concealed (Jensen, 1996; Phillips, 1996).

Feeling uneasy around women, maybe even fearing them, must have created some problems during the Fifties. Women were then much more 'present' than ever before and their sphere of influence had extended considerably. Children of all ages were omnipresent in the Fifties as well, emphasising the woman's augmented public presence. Following Huyssen's line of thought, not only did the masses and mass culture become associated with women, but cities did too (Huyssen, 1986; Phillips, 1980). This reinforced an older notion that held cities in contempt as effeminate places.
Urban areas grew considerably during the Fifties. "Instant suburbs" (Yska, 1993, p. 45) mushroomed to counter the housing shortages connected with a post-war mass migration to the cities. In the face of these developments, dreaming about the 'ideal mountain type' appears to be a rejection of urbanisation (and, in a wider sense, of change). Statements like "we are a small community, and the country around us is large and wild enough to preserve the colonial attitude" (Editorial, Listener, Jan. 27, 1950) then read like a reassurance that not all would be lost in the urban sprawl. The 'ideal mountain type' was still within reach but men needed to make an effort if they wanted to avoid having their masculine essence diluted in an all-female environment.

Men, I suggest, have been pushed into just as narrow a corsage of eligible roles as women have during the Fifties. Growing family responsibilities required the adjustment of the idea of manliness from the heroism of old to a more general understanding of masculinity as "action, enterprise and progress and their corresponding realms of business, industry, science and law" (Huyssen, 1986, p. 45). Whenever men could, however, they sought out niches of 'ideal manliness'. Maybe this is why, as Margaret Mead mused on a visit to New Zealand in 1951, young New Zealanders engage in so much mountain climbing and outdoor activities in general (Of Myths and Men, Listener, Aug. 31, 1951).

As John Tosh (1998) outlined about the Victorian cult of home, so does Jock Phillips (1996) about the 'cult of domesticity' in New Zealand. The point of convergence between these two disparate sources is that sooner or later men resent their chosen masculine roles. Tosh (1998) explains that the initial enthusiasm wanes as the balance of power within the household shifts from the husband's into the wife's hands, an inevitable consequence of the husband's long absences from home. This is the process that Robert Chapman (1953) described in 'Fiction and the Social Pattern'.

As the wife assumes the dominant position in the household, she is increasingly perceived as materialistic spendthrift, talkative nag and moralistic prude by her husband (Phillips, 1996). Men apparently even threatened to leave their wives because of these shortcomings, as an article in the Listener in 1950 shows:
he called at one of the Bureaux and asked if "something could be done about my wife," as her behaviour was becoming more than he could stand. If something wasn’t done soon, he would leave her. He explained that she was a hopeless housekeeper as she was always running into debt—three times within the last year he had come to her rescue with the savings from his own pocket money. (Keeping People Married, Listener, Mar 10, 1950)

The same husband later helped his wife "to learn the art of household budgeting" (Keeping People Married, Listener, Mar 10, 1950); the marriage was saved mainly through his effort. It surprises to read about such dedication to saving one's marriage because more often than not "the family man was portrayed as an unwilling participant, nostalgically yearning for his unattached days" (Phillips, 1996, p. 252). Such yearnings could be satisfied even for married men through 'clustering' with their 'mates' whilst engaging in manly activities such as drinking and swearing (Jensen, 1996).

According to the separate spheres ideology men continually have to switch roles between "home male" and the "social male" (Smith, 1990), which are polar opposites. And just as housewives engaged in escapism when listening to romantic radio serials, so men started dreaming of a "rigorous life full of adventure and free of home ties" (Tosh, 1998, p. 86). 'Rugby, racing and beer' satisfied these desires most easily for New Zealand men.

An implication of the white-collar type of masculinity is worth noting; and that is its relation to egalitarianism. As the "suit became re-encoded as symbol of masculine power and achievement" (Andrews, 1999, p. 210), the range of admired male behaviours moved away from the physical realm and more towards cultivated manners. Because these were paired with suppression of emotions and a certain aloof carelessness, the risk of appearing effeminate was minimal. An Englishman's opinion of New Zealand men conveys the uniformity of these changes:

he obtained a fresh and unbiased insight into the lot of the New Zealand working man, whom he considers "better educated, better mannered, and more cultured" than the working people in he has encountered elsewhere in the world.

He thinks the New Zealand worker has all the characteristics of what people would

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1 The Family Discussion Bureaux in London. The article recommends that similar agencies be established in New Zealand.
call the middle classes in England. He thinks he has middle class ideals, for instance, like wanting to settle down with his family in some pleasant suburb, which in a surprising number of cases he does. (He Likes New Zealand, *Listener*, Feb. 24, 1950)

If New Zealand society was indeed egalitarian, then it would be uniformly a middle-class society. And as far as economic aspirations and ideology are concerned, this remains a true statement (Authority and the New Zealander, *Listener*, Oct. 4, 1957). But emotional development lagged far behind economic awareness; the relationships New Zealanders had consequently were the "unreflective, unsubtle ones of an industrial working-class" (Authority and the New Zealander, *Listener*, Oct. 4, 1957). Whilst these conditions were not present in post-war New Zealand, men's lack of emotionality created the same outcome. It appears as if there has been more class division in the Fifties than can be discussed in full here; a grave gender imbalance does not allow for any easy talk of New Zealand society as egalitarian. Within the male culture alone there is a demarcation line between emotional behaviours indicating a broad range of class affiliation.

It is important to stress men's deep insecurity and uncertainty in post-war New Zealand. 'Rugby, racing and beer' continued to offer an easy escape from these feelings of uneasiness because they were conceived of as truly masculine activities:

"I think it comes from an arrogance or ego or something. The New Zealand male in a bar situation seems to want to be the centre of attention, they like to be the life and soul of the party. He is obsessed with people not liking him, he wants to be liked by everyone. He wants to be able to stand tall, to be not so much a 'rugby, racing and beer' type, but to be admired." (Smith, 1990, p. 188)

Children are conspicuously absent in the *Listener* and *Landfall* as well as all additional sources. Whenever there is mention of children, it usually happens by implication or in association. This surprises at first, considering that in 1960, there were 685,000 children aged between five and twenty in New Zealand, the general population being 2.4 million (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 1962).
In New Zealand writing at the time, furthermore, the children's point of view became a remarkable feature (Wevers, 1998). As a literary technique, using a child's perspective served to deliver a realistic description of society while at the same time evading the necessary critique of society one expects from an adult narrator. The stronger focus on children in writing by association points to a "reinforcement of the earlier emphasis on dependence" (Wevers, 1998, p. 281), dependence being inherently part of family life. If we follow accounts in the *Listener* and *Landfall*, children were part of the structural unit 'family' which was dominated by the mother.

Adolescents, in contrast to children, were overly 'present' in both society and journalism, at least in the middle-years. New cultural influences, especially American music and pulp fiction, influenced youth during these years. The growing number of teenagers, all of whom (and here I exaggerate for argument's sake) read crime comics, listened to The King, went to the movies a lot and hung out at milk bars, ingeniously formed their own social code.

Redmer Yska (1993) discusses this at large in *All Shook Up*. 'Instant suburbs', he argues, came with "broken homes and de facto parents, heavy drinkers, working mothers and neglected child rearing" (Yska, 1993, p. 46). The youth growing up in such conditions were dislocated. A feeling of dislocation or bewilderment can revert into hostility. This, combined with little opportunity in the way of "wholesome sport and recreational activities" (ibid., p. 48) in the suburbs and, with both parents working and therefore having precious little time to impress ethical standards upon their children, created a breeding ground for deviant behaviour. Furthermore, newly attained affluence gave children pocket money and American influences gave them ideas of what to do with it.

The resulting cases of juvenile delinquency, also called the 'sexual offenders cases', caused much uproar and anxiety nation-wide. Teenagers engaging in 'illicit' sexual activities represented a direct assault on their parents' beliefs and values. It is always difficult for any new generation to share their parents' world-view, but it has been argued that it was even more difficult for the youth during the Fifties:
For the discontents of the young were not blanketed by the consciousness of living through times of staggering improvement, far better times than their parents had ever expected to see. The new times were the only ones that young men and women [...] knew. On the contrary, they felt things could be different and better, even when they did not quite know how. (Hobsbawm, 1994, p. 301)

The youth, less complacent and contented than their parents, were eager to change the gerontocratic society that did not grant them freedom to be themselves (Yska, 1993). As a result of their rejection of the status quo, the nuclear family was perceived as under threat (Nolan, 2000). It is probably this circumstance more than the teenagers' actions per se that constituted the elements of the offence.

In response to the youth's deviant acts, domesticity was reinforced as the one stable solution to society's problems; working, single and neglectful mothers were blamed for their failure to uphold the ideal family (Yska, 1993). The Mazengarb Report has therefore been called a "conservative backlash at the working mother" (May, 1989, p. 68). Ultimately, and in accordance with established theories of deviance, the adolescents' moral trespasses helped to embed domesticity as the one social norm even further so that it could indeed "be classified as monogamous, mobile, and faintly patriarchal" (The Family in Perspective, Listener, June 15, 1951).

3.4. General Reflections of the Family in Landfall and the Listener

Landfall was overall critical of the mainstream perception of marriage and the family but did not assign the topic much space in its pages. The family was mentioned alongside more significant other issues such as gender relations and egalitarianism (L. M. Hall, 1958), socio-literary analysis (Chapman, 1953) and when talking about the lives of writers (Brasch, 1960).

Altogether, as one observer commented, the spirit of the age appeared to be that "if anything is 'offensive to many', it might as well be banned" (Monro, 1955, p. 77). Committing what was 'offensive to many' constituted 'juvenile delinquency' or, in the case of alleged communist
affiliations, 'subversive behaviour'. The rational basis to this kind of argument was virtually absent. It was noted that avoiding offensive behaviour, according to the Mazengarb Report, demanded a morality that consists in "adhering blindly to a code of behaviour" (ibid., p. 79). In the wake of the juvenile offenders cases, Landfall with its high intellectual standards had to (and did) reject the wilful refusal to use one's intellectual faculties that was required by the mainstream for embracing family life.

Monro further noted that, reading some of the pamphlets in circulation on marriage and divorce, "one is tempted to conclude that it is desire to be respectable that holds New Zealand marriages together" (ibid., p. 81). A cynical comment but in good company as Landfall, Bill Pearson's 'Fretful Sleepers' and Robert Chapman's 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' are equally disinclined to praise either the notion of shallow respectability or the family. Whenever Landfall focused on the family, it was in fact done with a certain scorn and carelessness. Three reasons I hold account for this: (1) the specific composition of the group of contributors, (2) the fact that most of them were writers and (3) Charles Brasch himself.

Firstly, from the very start the typical contributor to Landfall has been male; only one quarter of all contributors were female (Geraets, 2003). The typical contributor is also

[... ] professional, middle-class and university-educated, perhaps an educator himself, and inclined to a liberal-radical attitude in political matters without any ties. (Geraets, 2003, p. 131)

These characteristics place the bearer at some distance from family life, especially if, as was the case in the Fifties, the compass of what family could mean was strictly defined and quite narrow, which also posed a obstacle to a 'liberal-radical' attitude.

Secondly, taking into account the contributors' occupational background, rejection of the idea of family almost follows as a natural consequence. As Landfall's writers' questionnaire of 1960 reveals, a number of writers saw themselves unable to produce literary work while maintaining a family at the same time. Breadwinning simply left no time for writing, and writing itself did not pay. Thus, as Maurice Duggan concluded,
There will always be a sense in which the writer is writing against his family and his responsibilities there. (Brasch, 1960, p. 50, Italics in the original)

Artistic achievement does indeed become more difficult with a family to support, as Toss Woollaston's life suggests (e.g. Trevelyan, 2004). Wishing to provide for his family, Woollaston took up the position of a journeying dealer when he and his family moved to Greymouth. But working for money took up most of his time, as his wife Edith lamented in a letter to Charles Brasch in 1952:

Toss himself seems swallowed up in his endeavours to make enough money to pay for the essentials... He scarcely ever thinks, writes, discusses or reads as he used to in Mapua & only has time occasionally to paint or begin to think painting; - there is no time and energy for anything else... (Trevelyan, 2004, p. 182)

Duggan furthermore mentioned the feeling of guilt at writing. Guilt is a psychological state that is engendered through outside pressure. Since it is an effective tool for "making people behave properly toward family and friends" (Baumeister, 2005, p. 349) it helps toward maintaining order. As a psychological mechanism, it assumes an established norm – in this particular case that of the nuclear family – which it compels the individual to follow.

Third and last, taking Charles Brasch's sole editorship into account, the contents of Landfall reflect his personal intellectual preferences. Brasch is "mainly associated with anxieties over national identity" (Sharp, 2003, p. 107), and the family as a concern therefore might have failed to resound favourably with him. Some scholars assert that Brasch was homosexual (Belich, 2001); this might also account for his subtle hostility against the ideal of the nuclear family.

Brasch is furthermore said to have had "little sympathy for the ordinary and decent achievements of ordinary and decent people" (Oliver, 2003, p. 121). A letter from his friend Toss Woollaston, received in 1950, illustrates this:
I don't dislike the work as much as I think you feel I must – am in fact too
absorbed in it – you may find me changed in outlook – a rapacious business man!
(Trevelyan, 2004, p. 184)

Brasch, coming from an affluent Dunedin family, had never had to be
concerned with the truly mundane side of existence which made him "less
than generous [...] to those who were intent upon acquiring a little ease and
comfort" (Oliver, 2003, p. 124). This together with his high intellectual
aspirations made Landfall an elitist magazine of the highest intellectual
standard – with low regard for the family.

The Listener, in contrast, was outspoken in its support of the family
ideal. The point of view on the family was male and, to be precise,
patriarchal. Whilst editorial opinion held that "the sexes are complementary"
(Edited, Listener, Jan. 20, 1950), it is also maintained that "no doubt we
shall continue to believe that women are weak and fair" (ibid.). Holcroft
here continued that, because "women have a vested interest in the matter
[they] will help to preserve this [image]" (ibid.). The Listener, it appears,
was comfortable supporting existing gender roles according to which
women were inferior to men. Printing Margot Roth's article (Roth, 1959) did
not change that position in the least; on the contrary, her attack on the
nuclear family and the 'art of housekeeping' were welcomed as an
opportunity to express a conservative patriarchal manifesto.
4. CONCLUSION

The Fifties were a decade of unprecedented economic and population growth. Together, these two factors created an environment in which much energy was devoted to home-making, as a consequence of which consumerism took root in New Zealand. The nuclear family was the main distinguishing factor in society around which these developments circulated.

*Landfall*, whilst aiming to be a genuine New Zealand voice, opposed most of the cultural mainstream's values. The *Listener* is altogether much more positive about New Zealand and also less critical. One might suspect that it was restricted in its freedom of expression more than *Landfall* was because it was a governmental publication, and I would generally agree with this. But Monte Holcroft (1969) asserted that his editorial freedom was in no way inhibited. The result, the *Listener* under his editorship, was a non-controversial family magazine.

The *Listener*'s conservatism is especially accentuated when contrasted to *Landfall*: it praised the family when *Landfall* scarcely mentioned it; it revered authority – the Queen's Tour in 1953/54 occupied most of the issues during her stay, and so did the Queen Mother's visit in 1956 – whereas *Landfall* did not; and it supported ownership of property where *Landfall* warned of the dangers of materialist attitudes. As a conservative organ the *Listener*, however, remained fairly moderate. The magazine would have had to be much more outspoken to this end.

*Landfall* never aimed to be objective and indeed could not have reached this end under the tenets Brasch had set for his journal in the first issue. *Landfall*’s mission was to be a New Zealand journal for New Zealand writers in a combined effort to give wings to a genuine New Zealand culture. It therefore followed in logical consequence that *Landfall* opposed the cultural mainstream which was widely perceived as philistine, especially so under Sid Holland's leadership (see e.g. Oliver, 2002).

But the discrepancy between *Landfall* and the *Listener* was more profound than this: ultimately, the notion of social progress was in conflict with the mainstream's overwhelming concentration on preserving the present status quo which they perceived as stable. The family was crucial to
from the viewpoint of conservatism it was, and still is, the cornerstone of society. Where *Landfall* and its contributors, New Zealand's writers, in a binary fashion, saw themselves as individuals opposite the abstract entity of state, society from the conservative perspective consisted of three players: individuals, institutions and the state (Nisbet, 1986).

Institutions such as the family, the church, societies and clubs and local governments secure the individual's welfare where the state cannot as easily reach. These institutional groups' vested interest is to maintain the present social order or to change it as they see fit. A main operating factor in all these groups' decision-making processes is protecting the group member's property and right of property ownership (Brett, 1997; Nisbet, 1986). Private property is viewed as a bulwark against threats to our survival which Torbjörn Tännö (1990) connects with conservatism's aiming to preserve the existing order via ensuring property rights:

> It seems to me that, at the heart of individual ideal conservatism lies anxiety. Everything near and dear to us is ephemeral. Life bears the emblem of insecurity. Everything of value exists under a permanent threat of extinction. If what is really good is to continue to exist we must constantly be on guard and we must always be prepared to confront the dismal forms of disintegration. (Tännö, 1990, p. 71)

The 'forms of disintegration' that conservatives opposed are many. Social change as a political platform such as was embodied by the Labour Party when it came into office in 1935, was easily the most obvious point of resistance. Reformist attitudes like Labour's were often viewed by conservatives as "idle worship of change" (Nisbet, 1986, p. 26) and were therefore to be strongly rejected. Conservatives in contrast were predominantly engaged in what we might choose to call 'idle worship of tradition' (Nisbet, 1986).

Writers encountered rejection to the same extent that they openly viewed themselves as advocates of alternative ways of living. Living as a single male or female, professing homosexual inclinations, being Catholic, having neither stable income nor housing conditions – these things were outside the traditions conservatives upheld in their deep-seated reverence of the past but they were the daily lives of many writers.
Conflict of opinion between such disparate groups appears inevitable. The next section which explores the field of New Zealand literati in the Fifties in detail will further enhance our understanding of the exact nature of this conflict.
II.

New Zealand’s Culture in the Nineteen-Fifties:

Writers and Writing

1. LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

The scope and intensity with which Landfall and the Listener discussed New Zealand writers throughout the Fifties is astonishing. Especially as regards the Listener the question that arises is: What was people’s concern with writing? Why did it perturb so many? Why was the debate about the state of New Zealand’s literature led so fervently?

Firstly, the understanding of literature then was far more activist than it is now. Writing was viewed as a creative as well as political activity, a notion that still persists in literature in different forms. During the Fifties, literary ambitions were closely related with the state of New Zealand as a whole, as this chapter will show.

Following the clarification of the function of literature in society I will present some of the controversies between New Zealand writers regarding culture and writing. Ultimately this will be a broad presentation of the field of New Zealand literati of the Fifties that seeks to make one crucial point: that the field of writers was much more heterogeneous than the received opinion has it.

The Fifties were a straightforward continuation of the literary nationalism that played such a crucial role for New Zealand’s culture during the Thirties and Forties and yet is not discussed as such in any of the standard publications on the topic (Barrowman, 1991; Jensen, 1996; Jones, 2003). In fact, as regards the development of writing during the Fifties in historical context a similar shortcoming must be noted. The gap of scholarship is so much more obvious because the Sixties are again discussed in great depth (e.g. Jensen, 1996).
Four of New Zealand's most acclaimed novels of the 'provincial period' were published in the Fifties (Jones, 1998): Janet Frame's *Owls Do Cry*, Sylvia Ashton-Warner's *Spinster*, M.K. Joseph's *I'll Soldier No More* and Ian Cross's *God Boy*. Yet the Fifties do not play a major role in New Zealand's literary history, rather, they appear to be relatively quiet years in between the 'nationalist decades' (Thirties and Forties) and the changing social and cultural awareness of the Sixties. In this sense, the 'roaring' earlier decades have overshadowed the Fifties and mitigated its significance. As an article in the *Listener* states:

An empty belly has a curious effect on the eyes: it makes them see things more sharply. Moreover, a writer is upheld by the society in which he lives and works. If people around him are troubled and angry, he goes a step or two beyond them and finds words for what is in their minds. He looks a little deeper into the common problems. If everybody is comfortable, the writer begins to relax [...]. (If Winter Comes..., *Listener*, Sept. 7, 1951)

Following this line of logic, peaceful times discourage good writing, and the Fifties as a relatively tranquil decade thus have not seen much valuable literature (which is not true). It is also possible that the general lack of interest in the Fifties simply extends onto its literature. A 'dull and boring' decade cannot offer much material for writers. Or can it?

Such thinking presupposes that good writing is a reaction to environmental influences; but writing can also simply spring off a writer's imagination regardless of external events, as is exemplified in much modernist writing. The next chapter will elucidate the writer's role that is associated with 'empty bellies making the eyes see sharper'.

1.1. The Role of Writers in Society

As Rachel Barrowman (1991) suggests, writers during the Thirties believed that it was their role to stir everyone into one concerted effort of trying to create a new culture. Literature for them was not merely a source of entertainment or pleasure "but an active instrument of opposition to the mass world, utilitarianism, and collectivism" (Williams, 1998, pp. 708-709).
Individuals needed to find strength in themselves and literature was one way to help towards this end. If they failed to discover their endless inner resources, then mass subjugation and fascism were the inevitable consequences.

This activist political understanding of literature thus emerged in direct reaction to political events of far-reaching consequences on all levels of society. Writing had a political purpose, and the writer had a specific role in society. Numerous magazines, some short-lived, were founded, some aiming to contribute to the political-cultural cause in a sophisticated manner (Phoenix and Tomorrow), some as an easy publishing venue for many different kinds of writing (e.g. Kiwi).

Because writing was an engagement with one's surrounding in political terms, the Thirties and Forties were years of prolific writing in New Zealand. Phoenix and Tomorrow exemplify the notion of writing for the betterment of society, and Landfall as the 'Phoenix grown up' remains within this framework. The writer, from Landfall's point of view, was an active tool of change or resistance against the evils of this world. Landfall explained the writer's role within this larger project in the following manner:

The artist is in the true sense a discoverer and a creator, not a cheer-leader or interpreter or populariser of political and social doctrine, nor apologist for any established order. He is the herald, the bringer of news [...]. (Notes, Landfall, 1956, p. 176)

The business of the imaginative writer under any system [...] is to keep society open, open to new ideas, new ends, new techniques; to persuade the holders of power that for the sake of their own survival and the interest of their society they must allow for change, for conflict of views, for the difficult pursuit of truth however disturbing truth is—truth in the arts, in the sciences, in economics and philosophy and in the courts of law. (Notes, Landfall, 1958, p. 100)

These passages show that apart from being an instrument of progress, the writer was also admired as a visionary, as someone whose writing had the power to "awaken and disturb people by holding up a mirror in which they could see themselves more clearly and less complacently" (Oliver, 2003). Having thus been led into the light, the reader would gladly adopt the recommended changes in attitude and life style.
According to *Landfall*, the writer was indispensable for society's well-being. Without writers the nation would considerably reduce the speed of progress and jeopardise society's intellectual advance altogether; without writers there would be little protection against the contaminating effect of both consumerism and mass ideology.

Brasch advances and defends the notion of the writer as a cultural leader of the polity. In a slightly more political vein this recalls the idea of the 'poet-legislator'. The poet-legislator is a man of extreme erudition whose wisdom and vision make him an advisor in all matters cultural and political. He is recognised and celebrated as an extraordinarily gifted individual and consequently is a hero of the public. He is also recognised in distinguished upper-class circles.

Thus established as a respected dignified member of society, the poet-legislator enjoys unrestricted freedom of expression. Freedom is in fact the *sine qua non* for his, as for any, writer's existence: without freedom, writers "lose their virtue" and value for society (Notes, *Landfall*, 1956, p. 175) because only in a free society can the writer pursue the truth as he sees fit. But seek the truth he must, even though the consequences of such action might be dire:

Truth indeed is apt to be unpalatable, and argument often leads to dangerously-sounding conclusions. But an exposed, 'open' society retains its vigour only by entertaining unpalatable truths and dangerous conclusions, in a process of constant renewal [...]. (Notes, *Landfall*, 1956, p. 175)

Brasch expected the public to welcome the poet and his visionary insights at the apparent expectation of hardship, of 'unpalatable truths'. It seems that in this Brasch followed Leavisite literary theory which was extremely prominent in the Thirties and Forties. Leavisite thought or 'culturalism' was an influential British development in literary criticism taken up by notables such as T.S. Eliot, who was widely read by New Zealand literati (Inglis & Hughson, 2003).

F. R. Leavis who interpreted the antique idea of 'poet-legislator' for his times went as far as to declare that "thinking about political and social matters ought to be done by minds of some real literary education" (Leavis,
1962, p. 193), *ergo* only by poets or writers in general. Continuing in this vein he holds:

> Without the sensitising familiarity with the subtleties of language, and the insight into the relation between abstract and generalising thought and the concrete of human experience, that the trained frequentation of literature alone can bring, the thinking that attends social and political studies will not have the edge and force it should. (Leavis, 1962, p. 194)

Familiarity with 'the concrete of human experience', so Leavis argues, is essential for the writer if he is to be of value for society. The writer's experience has to be the reader's as well. H. Winston Rhodes, one of the founders of *Tomorrow* magazine, was probably the most prominent and ardent adherent of such thinking among New Zealand literati (Williams, 1998). 'Telling it as the ordinary person lives it' was the predominant attitude among writers in the Thirties, and social realism, the idea of the worker as poet, accompanied this aspect of Leavisite thinking (Barrowman, 1991; Cutler, 1990; Jensen, 1996).

Leavisites viewed artists and writers as an absolute necessity of any society because they kept the "flame of culture burning, maintaining the higher spiritual values" (Inglis & Hughson, 2003, p. 92) of society. Despite Leavis' conviction that writers establish a 'rooted' culture (a paradox in terms) which is relevant to the public's everyday life, he contradictorily also advocated a specific social hierarchy that was crowned by the poet-legislator. The writer was thus hinged between everyday egalitarianism and high culture with its English aristocratic taint; an intellectual challenge that was going to confuse New Zealand writers (Oliver, 2002; Perry, 1987).

'Relevant writing' about New Zealanders' everyday life meant writing in the social realist rather than the Georgian tradition. The writer had to be "socially aware" (Jensen, 1996, p. 44), ideally a worker, because he was to write about the 'real' world of the ordinary New Zealander; it was therefore advisable to write in a straightforward prosaic style without poetic encumbrances and with a minimum use of metaphors (Perry, 1987). As a result, much writing of the period from 1930 through to 1960 is very matter-of-fact and realistic (if at times bleakly so). Robert Chapman (1953) explains that such stylistic choice is the result of each author having to be
"his own sociologist" (Chapman, 1953, p. 30) which implies that writing in the social realist mode, even of fiction, comes close to establishing scholarly fact.

The ultimate purpose of all scrutinising and dissecting in Landfall appears to have been to educate the New Zealand public – help them to reach a higher level of insight – and to thus diminish the gap between the writer's extreme awareness of social processes and the public's 'dim-wittedness'. The public's slow advancement would naturally begin with education; rather than addressing the ordinary New Zealander himself, Landfall chooses to address the already educated (Geraets, 2003). We can think of Landfall's readers as mediators between the public and the humanist project of Landfall which has been pronounced succinctly:

In different ways, with various equipment, [Landfall's] contributors are all in search of the excellence of truth. As victims of a New Zealand education, many of them (including the editor) are handicapped if not crippled in their search. [...] Every one of the arts in New Zealand, like New Zealand life generally, suffers because of the inadequacy of New Zealand schooling. Those for whom the arts are life itself, with those who seek the excellence of truth in other fields, must know that the cause of the university is their own cause. (Notes, Landfall, 1959, p. 207)

Brasch's idealism cannot be overlooked in these comments. The 'university's cause' is educating the people; the artist's cause is the same. The artist as (poet-legislator-) educator is necessarily elevated above the level of those whom he educates. In this sense, not only did Landfall seek to bring about change in its nationalist aspirations; it did so as one in a superior position. This superiority was natural and necessary, for, as Brasch along with the Leavises believed, nothing much in the form of healthy progress can be expected to be generated by the public – the masses – themselves (Inglis & Hughson, 2003).

Because the Listener was not primarily concerned with arts and letters, discussion of both in its pages had to take a different course; within the restrictions set by the NZBS the discussion was, however, still led with the same enthusiasm that Landfall displayed (between 1949 and 1960, at least sixteen editorials address the matter of writers and books in New Zealand). Altogether it appears that where Landfall especially focuses on
critical and perhaps even iconoclastic discussion of current events, the Listener deliberately avoids deeper engagement. By this I mean that not many attempts at deconstructing New Zealand myths can be found in its pages. To the contrary, the Listener in some ways even contributed to the perpetuation of everyday myths and prejudices.

One such myth is that of how unrewarding it can be to be a writer. According to editorial opinion, writers are in most cases obscure persons who might become public figures long after they are gone but mostly disappear into oblivion (Editorial, Listener, May 19, 1950). The writer thus remains unrecognised for the most part in his contribution to society. This 'lot' must be hard to accept for some writers since writing is an "engrossing activity" (Editorial, Listener, Mar 22, 1951) that requires one's all. Sadly the situation often is that

Unless the artist is able to face loneliness and neglect, he is clearly unequal to the struggle before him. [...] Artists are valuable members of any community; but many aspirants are rejected in the rather cruel process that leads to occasional achievement. [...] Recognition is often withheld for many years, perhaps a lifetime; yet the true writer does not cease to write, or the artist to paint. (Editorial, Listener, Mar. 18, 1955)

Where for Landfall the writer was outside the 'masses' through his natural in-born leadership qualities, Holcroft describes the writer as someone distinguished from the crowd through his heroic qualities. 'Unless the artist is able to face loneliness and neglect, he is clearly unequal to the struggle before him' – this clearly points to the writer's outstanding endurance and innate strength.

Outside the mainstream society but for reasons of his excellence, the writer is a 'valuable member of the community' who has a "bright vision" (Editorial, Listener, May 25, 1951) of the future, especially so when he is still young. It follows that in order to develop this skill of vision, the writer demands "freedom of thought and action which leaves [him] restless under external discipline" (ibid.). What the writer needs is his personal degree of freedom, and only he knows what this means. Provided that he has freedom, the writer sets to work doing "some hard thinking and good writing"
They must write of what they know, whether it be the streets of Wellington or a timber settlement in the north. The bustling years of expansion through which we are now passing will be reflected in writing, though possibly not until the phase is ended; and it will be found that the best novels are those rooted in human situations. (Editorial, *Listener*, Feb. 18, 1955)

'Writing of what they know' means writing about New Zealand as they find it which circumscribes the social realist project. Social realism does not distinguish between subject matters so long as the scenes described do not take the reader beyond the 'streets' or 'timbermills' – the working-class everyday life. Holcroft's advocacy of social realism is expressed quite strongly when he declares that writing that is not in the social realist mode is flawed because it naturally lacks the "classic virtues of restraint and balance" (Editorial, *Listener*, Jan. 13, 1950).

Holcroft's personal understanding of the intersection between writing and New Zealand society exhibits all these convictions that are implicit in his editorials. For him, furthermore, the writer must explore New Zealand as the public understood it, including all the "silence[s] and strangeness" (Williams, 1998, p. 711) that the landscape posed to the spectator. 'New Zealand' is already there in everyone's everyday lives; the artist, philosopher and writer, setting out from the British tradition, must identify and spell out the 'New Zealand of the mind' for everyone (Williams, 1998).

The writer is therefore less a herald of progress than an interpreter, someone of superior discernment rather than erudition. He translates what is already there into a more accessible language; this is why he truly must be of the people, a native. If he is a visionary, then because he sheds light into the darkness that surrounds New Zealanders at present and not because he leads the way into the as yet dark future.

Contrast this with *Landfall*: the role of the writer there is to present an image of people's lives and their future potential to them. Here, only the writer can mirror people's reality as it really is; once people's awareness has been enhanced through education, progress is not far off. Where the *Listener* takes New Zealanders as vessels of New Zealandness, *Landfall* is still...
labouring to fill the very same into the people. The former believes in an organic New Zealand culture as already existing, the latter is still waiting for it to evolve.

Both Brasch and Holcroft perceived their country as in need of some 'nation-building', to borrow Brian Easton's term (Easton, 2001). *Landfall* under Brasch saw itself as an active contributor to this project in that it aimed to add what was not there yet. This was how *Landfall* engaged in literary nationalism. The *Listener*, in contrast, simply hoped to be a publishing venue for New Zealand artists who already 'knew about' New Zealand. All it needed was to publicise their 'New Zealand of the mind'.

In both views of the social function of literature New Zealand's culture was at the same time organic and created. This is an inherent paradox in British culturalist thought, the tradition that the Leavises (both F.R. and his wife Q. D.) came from. Literature was an organic product of New Zealand's culture for *Landfall* and the *Listener* in that it originated from the much longer British tradition and in relation to the land and its indigenous people (Williams, 1998). The recourse to the British tradition, whilst inherently clashing with egalitarianism, also entailed the creative part of the cultural project according to which the writer is a gifted individual who adds something to his local culture; this is where literary culture becomes 'created'.

The conflict between organic and created is more obvious in the *Listener* where the writer is alternately a 'poor bugger' in a "country with a weak literary tradition" (Editorial, *Listener*, Jan. 13, 1950) or someone facing 'loneliness and neglect' on his road to posthumous glory. In terms of an organic literary culture, *Landfall* under Brasch embraced the British tradition (but not modernism). As far as an indigenous New Zealand literature is concerned, *Landfall* confidently leant towards the culture-as-a-construct position.

As to the conditions under which writing prospers: those do not have to consist of daily strife and hardship, which is assumed when saying that the literary scene during Fifties was quieter than in previous decades because writers' and readers' bellies were full. If, however, social realism is held to be the pinnacle of development in writing, then and only then does
this statement come true. Social realism reveres the worker and his daily struggle; it demands of the writer to have a political purpose in writing, to educate rather than merely entertain. Modernist writing such as Virginia Woolf's or James Joyce's or even Katherine Mansfield's, discarded under many negative allegations during the Fifties, also aims to enlighten the reader but rather by leading him inward. The inner life is where modernism locates everyone's struggle.

The rootedness of the social realist tradition in New Zealand literature meant for the writer that he had to be a chronicler more than an artist. As a result, the perimeters as to what could be written about were quite narrow. The next chapter will illustrate some of these limitations. I will introduce three short stories written in the social realist mode. Two of the short stories, Frank Sargeson's *The Making of a New Zealander* and A.P. Gaskell's *All Part of the Game* are still lauded as outstanding achievements of New Zealand writing. The third short story by Maurice Shadbolt, *Annual Holiday*, has been chosen because it addresses the divergence between the writer and the ordinary New Zealander which is ultimately what we have set out to understand.

### 1.2. Three New Zealand Short Stories

As Kai Jensen (1996) shows, Frank Sargeson found his authorial New Zealand voice in direct relation to the publication of *Tomorrow*. *Tomorrow*, continuing what the *Phoenix* had begun, embodied a humanist Marxism which was brought to it by its editor, H. Winston Rhodes (Barrowman, 1991). To left-wing writers and thinkers like Rhodes and Denis Glover and A.R.D. Fairburn who were among the most ardent contributors to *Tomorrow*, the life of the 'ordinary man' needed exploration and explanation. It was the encapsulation of this idea in one magazine that stimulated Sargeson to write about the 'ordinary man' in that man's voice (Jensen, 1996).

The result of his bold move to adopt the New Zealand vernacular for his writing is part of New Zealand literary history. In the established
opinion, his work "more than that of any other writer [...] signifies New Zealandness in our literature" (Wevers, 1998, p. 263). *The Making of a New Zealander* (Sargeson, 1964), first published in 1939, was awarded the first equal prize in the short story section of the Centennial Literary Competition in 1940 (where Monte Holcroft won the essay prize with *A Deepening Stream*) and is also included in anthologies of New Zealand short stories such as Dan Davin's *New Zealand Short Stories* (Davin, 1953).

1.2.1. Frank Sargeson: *The Making of a New Zealander* (1939)

In *The Making of a New Zealander*, Sargeson addresses the vital question of the essence of being a New Zealander. The Dalmatian farmer Nick, new to the country, struggles to become a New Zealander and asserts that he actually is one now. But living like a New Zealander – Nick and his close friend own a vineyard – does not make a New Zealander. The narrator therefore responds:

No [you are not a New Zealander, A.B.], I said, but your children will be.
I have no children and I will never marry, Nick said.
No? I said, then your cobber will.
He will never marry either, Nick said.
Why? I said, there are plenty of Dalmatian girls out here. I bet you could get New Zealand girls too.
But Nick only said no no no no no. (Sargeson, 1964, p. 115)

Nick does not wish to get married because he is a Communist, and he is self-conscious about it. The reader also instantly wonders about the nature of his relationship to his close friend. That Frank Sargeson himself was homosexual is implicit in most of his stories (Jensen, 1996). Perhaps this is why Nick is not trying to find a wife. The dialogue about marriage leads to the story's climax:

Yes, I am a Communist, Nick said. But what is the good of that? I am born too soon, eh? What do you think?
Maybe, I said.
You too, Nick said. You think that you and me are born too soon? What do you think?
He said it over and over, and I couldn't look him in the face. It had too much of that sadness... I mightn't have put it the way Nick had, I mightn't have said I was born too soon, but Nick knew what he was talking about. Nick and I were sitting on the hillside and Nick was saying he was a New Zealander, but he knew he wasn't a New Zealander. And he knew he wasn't Dalmatian anymore.

He knew he wasn't anything anymore. (ibid., p. 116)

Nick is a dislocated individual, and in that respect he is maybe not very different from other New Zealand men. The underlying assumption here is that the same environmental and social conditions produce the same character in a New Zealand man. He is thus defined through his daily struggles and achievements.

That evening, as the narrator returns to the farm where he is working after his chat to Nick he is told to leave and find work elsewhere. He leaves straight away. At the end of the story, he finds himself in precisely the same positions as Nick, a recent immigrant to New Zealand, finds himself in:

I wasn't sorry. I stood on the road and wondered if I'd go up to Nick's place, but instead I walked into town, and for a good few days I never left off drinking.

I wanted to get Nick out of my mind. He knew what he was talking about, but maybe it's best for a man to hang on. (ibid., pp. 116-117)

Bill Pearson (1964) comments on this story that the "tender groping adaptation" that Nick undergoes is also the narrator's own situation and "that of all New Zealanders, not yet grown into their time and place" (Pearson, 1964, p. 13). The impression that New Zealanders are "merely camping on these islands" (We Here Highly Resolve, Listener, 5. Jan. 1951) persisted into the Fifties but, as I have argued above, is less commented on as the decade progresses.

Most of Sargeson's characters are 'displaced' persons like Nick and the narrator himself who finds himself dismissed from work on a whim and is consequently left to stray through the city all by himself. It is 'under-dogs' like Nick who populate New Zealand to the most part; it is displaced and disillusioned 'men alone', 'hanging in', 'sticking it out' who make New Zealand. But shared experience alone does not make a New Zealander. Paradoxically, being born in New Zealand does. Therefore, Nick's children would be New Zealanders, whereas he has no hope of ever being one. As
Eric Hobsbawm (1990) states, "nationalism after 1919 was separatist rather than unifying" (p. 139); although New Zealand settler nationalism was more unifying in character, Nick might have brought this attitude with him and thus caused his own exclusion from becoming a 'true-blue' New Zealander.

'Being born too soon' points to the imminent occurrence of significant events. Sargeson perhaps saw New Zealand emerging as a mature nation. Pearson (1964) supports this idea; he asserts that Sargeson saw ever more 'alive' persons like himself around him. Being 'alive', however, came at the cost of gaining insight into one's loneliness and rootlessness. 'Dead' people, in contrast, were perennially unaware and careless; they "could not conceive of the abandonment of man in the cold desert of space, [they] do not recognise their own or other's needs for affection and loyalty" (Pearson, 1964, p. 16). A.P. Gaskell in All Part of the Game (Gaskell, 1950) labours with the same distinction between 'dead' and 'alive' people, between those who care and those who do not. His story highlights the struggle of being 'alive'.

1.2.2. A.P. Gaskell: All Part of the Game (1950)

A.P. Gaskell has been listed among the 'Sons' of Frank Sargeson" (Wevers, 1998, p. 270), a group of writers who, because Sargeson's plain style was so appealing to many, "wrote about New Zealand in his terms" (ibid.). Like most short stories written in the social realist mode, Gaskell's stories also "contained a considerable body of social comment" (Oliver, 1992, p. 554). All Part of the Game has received special recognition through its inclusion in Brasch's first selection of writing from Landfall, Landfall Country (Brasch, 1962).

All Part of the Game is written in just as plain and matter-of-fact a style as The Making of a New Zealander, in this story, however, the point of view is that of a child, a boy, Gordon. From the outset, the stylistic possibilities are therefore limited: a boy can only narrate the way a boy thinks, without encumbrances such as metaphors, complex interpretations and explanations, and without too much criticism of the world, for children lack the experience to delve far beneath the surface. They consequently take
events and people at face value. The child's point of view is persistent in New Zealand writing for all these and other characteristics (Wevers, 1998).

Gordon, who lives in New Plymouth, arrives at his aunt's house in Sockburn to spend the summer there like he usually does. His aunt and uncle own racing stables and Gordon likes helping with the horses. The family – 'auntie', uncle, Mary, the young and pretty daughter, and her older brother Cliff – employ a jockey, Norman, who is living-in. Norman's character as a 'good guy' is established early on in the story. He is a sensitive young man who has romantic feelings for Mary which she reciprocates. But, being a jockey, he is very small, about which Gordon comments:

You couldn't help liking him, though sometimes it seemed funny for him to be acting like a grown man when he was so small. (ibid., p. 24)

His smallness is a sore point for Norman. He gets quite upset when, in an argument, his size is used against him. Gaskell here intimates that Norman has struggled in life only recently:

'But Mum, you must remember he's not right yet. Just when he's getting along nicely you have to go and upset him again.'
'I go and upset him. I like that. If he's so damned thin-skinned he can't take a bit of a joke he deserves to be upset. What he needs is a good hard kick on the backside to wake him up a bit.'
'Oh don't be so childish. He's not a little boy. You can't smack him to make him better.' (ibid., p. 25)

Mary's mother is not inclined to understand Norman's predicament, partly because she does not approve of him as an eligible partner for Mary, partly because she is a harsh woman in general. For her, Norman's main function in the family is to win the upcoming races for them. Gordon nonetheless hopes that Norman will be accepted as part of the family if he can win the races; Mary's behaviour supports this assumption.

When Norman fails to win the decisive race, everything falls to pieces. The prize money has been much needed, and it is a bitter shock for everyone when Norman loses his stirrups and comes fourth. In direct consequence, Mary changes her mind about him:
'He wants me to go to the dance with him,' she said. 'He's been pesterig the life out of me. He's drunk too, and you can smell it a mile off.'

'Are you going?' asked auntie.

'Not with him like that. Not on your life. I think it's a damned insult him coming like that and expecting me to go with him. I thought he was a decent sort of chap.'

'[...]'

'I thought I heard you a couple of days ago saying you'd go,' said auntie.

'I said I'd go if he won. I didn't say I'd go if he lost. I wouldn't have minded so much, but for him to come here stinking like that, and he's all untidy, it's a damned insult.' (ibid., p. 38)

In the end, Mary goes to the dance with her brother Cliff who, in a fit of anger or plain viciousness, tells Norman that Mary has lost all interest in him because she only dates jockeys who win. He adds that "Mary only likes big jokers" (ibid., p. 39) which, as Cliff proudly asserts, affected Norman considerably.

In the morning, before Gordon and Cliff get up, they hear someone locking them into their sleep-out. In an attempt to find out why everyone is behaving so peculiar all of a sudden, Gordon and Cliff climb out of the window. They see Norman hanging on a rope in the barn and climb back into their sleep-out. Cliff cries but Gordon remains silent; he is frightened.

Gordon is sent home on the next boat leaving from Lyttelton Harbour. Disillusioned, the narrator, alias Gordon, concludes the story:

"But it wasn't until the boat had pulled out and I was in my bunk, feeling it press up underneath my back and sink away again that I started to cry. I liked Norman, and it seemed so awfully sad to think that someone always had to be the loser." (ibid., p. 41)

Does Gordon, with these final comments, tell us how hard life could be for a man in New Zealand? How pressured for success men were?

This story as well as Frank Sargeson's discussed above exemplifies one of the major themes in New Zealand writing of the Fifties: the 'man alone' theme. Frank Sargeson's narrator in The Making of a New Zealander as well as Gordon are ultimately isolated individuals. Their deepest emotions they experience in solitude (Gordon); grave insights into the meaning of life come to them in solitude (narrator in Sargeson's story);
struggles have to be overcome in solitude (Norman); ultimately, every man stands alone.

The 'man alone' theme had been established by John Mulgan and his novel of the same title, published in 1939 in Britain. In 1949, the New Zealand Literary Fund decided to subsidise a re-print of Mulgan's novel which made it widely available (Jones, 1998). Man Alone tells the story of a soldier returned from the trenches who, through an accidental killing of his love interest's husband, is forced into the wilderness where he fights for survival all by himself. He eventually leaves the country to fight in the Spanish civil war.

The 'man alone' theme is ambiguous. On the one hand, it can be understood as praise of masculine virtues such as independence, energy, endurance, straight-forwardness (Tosh, 1998); this reading of Man Alone puts men into a hostile environment which perpetually poses threats to their survival (both physical as well as emotional). On the other hand and probably closer to Mulgan's authorial intention, the novel can be taken to proclaim that men (or anyone for that matter) precisely because of their perpetual struggle against 'enemy forces' cannot exist in isolation from their fellow-beings. The second perspective contains a social component that the 'classic' 'man alone' theme lacks.

1.2.3. Maurice Shadbolt: Annual Holiday (1955)

Being alone appears to be a condition of a man's life even when he is in company. Maurice Shadbolt's short story Annual Holiday, published in the Listener in 1955 (10. June), shows how three men, the narrator himself, 'Shorty' and 'Eddie' spend weeks at a time on a fish trawler without surrendering their solitude. This is maintained in obscure ways, for example by reading by oneself rather than conversing or, when engaged in conversation, by keeping one's thoughts mostly to oneself. This then results in long silences:

Eddie was a strange young man, only recently married, and much addicted to reading. [...] After tea when we had stacked the dishes away for the morning clean-up, Eddie settled himself on a bunk among a pile of paper-backed novels and
luridly covered pulp-magazines while Shorty and I sat facing each other across the small cabin table. Eddie rarely took an interest in what we talked about; probably it puzzled him, for our conversations consisted for the most part of long silences which were usually only ended by one of us probing tentatively into the other's thoughts. (Shadbolt, 1955, p. 8)

Shorty whose boat the three men are fishing on is a simple man who likes simple things. He enjoys looking out onto the sea, and "it was the simplicity of the scene that always attracted Shorty" (Shadbolt, 1955, p. 8). Looking out over a city would not be as enjoyable for him because it would be "too complex a thing" (ibid.). The narrator, in contrast, just finishing his university studies, comes from the city. Fishing with Shorty has been his annual holiday job since the last year of High School.

Shorty being a fisherman and the narrator a university student in the city has never kept them apart. Summer after summer the two men had enjoyed each other's company, smoking and being silent together. But this year is the narrator's last years at university, and he has plans to go to England. Talking about these plans for going overseas, both men realise that they are very different after all:

Think you'll like England?
I don't know, I said. I just want to have a look around.
What for? There's plenty to see here.
I suppose so, I replied carefully, for Shorty was quick to see through any dodging of the question. But I think you get a clearer view of your own country once you get away from it.
What for? He was clearly puzzled. Isn't it good enough to see your country from the inside and know it that way? There's no need to go running round the place trying to get different angles on it.
Oh, I don't know, I replied. I was not at all sure I could explain it to myself, let alone Shorty. (ibid.)

The narrator has no clear expectations of what to do in England or with his life in general. He says he will "let the idea come as I go along" (ibid.). Shorty finds all this quite hard to understand because for many years the narrator's future had been clearly defined. The inability to understand each other creates a barrier between the two men, "something perhaps indefinable, but there just the same" (ibid.). Sharing long silences together
now becomes slightly oppressive; with the 'barrier of not understanding' between them, it is harder to break the silence and talk. In the end, the narrator catches a lift back into town whilst Shorty waves him good-bye from his boat for a long time.

Shadbolt here addresses the divergence between two men with entirely different outlooks onto the world, the awareness of which, as it dawns upon the men, destroys their social relations. The very question of 'What would you go away for?' sets them apart instantly. It asks for the utility of going overseas and thus demonstrates that it sees no inherent value in the act. But travelling for many possesses only a value in itself, and not as a means to a specific end. W.H. Oliver (2002) encountered the same problem of insurmountable differences of opinion whenever he was asked 'Why study history?' He concluded that "attempts at utilitarian answers only lead to the same questions all over again" (p. 111). The somewhat more abstract end in both cases, travelling as well as studying history, is to widen one's horizon and gain experience and hence knowledge but someone who does not understand this by himself might not be able to relate to these ideas even when explained.

Shadbolt shows in Annual Holiday how a difference in outlook can create a barrier between two friends. Is it the difference as such that has created the barrier? Or is it the specific contents of how the narrator chooses to differ from Shorty? A variety of themes comes to mind – New Zealanders' culture-consciousness in comparison with Britain, the working class's self-consciousness as against the educated minority – but Shadbolt's precise meaning remains elusive.

But we can be certain about the literary character of Shorty, an ordinary New Zealand fisherman. Shorty works in an Auckland wool-store in between fishing, which is where the narrator first met him. He is a quiet character, "an unobtrusive little middle-aged man who sat apart from everyone at smoko and who didn't take part in the jokes and barracking of the other wool workers" (Shadbolt, 1955, p. 8). He is a bachelor with rooms not far from the harbour but usually lives on board his launch. In contrast to the narrator who feels the need to go overseas for more clarity, Shorty knows all he needs to know and is content.
Both Shorty and the narrator, in their own ways, are 'men alone'. None of them has a family to support; both of them have life's challenge ahead of them but are not burdened by it. Shadbolt's 'men alone' are much more positive than Sargeson's or Gaskell's who both draw a bleak picture of men's lives in New Zealand. In this respect, Monte Holcroft (1969) comments about Sargeson's fiction:

[…] I did not feel at home with his characters, or with the grey and flat landscapes against which he produced them. In his private vision of the New Zealander he was preoccupied with his essential loneliness and his struggle against Puritanism. Yet I could not believe that he saw his countrymen in the round: they were incomplete or lamed; a larger and richer humanity remained undiscovered outside them. (Holcroft, 1969, p. 112)

Indeed, it was widely believed that Sargeson's 'men alone' were not at all representative of New Zealand. In a letter printed in *Landfall* on the occasion of Frank Sargeson's 50th birthday, for example, it says: "We didn't imagine that what you said, or the way you said it, presented a complete picture of this country or described it in the only way possible" (A Letter to Frank Sargeson, *Landfall*, 1953, p. 5).

For many, then, Sargeson's implicit searching for goodness and kindness in men's hearts has remained hidden in his stories (Pearson, 1964, pp. 15-17). Instead, Sargeson's work was taken literally, not as an expression only of his private vision, and consequently his construction of half or 'incomplete' characters was criticised. The problem with the social realist tradition is, of course, that it inadvertently obscures the fictive creation of reality.

Shadbolt, in contrast to Sargeson, has created 'round men': the university-educated narrator who works in a wool-store before and then as a fisherman over the summer; Shorty who loves the simplicity of the sea but works in Auckland as well, who likes his silence but is no less emotional than anyone else; and Eddie, the book-worm, who has recently married and wishes to buy a nicer house which is why he spends weeks away fishing with Shorty. These three types of men break stereotypes, both as regards the intellectual and the ordinary New Zealander.
Some of these stereotypes we have already examined but not much has been said about the New Zealand writer as yet; suffice it to preface that there is no such thing as the ideal or typical New Zealand writer. Writers, despite their many common characteristics, are as diverse a group of people as any other. We do know that referring to them all under the same heading is an auxiliary abstraction but sometimes we tend to forget about this very fact. This is when myth-making begins.
2. NEW ZEALAND WRITERS

Among the many possible distinctions between different groups of New Zealand writers, one is of particular interest for the present study: the distinction between literary nationalists and 'normal' writers. This distinction mostly coincides with the generational differentiation between old and young writers.

In general, young writers have two possible ways of winning recognition and acclaim in literary circles: as followers of the older tradition or as founders of new literary movements (which do not necessarily have to be iconoclastic). In many ways, the younger writers during the Fifties followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. In terms of literary accomplishments, nothing much changed therefore.

This section delineates the heterogeneity of New Zealand writers through the focus on commentaries on writers' conferences held during the Fifties and statements writers made about their own lives.

2.1. Writers in Communion

The 1951 Writers' Conference was held in Christchurch (May 8-11). Most New Zealand writers attended the conference which gave rise to one observer commenting that, because everyone came, the few absentees "took on a prominence that their presence could hardly have exceeded" ("Augustus", 1951). Whilst one writer held that "there must be as many views of the Conference as there were individualists attending it" (Chapman in Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 224), most commentators observed a generational rift between young and old writers.

The main point of divergence between the generations was appreciation of each other's work. The young writers had as a sum read the older writers' work and also accorded them "respect and gratitude" ("Augustus", 1951). In contrast, not only had older writers often not familiarised themselves with the work of younger writers, they in fact were quite "frank in their disapproval of work of the younger generation" (Oliver,
Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 223). Upon this becoming evident, the most offended young writers formed a 'break-away group' which felt that the New Zealand Literary Fund upon whose support all writers depended and which was chaired by older writers, "could not be other than insensitive to the merits of the younger writer, or, for that matter, to any new creative directions" (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 223).

"The forces labelled young" (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 221) were, however, not unanimous on many other matters apart from their common struggle against the establishment. The young prose writers at least agreed on one theme, "the formative, constricting and distorting effect of the mores and values of New Zealand Puritanism on our human scene" (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 226). In elaboration of this theme, Chapman relates much of what he will later (in 'Fiction and the Social Pattern') discuss at greater length.

This leads to the conclusion that criticism of New Zealand society such as expressed by Robert Chapman and Bill Pearson has been shared by younger prose writers but not by younger poets, journalists, essayists or critics. Bearing in mind that New Zealand's population reached the 2 million mark in 1952 and that writers anywhere are a small proportion of society, the group of young prose writers in 1951 must have been quite small indeed. In the words of one scholar, these young novelists expressed the "frustrations of a handful of sensitive, intellectually ambitious individuals about the threat posed by conformity" (Perry, 1987, p. 173); conformity in this sense refers to the mainstream as well as the literary culture's own norms. The 'handful' of young prose writers' social criticism did, as we know, have a tremendous and lasting impact; this situation will be interpreted at greater length in this study's conclusion (Part III).

Lawrence Jones (1998) refers to the novelists between 1935 and 1964 as 'provincial writers' and the period as 'provincial period'. According to Allen Tate (1959), the provincial attitude describes the rejection of the past in consequence of which it is virtually "locked in the present" (Tate, 1959, p. 287). New Zealand's provincial writers, as became evident in the 1951 Writers' Conference, only partly rejected the past which I hold is what the formula 'Puritanism' often stands for. For it was only the young novelists
who attributed most of society's wrongs to New Zealanders innate Puritanism. This served as an explanation (or excuse) for why these young writers decided to be 'locked in the present' – as a necessary new movement.

By implication, to the young writers the older writers seemed to be 'locked' in the previous century and particularly the 1830s. Bill Pearson says as much in an interview with Alex Calder (1997); the 'older' writer Frank Sargeson (1954) himself and, thirdly, Lawrence Jones (1998) confirm that there was indeed a specific connection between the 1830s and New Zealand in the Fifties in terms of literary production. And the younger writers, despite their inclination to not resort to English history but write genuine New Zealand literature, also inadvertently turned to modes of writing originating in that time.

Lawrence Jones (1998) holds that the New Zealand novel during the provincial period had one great progenitor whose style novelists realised in their own work – George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, a traditional realist novel published in 1872 whose subject matter is the struggle and protest against English Puritanism. There are indeed a number of similarities between the New Zealand novel in the Fifties and this late Victorian novel: (1) depiction of society through literary characters; (2) the author's situation as isolated individual; (3) the genre in relation to the literary mainstream.

*Middlemarch* tells the story of "growth, use and inevitable failure and frustration of all human energy" (Byatt, 2000 [1980], p. vi). The 'common folk' in the novel are ambitious (sometimes in a positive sense) and greedy and, unaware of the futility of all their endeavours, honestly strive towards their small share of happiness. Antonia Byatt (2000 [1980]) says about Eliot's characters in *Middlemarch*:

[... ] her people *think*: they worry an idea, they are, within their limits, responsive to politics and art and philosophy and history. (p. vi)

These thoughts consequently become actors in the novel just as the human actors themselves are which implies a deeply developed dedication to reflection both on the author's as well as the novel's characters' side. Dorothea, the main protagonist, hungers to learn, to refine her intellectual capacities, and strives towards this end, knowingly incurring her own
emotional and spiritual impoverishment. She marries the older man who promotes her learning and thus sacrifices her hopes of happiness and passionate requited love with young Ladislav.

In her subject matter as well as stylistic execution – combining intellect and passion in her writing – Eliot starkly deviated from Leavis' 'Great Tradition' of the English novel (Byatt, 2000 [1980]). Her realism was traditional without utilising any of historical templates of English literature. Such writing openly challenged and thus rebelled against the literary establishment.

Taking this into consideration we can assume that, in resorting to a comparison with George Eliot's Middlemarch, New Zealand novelists sought to find an expression for the situation they saw themselves faced with. Frank Sargeson's (1954) comments shed more light onto the similarities:

George Eliot discovered that she was unable to fit into the social pattern which prevailed in her day, and although she eventually discovered her true vocation as an artist, and achieved a tremendous success, it is extremely likely that she was impelled to her persistent and patient examination of society, and the human relations which it implies, by the unhappiness and dissatisfaction, which she experienced in the first thirty or so years of her life [...] (Sargeson, 1954, p. 23)

Sargeson continues to explain that "given a certain kind of society, you may reasonably expect a certain kind of novelist" and that Eliot's novels are the way they are because they are "closely connected with her having been a considerably isolated figure in mid-Victorian society" (Sargeson, 1954, pp. 24-25).

George Eliot was in many ways a prime example of the writer as an outsider of society herself. Most unconventionally, she lived as an unmarried woman with her lover and suffered under the alienation that had to follow in an age where 'respectability' was all. For someone sympathetic with her cause, Puritanism, so often mistaken as Victorianism in short, would be wholly to blame for her hardships. This parallel has been drawn by some New Zealand writers – the younger novelists.

I have argued before that the socialist realist mode was the prevalent one throughout between at least 1940 and 1960. Now, with a 'break-away
group' of young prose writers at the 1951 Writers' Conference, it appears as if the dominance of social realist writing had been maintained per force, i.e. marginalisation of other modes of writing. The writers' own comparison with George Eliot supports this assumption.

Meanwhile the older writers and especially prose writers were not a homogenous group either but, at least as regards the 1951 Writers' Conference, did not deplore the "formative, constricting and distorting effect of the mores and values of Puritanism" (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 226) in New Zealand. And on a subsequent Writers' Conference (in 1959, Wellington) they were the only age group present.

Indeed, as Ian Cross (1959) mused about the "noticeable absence of younger writers", it seemed likely that the older writers' growth was "at the expense of the young" (Cross, 1959, p. 310). Attended mostly by established writers and women writers who, despite being a "thumping majority" displayed the "solidarity of an oppressed minority" (ibid.), neither poetry nor novels were discussed in any depth. Self-consciousness and lack of self-esteem as regards being a writer are suggested as reasons for this:

There was the same attitude toward writing as a fit subject for discussion that I'd expect a League of Mothers to hold toward sex. When O.E. Middleton announced himself as 'a dedicated writer' the body of the conference flinched as though it had been jabbed with a pin; the next day the same body flinched again, this time because James Baxter suggested that writing was a vocation. (Cross, 1959, p. 308)

Diverting attention away from those older concerns about what it meant to be a writer served two purposes. On the one hand, it showed the writers' preference to "avoid issues and [for] liking others to keep us happy" (Cross, 1959, p. 309); on the other hand and more importantly, however, not allowing space for discussion of the writers' place in society and related matters limited young writers' chances to feel at home among their peers.

Thus the 1959 Writers' Conference, just as its 1951 predecessor, told the tale of the literary establishment hindering the newcomers' progress. As a result, most young novelists left New Zealand (Cross, 1959). Women in particular suffered under the established writers' tactics of exclusion. As Kai Jensen (1996) shows, women's rate of publication underwent a marked
decline between 1930 and 1960, not because there were no women inspired to write in New Zealand but because the literary establishment, mostly male, did not let them flourish. James Baxter gives succinct expression to the young writer’s struggle in a letter to *Landfall*:

No one who has studied *Landfall* reviews over the past ten years would be so naïve as to expect in your pages a considerate or gentle treatment of a first novel by a New Zealand novelist. Ungenerosity is the norm. [...] How right it is, too, that a special severity should be extended in the case of a first novel by a woman! I was deeply delighted by the quiet surgical butchery which one of your reviewers recently performed on *The Race*, by Ruth France. A genuine hysterectomy. (Letter to *Landfall*, 1959, p. 387)

Many of New Zealand’s most acclaimed writers before 1930 had been women – Katherine Mansfield, Jane Mander and Ursula Bethell for example – but the advent of social realism in New Zealand signified a complete turn: the *Phoenix* generation writers "sought to produce work that might be relevant to ordinary New Zealanders – by whom they often meant the hardbitten Kiwi bloke" (Jensen, 1996, p. 43). The previous literature, "flowery, sentimental, socially naïve" (ibid., p. 42) as it was thought to be, and its authors, did not fit the changed political climate.

Because the overall number of writers was so small, agreed-upon literary standards were easily enforced. Whilst smallness was a safeguard against damage to different groups’ standing in literary circles, literary criticism was severely affected by it. More often than not, criticism was no more than "hollow flatteries" (Letters, *Listener*, Feb. 9, 1951) rather than an insightful critique of the work from which the author might subsequently profit. Holcroft explained that "it is not easy to be outspoken in a small community, for critics often know the people upon whom they are passing judgement" (Editorial, *Listener*, Jan. 6, 1950).

If, then, critics were in fact quite outspoken especially against a woman writer’s first novel, this suggests a grave lack of civility on the side of the critic. There was a misogynist streak in New Zealand literature at the time (Jensen, 1996); Ian Cross (1959) for example observed "a slight tendency on the part of some men to resent her [women writers’, A.B.] presence at the conference" (p. 310). Hostility towards women writers was
wholly unnecessary since women were marginalised in that profession anyway.

I will continue this discussion in the next chapter that specifically examines writers' lifestyles and attitudes towards being a writer. The already heterogeneous field of New Zealand writers will become even more heterogeneous; relating the findings to the overall question of why some writers saw themselves as alienated and marginalised individuals will help to reduce the number of pertinent themes that will have emerged.

2.2. Writers' Lives

In 1960, *Landfall* conducted a survey about the lives of New Zealand writers (Brasch, 1960). One of the motivations for the survey was the question how, in face of the fact that writing 'does not pay', there were so many good writers in New Zealand. How did they live? How much time did they have for writing, and was it continuous or uninterrupted? Did they feel the need to travel in order to be stimulated to write? Did they work in other jobs despite writing? Did this hinder their progress as writers? Questions to these ends were answered by fifteen writers 4.

The answers as to how many hours writers worked varied between four or five a day, ten a week or 'at least' twenty to thirty hours a week. Interruptions were many as hours of staring at empty pages were included in most authors' count, so whatever the time truly allotted to writing was any attempt at quantification must be satisfied with estimates. Ruth Dallas expresses this succinctly:

'It's not easy to say when a writer is working, and when he is not working; he might be working mentally, when he is apparently absorbed in manual work; and who can say what he might or might not be capable of, if his energies were not spent in other ways? But I find four hours at my desk, for reading, writing and typing, sufficient, at present. (Brasch, 1960, p. 47)

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Ruth Dallas here implies that a writer's 'energies' might be 'spent in other ways' than writing, i.e. work. Indeed, none of the fifteen writers surveyed managed to live on writing alone. Everyone had other jobs, even those who found a publisher for all their writing (e.g. Ruth France), in broadcasting, journalism, as university lecturer, teacher or unskilled worker of any kind. Money was always short, hence the necessary work in other paying jobs. But money, in the words of James K. Baxter, is a problematic thing:

It distracts the mind from any sustained meditation. If one has it one thinks about it. If one has not got it, one thinks about getting it. I dislike money intensely. [...] I have had nearly thirty jobs in the past fifteen years: all of them kept me alive and tended to prevent me from writing. (Brasch, 1960, p. 42)

R.A.K. Mason also admitted that his two jobs (as landscape gardener and Trade Union officer) have kept him "too busy to leave any spare energy for writing" (Brasch, 1960, p. 59); E.H. McCormick found it "impossible to do much serious writing while holding another job, whatever the nature" (ibid., p. 62); Bill Pearson, while working at the University of Auckland, had also had no time for writing at all during lecture time.

Only O.E. Middleton insisted that working alongside writing had only been a wholly profitable experience; similarly Kendrick Smithyman, working as a teacher from 'nine to three' felt he had no need to complain. Ian Cross, writing and working as a journalist, was happy with his position as well. He felt himself as part of a longer tradition that included notables such as Dickens, Hemingway and Defoe, and was therefore "not too unhappy" (ibid., p. 45) about the patchwork-structure of his occupational life.

But work was not the only activity that interfered with writing. Maurice Duggan, as mentioned above, had feelings of guilt towards his family about the time spent on writing. Writing, he held, was a selfish activity that conflicted with the writer's responsibilities for his family because it did not pay. James K. Baxter shared this belief:

I like eating, drinking, a reasonable degree of comfort, and must provide for these and other satisfactions for five people. The satisfaction I get from writing is a purely selfish one and, when family needs are taken into consideration, certainly cannot be given too high a priority. (Brasch, 1960, p. 44)
Kendrick Smithyman also refers to his family when answering the question after how much time he can allot to writing:

And also, there is my family, whose existence does have some influence on my working conditions; I have three sons, my wife is arthritic, and until recently I have had my aging and ailing father. (ibid., p. 68)

Ruth Dallas was also mainly occupied with housework and family responsibilities which have "both helped and hindered" (ibid., p. 48). In her case, the family environment seemed to work as a creative stimulus; for the same reason O.E. Middleton did not complain about his work.

On the question whether overseas travels were a necessary creative stimulus, the majority of writers affirmed that this would be indeed so. Maurice Shadbolt whose narrator in Annual Holiday thinks of travelling as indispensable, indeed thought highly of travelling himself but said he wanted to mostly live and write in New Zealand. Travelling for some writers borders on a necessary ingredient to their creative career; Ian Cross's words illustrate this notion succinctly:

The New Zealander must travel overseas if he is to achieve any depth of understanding of his own country. A writer must get outside his own class and society in order to write about it; the only way a New Zealand writer can do this is by going overseas. (ibid., p. 44)

New Zealand's isolated location, still thought of by many New Zealanders during the Fifties as a "geographical anomaly" (Templeton, 1993, p. 3), does pose limitations to its cultural diversity. But we can also imagine that, if one writes as a New Zealander, remaining within the New Zealander's consciousness produces 'purer' New Zealand writing. Ruth Dallas shared this opinion but, at least as Landfall's writers' survey was concerned, stood alone in this. Everyone else wanted to travel more in order to get a clearer view of their country.

There is a pattern in the cacophony of opinions and attitudes that this survey presents: there are writers who 'happen to be' writers and have their feet firmly on the ground. For them, writing is a meaningful hobby. State
patronage in the form of grants or bursaries is welcome and would certainly be helpful but not a decisive factor in whether or not they write. Writing is not viewed as an occupation that pays, therefore other jobs are needed. Book reviewing and work in broadcasting are not the most stimulating tasks but are acceptable as a means to sustain oneself.

The production of a longer novel becomes a tremendous challenge for a writer of this calibre, and indeed the widespread opinion is that because writing does not pay and writers have to spend much time in other paying jobs, the brief lyric and short story dominate New Zealand writing:

Here were two forms admirably suited to the requirements of a part-time writing life, a writing life fitted in around the edges of the forty-hour week, pursued at weekends and evenings, in time filched from office, schoolroom, library and university. (Oliver, 1960, p. 287)

Opposite the part-time writer (who is more serious about his writing than the term indicates) we can identify the more serious and somewhat 'precious' writer. He needs much and uninterrupted time for writing; he does not do book reviewing – in fact one writer considers it as "literary onanism" (Antony Alpers in Brasch, 1960, p. 40) – because it is not about one's own creativity. Also, 'precious' writers hold that the New Zealand Literary Fund should offer more scholarships of a larger size and that travel grants should be increased as well.

Yet another and smaller group of writers is distinguished by one trait only: they need to be left alone. In response to the question how the writer could be helped, E.H. McCormick said "it might be a good idea to leave them alone for a while to scribble away in their baches and bedrooms" (Brasch, 1960, p. 62), and Allen Curnow replied:

Leave them alone. I mean 'alone'. Trade and professional groups we may call collectively lawyers, master butchers, etc., and in that capacity they are all the same. Writers are all different—one from another, far more different than a butcher from a lawyer. Do we need any help to breathe? Or to stop breathing? (Brasch, 1960, p. 47)

State patronage, as Curnow intimates here, can be inhibiting. A.R.D. Fairburn is known as the most ardent enemy of state patronage (e.g.
Fairburn, 1956). Needless to say, these writers were established and enjoyed considerable acclaim.

Curnow is of course right in saying that 'writers are all different'. Robert Chapman (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951) explicitly calls writers 'individualists' when he says that "there must be as many views of the [1951 Writers'] Conference as there were individualists at it" (p. 224). But we can nonetheless distinguish two groups of writers: those for whom their condition as a New Zealand writer was not lamentable, who found all they wanted to write about within themselves or around them, and those writers for whom New Zealand is essentially insufficient.

I hold that the watershed between those two groups is their perception of New Zealand's culture. The young generation of writers, in short, did not share the older generation's concern about it. They knew "nothing of that inward-turning of the New Zealander's mind which accompanied and followed the depression of the thirties" (Mulgan, 1953, p. 223) because they had inherited a New Zealand literary tradition which, if still in its infancy, was good enough for them.

But writers did not only find themselves facing each other in opposition on the grounds of age and therefore opposing views of their culture. Some of the conflict among them emerged over styles of writing, as well. Most New Zealand writers during the Fifties engaged in what Kai Jensen (1996) has called 'masculine' writing. Masculine writing meant writing in the social realist mode "with a minimum of floweriness or metaphor" (Jensen, 1996, p. 45) because it meant to purport the masculine values of "independence, energy, endurance and straight-forwardness" (Tosh, 1998, p. 83).

This style was seen as most suitable to reach a wide reading public which was part of the literati's political mission. However, when writers of the masculine tradition said that they aimed to cater for the ordinary New Zealander, they really actually meant the "hardbitten Kiwi bloke" (Jensen, 1996, p. 43). Their prose mirrors this:

Deftness with rhyme and form, verbal resource, intellectual force, colloquial flavour and a readiness to grapple with harsh facts: these were the trappings of
poetic 'authority', the 'mature utterance' that Curnow and his associates admired. (Jensen, 1996, p. 75)

And these writers, Allen Curnow, Rex Fairburn and Denis Glover more than any other, lived the masculinism that they created in their work. Their drinking exploits are legend, so are their sporting achievements — and their misogynist attitudes:

In their creative writing and criticism these writers preferred to imagine women as wives, mothers and lovers. This tendency was strongest in the war literature of the 1940s and 1950s, which thoroughly explored the distinction between men as soldiers and women as wives, sweethearts, mistresses or prostitutes. (Jensen, 1996, p. 79)

Such attitudes involved a quite marked denigration of women writers who either withdrew from the literary scene or were pushed out. The problems they encountered would be testified in their biographies; Ruth France's and Ruth Dallas' survey responses (Brasch, 1960) unfortunately do not reveal any.

The heterogeneous field of New Zealand writers, according to the material presented here, consisted of diverse groups such as masculinist writers or, in the words of James Belich (2001), the "blokerati", younger prose writers, young and old writers, and women writers. To a certain degree, by being a writer, these men and women faced similar challenges. However, most of them, we can assume with a fair degree of certainty, would not have written about the Fifties or their country as Bill Pearson (1952) and Robert Chapman (1953) have done. The concluding chapter of this study will summarise the reasons why the opinion of a "handful of sensitive, intellectually ambitious individuals" (Perry, 1987, p. 173) should have created so pervasive an image of the Fifties.
III.

Conclusion:
The Alienated Writer and the Cultural Mainstream

I have set out to explore the factual basis that underlies Bill Pearson's 'Fretful Sleepers', Robert Chapman's 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' and the more general stereotypes we all hold about the Fifties. The main question was whether New Zealand writers were indeed as alienated and pushed towards the margins of society by a hostile mainstream as many sources suggest. The short answer to this is 'no'.

Colin Wilson (1956), in his study of the artist as an outsider, showed that many artists throughout history had none of the characteristics of an outsider. He named Shakespeare, Dante and Keats as "apparently normal and socially well-adjusted" (Wilson, 1956, p. 14) artists, and indeed believed that "the outsider may be an artist, but the artists is not necessarily an outsider" (ibid., p. 15). Chapman (1953), in contrast, held that for the artist in order to describe society and interpret it for the public, he must be on the margins of society. He must be on the outside so that he can observe better.

But not all artists during the Fifties were outsiders. Not all writers wished to be outsiders either; it would be nearer the truth to assume that writers "wished to be accepted by the institutions they attacked, by the society to which they could not conform, that they longed to be loved by those they hated and condemned" (Aldridge, 1956, p. 8). Some writers still could not help but feel alienated by and hence hostile towards their society. Three factors were crucial in producing the feeling of being on the margins of society: conservatism, conformity and the family, all of which can be viewed as push-factors, placing artists at a distance from society.

The discussion of these three factors in chapter 1 is premised on the assumption that on the whole all writers react similarly to external stimuli. This is a simplifying assumption that could not easily be made in a country larger, more diversified and less isolated than New Zealand. Simplifying
allows us to understand in general terms how the intelligentsia related to the New Zealand public (and vice versa) in the Fifties.

Chapter 2 summarises what has been laid out about the various groups and factions within the writers' field itself. The *Listener's* and *Landfall's* respective roles in creating outsiders both within the writers' field and the mainstream culture and between the two will be explored.

New Zealand history writing has of course had an enormous influence on how we view the Fifties today. This will be discussed in subsection 2.3 which will finally allow us to understand why the unfavourable opinions about New Zealand that were held by of only a few writers have come to weigh so much.
1. ALIENATING FACTORS

1.1. Conservatism

More than anything else, the cultural mainstream in the Fifties was conservative. The Fifties were not the time for change, and because the Left aims for change, they were not the time for the Left to find much appeal (Hobsbawm, 1994; Yska, 1993). If we assume that most writers had a politically left outlook, then this may account for some of the problems they have encountered.

Left ideologies oppose conservative ones in many ways, most importantly as regards views on private and state property, the economy, progress and cultural pursuits. Whilst there is nothing wrong with ideological friction, the Fifties with their general 'no-nonsense spirit' were hardly accommodating of ideological difference. And even though the conservative mainstream dictated most aspects of everyday and political life, due to the lack of scholarship about the Fifties we are at a loss to make out what this meant for the people and the country as a whole.

Private property was strongly promoted by the National Government under Sidney Holland because it was viewed as a safeguard against existential dangers (Tännösö, 1990). Land ownership in a non-urban setting was believed to be the most secure economic base of a conservative society (Nisbet, 1986). Urban life was rejected by conservatives on the grounds that

[..] it increased the social distance between individuals, loosened the bonds of marriage and family, and gave a monekyed character to all life that was not present in a landed-agrarian rural society. (Nisbet, 1986, p. 66)

The conservative often displays feudal attitudes of a similar nature as the sentence quoted above. In the Fifties, the context for semi-feudal opinions like Monte Holcroft's in his editorial on the ideal mountain type (Editorial, Listener, Jan. 27, 1950) was the search for national identity. Evoking images of a bucolic and healthy past and translating them into future purpose creates the idea that "nations may become that which once
they were in some mythical 'golden' age" (Edensor, 2002, p. 18). Reference to the past hence gives direction to the process of searching for identity. Conservatism's latent feudalism probably served the nation's search for national identity.

Rural living, however, did not suit the population growth New Zealand experienced in the post-war era. The new solution was 'instant suburbs', in which property ownership and close to-rural living were satisfactorily combined. Altogether Sid Holland's idea that "the way to beat Communism was to create a nation of 'little capitalists' with their own property" seems to have worked (Yska, 1993, p. 25). Private property creates in the owner a sense of "stake in society" (Nisbet, 1986, p. 64) and thus helps to turn a mere squatter into a loyal citizen whose services can be employed for national defence.

Social democracy, conservatism's ideological opponent, rejected notions of personal material wealth in favour of community well-being. Furthermore, New Zealand's writers and intellectuals thought about New Zealand a lot, about its origins and its possible future path, and were ready to take the necessary steps towards a better future. A conservative does not think like that: where progressive thinkers see the past as gone and mere information for the future which begins right now, the conservative way is to see the present "as the latest point reached by the past in a continuous, seamless growth" (Nisbet, 1986, p. 25).

A strong focus on the past maybe accounts for conservatism's peculiar disregard for culture. This includes 'inner-directed' (Aldridge, 1956) and abstract thoughts. Conservatism has a deep mistrust of those and prefers the comfortable assuredness of past experience as main stock of knowledge (Nisbet, 1986). The resulting philistinism created barriers to writers' recognition in society and possibly induced some writers to move towards the margins. Conservatism's respect for authority might have worked to a similar effect, especially as regards the writer's subject matter: where he formerly wrote about a hero who, through a series of adventures and reflection upon himself and society, finally understands life, the writer, under conservatism, is restricted in his scope of criticism of the 'system' (Aldridge, 1956).
The ideological conflict between the conservative mainstream and the progressive intelligentsia was sharpened in particular by the mainstream's overall conformity. E.P. Thompson (1978) observed that many intellectuals at least tried but, ultimately, found themselves unable to "resist the 'natural' economic processes and pressures to conform" (p. 235). This is because "the individual mind seems almost powerless to resist objective pressures to conform" (ibid., p. 236). It is possible that this engendered fear in writers, fear to lose sight of their ideals, fear to crumble in the face of an almighty opponent.

Conservatism grows on a climate of fear. It is therefore not surprising to identify the dawning of the age of nuclear warfare as the most conservative decade of the twentieth century. Conservatism truly is an ideology of fear: in the wake of the French Revolution, in which 'the masses' had abolished monarchy and with it tradition, Edmund Burke, the founding father of conservatism, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) listed all the dangers that such a development harboured. One of the main tenets of conservatism since then has been to protect the established order against the 'masses', and private property was embraced as a means to this end because, as a New Zealand observer stated, "nothing is more inhibiting to dangerous thoughts than is the combination of the freehold and a large mortgage" (Civil Liberties in New Zealand, *Listener*, Nov. 1, 1957).

Giving 'the masses' the opportunity to accumulate property thus ensures stability for the polity. Without being fettered to material belongings, there was no knowing which political ideology of the day citizens might choose to follow, possibly to the detriment of the established order. This "conservative litany of the masses" (Nisbet, 1986, p. 47) seems to connect with men's fear of women which is, at heart, the fear of the "loss of identity and stable ego boundaries of the mass" (Huyssen, 1986, p. 52). Fear of women has always been a formative influence on New Zealand's predominantly male culture, and whilst this is not a crucial concern in the present study, an investigation into the relation between conservatism and gender attitudes would certainly be worthwhile.
1.2. Conformity

In sociological terms, enforcing conformity means enforcing social stability, which was greatly desired after the years of social upheaval. The events of 1951, the waterfront dispute, created a conformist pattern in three ways: (1) non-conformity was portrayed as dangerous; (2) in the wake of the industrial dispute, the freedom of the press and citizen rights were severely curtailed under National's Emergency Regulations, and the prolonged suppression of opposing voices helped to streamline public opinion to a conformist middle; (3) the government, impressing its authority so strongly onto New Zealanders, left no doubt that it demanded respect and would not tolerate disobedience.

The juvenile offenders cases created a similar pattern of conformity. The Mazengarb Report, which condemned all kinds of sexual behaviour as 'untoward', was essentially a "conservative backlash at the working mother" (May, 1989, p. 68). Portraying working and single mothers as irresponsible served to strongly impress upon the public that the nuclear family according to the housewife model was the social norm.

New Zealand in the Fifties was altogether not a society that encouraged dissent, and indeed with the threat of the employment of nuclear weapons against the west looming, discouraging hysterical and irrational dissent was in many ways a sensible attitude (Sunstein, 2003). Viewing conformity as the suppression of dissent as Cass R. Sunstein (2003) has done, offers an understanding of the outsider as someone who "confers benefits on others, offering information and ideas from which the community gains a great deal" (p. 12). In the case of New Zealand's writers, a large amount of useful information, generated in discussions among friends and foes, would have been lost in the Fifties. The uniformity of expression during the Fifties has led an American writer to coin the term 'the grey new world' (David Riesman; see Aldridge, 1956).

Forced uniformity, so the fable goes, always has a stifling effect on the reflective mind. The intellectual needs to be free if he is to serve society to his fullest extent, and conformity puts him into a cage. Left to think and discuss at their leisure, intellectuals will develop vivid discourses between opposing factions (Collins, 1992). In an interesting and very human turn of
events, however, some groups will strive for power even among intellectuals. They will try to suppress dissent and to establish an orthodox intellectual regime (Collins, 1992).

So while the mainstream culture can and does impose pressures to conform on intellectuals, artists and writers, the same process develops within the intelligentsia itself. As Rachel Barrowman (1991) has shown, this is what happened in the inter-war years in New Zealand. A social democratic ethos gripped most of New Zealand’s literati in the Popular Front movement, the Left Book Clubs and the events evolving around the birth and demise of Tomorrow, all of which resulted in the exclusive definition of the writer’s role as a servant of society who attempts to enlighten the public (Barrowman, 1991).

Masculinism, the related literary tradition of common-sensical social realism, gained complete dominance in the literary field by 1941 (Jensen, 1996). In its orthodoxy, it did not allow for any other style but social realism to become established. It did, in fact, discourage and even disparage female as well as modernist writers. Imagination and fancy, connotated as feminine, were also depreciated, and so were writers in these sujets. Conformity was actively and belligerently enforced (Jensen, 1996; Phillips, 1996 esp. on misogyny). The smallness of New Zealand’s social scale made this a relatively easy process, and the social relations between writers helped as well because, as Ian Cross (1959) observed regarding the 1958 writers’ conference, writers preferred liking each other to discussing important issues.

Close social bonds help to impose core standards. As Jensen (1996) shows, the true-blue masculine writers (A.R.D. Fairburn, Denis Glover and Allen Curnow) were all close friends with each other; united in this way, they assumed dominance and dictated literary standards. Another reason for placing prominence on social bonds might be that

Groups want consensus and feel best when everyone agrees. Hence they avoid possible disagreements and suppress any urge to question what the other members of the group (especially a leader) may have said. (Baumeister, 2005, p. 382)
Sunstein (2003) extends this notion and shows that according to experiments conformity is encouraged "if the central goal of group members is to maintain and improve social bonds" (p. 81). If 'belonging' is the reward for conformity, then participants in laboratory experiments conceal their dissenting information (Sunstein, 2003).

Insecurity about one's place in society can be the reason that 'belonging' assumed such significance for the individual New Zealander during the Fifties. In this vein, John Aldridge (1956) speaks about a "vague, generalised feeling of anxiety" (p. 115) that existed in his society regardless of politics. Bereft of both the power and the will to resist conformity through fear, the writer 'joins in':

In a society in which [...] "inner-directed" traits are no longer required by the industry and, therefore, no longer serve as criteria for the judgement of individual worth, a person's agreeableness or niceness becomes one of the main criteria by which he can be judged; his "personality" becomes his distinguishing or saleable commodity. But "personality" in such a society does not mean a set of traits which particularise or set off an individual from others. The requirement that he be approved of by everyone forces the individual, on the contrary, to suppress his particularising traits—if he has any—on the ground that someone, anyone, might not like them, with the result that "personality" becomes, for him, innocuousness and anonymity. (Aldridge, 1956, pp. 115-116)

These comments seem applicable to the New Zealand context, as well. Suppressing one's personality must have been a tremendous burden for writers and artists, especially since ex-pressing is their occupation. The smallness of New Zealand's literary field would have further made it nigh impossible to find a niche where non-conforming expression among like-minded became possible.

1.3. Family

As the debate evolving around Margot Roth's (1959) letter to the Listener evidenced, the 'social code' of family life in the form of the male breadwinner model was strongly enforced by women. The standard to which women were expected to conform was narrowly defined, and women who
deviated from it shunned. This was no different in rural than in urban areas as this farmer's wife's experiences show:

I was expected to keep the house immaculate, do the washing on Monday, bottle 200 bottles of fruit, sew, knit, and serve on committees. I felt inadequate. It was impossible - in past eras women had help in the home. And I felt it was women setting these standards, not the men. They, the women, could be very vicious with their criticisms. (Elizabeth Marshall in personal communication with Sally Parker; Parker, 1992, p. 210)

These comments, despite referring to a rural community, describe the situation for urban housewives under the housewife-male breadwinner model as well. In the Fifties, this family model gained dominance over the formerly predominant agrarian family-economy model where everyone worked together on and around the family farm (Pfau-Effinger, 2004). The housewife model underlies the separate spheres model according to which men worked outside in the 'public' and women managed household and children in the 'private' sphere of the home. The Mazengarb Report put renewed emphasis on the morality of this model of family life.

The housewife model is premised on two converging conditions: prosperity and urbanisation. Economically, it had to be possible to sustain the family on one income only. In the Fifties, this became an option for increasing numbers of New Zealanders. Established in Britain early in the nineteenth century, the cultural model of the housewife family could thus be translated into social practice in New Zealand as well.

Urbanisation was another important factor; without it, the agrarian family economy model would have persisted. Urbanisation is assumed to be a vital factor in the development of the housewife model because it necessitated the man's travel away from home and to work. But this process, as Pfau-Effinger (2004) shows, does not always result in the housewife model gaining social prominence. In Finland, for instance, it never found much support despite a vigorous urbanisation process in the second half of the twentieth century. The reason for this 'Finnish anomaly' lies in that it lacked the cultural heritage of gender segregation because in Finland, the previously "sparse settlement of the countryside meant that separate female and male subcultures had hardly developed" (Pfau-Effinger, 2004, p. 392).
Therefore, as urbanisation progressed in Finland, men and women were affected similarly and reacted similarly. Most women were working mothers even in the early years of urbanisation (Pfau-Effinger, 2004).

The New Zealand situation could not be more different. New Zealand has always had a strong male culture. It has, in fact, been referred to as a ‘man’s country’ (Phillips, 1996), and despite New Zealanders' praise of their egalitarianism, it has been shown (esp. L. M. Hall, 1958) that the male subculture has always been dominant over the female one. This was an ideal breeding ground for the housewife model to become established as the social norm.

For men, the housewife model appeared to be the perfect patriarchal system: engaging in the seriousness of the male world throughout the day, men would come home to a warm hearth, prepared food and a loving wife. But the reality, as New Zealand men in the Fifties soon found out, was much different:

> Marriage inevitably meant returning not to a quiet domestic hearth to be waited upon but to an overcrowded home in which there where nappies drying before the fire and where the woman’s attention was focused more upon her newborn than upon her spouse. (Phillips, 1996, p. 240)

This met with a wide-spread misogyny to create a general resentment among men towards the family (Phillips, 1996; Tosh, 1998). Misogynist tendencies, obvious in much writing (Chapman, 1953; Jensen, 1996; Pearson, 1952), evidence that writers have been part of these developments as well.

I have argued that writers' misogyny was related to the overall phenomenon of New Zealand men's anxiety about their masculinity (II.2.2.). New Zealand men were confused about their social roles in the post-war urban society and struggled to find avenues of reassuring themselves of their masculinity (Andrews, 1999). The emphasis on masculinity in New Zealand's literature, established in the Forties, meant for writers that "writing itself could generate a sense of masculinity, if writers made certain choices of style and attitude" (Jensen, 1996, p. 62). But family life absorbed much of writers' time, especially through working in order to provide, as
Landfall’s writers’ survey has shown (Brasch, 1960). This survey also shows that the implication of working a ‘normal’ job for the writer was that he had to become part of the conformist mainstream. Where he could formerly be a hero, a man alone on his journey through countless adventures into an unknown future, very much like the literary ideal of the “Young Man from the Provinces” (Aldridge, 1956, p. 117), he now faced a different future course:

The Young Man himself, or his comparable type, is no longer provincial or idealistic. Dreams of glory, wealth, and adventure no longer obsess him. His future is clear and realistic. The safe job with the corporation or the university, the pretty wife and children, the prefabricated ranch-style house with the picture window, rumpus room, and breezeway, the Ford that looks like a Cadillac—these are the goals toward which his heroism is directed, his dramatic escape is made. (Aldridge, 1956, p. 118)

Substitute the ‘ranch-style house’ with a Californian bungalow and the Cadillac-like Ford with an Austin, Humber or Morris Minor, and this passage describes life as a writer engulfed by conformity might have felt forced to envision it. The important point here is that the heroism that was formerly an intrinsic part not only of being a man, but more importantly of being a writer, was lost. Instead, the writer’s daily job brought him within the woman’s sphere of everyday life, which is diametrically opposite to the heroic life:

The emphasis in the heroic life is one the courage to struggle and achieve extraordinary goals, the quest for virtue, glory and fame, which contrasts with the lesser everyday pursuits of wealth, property and earthly love. (Featherstone, 1992, pp. 164-165)

‘Wealth, property and earthly love’ are the exact things New Zealanders strove after during the Fifties, and they did indeed not leave much scope for the artist to perceive of life as a whole as an adventure. It was of course not the family as such that made heroism almost impossible for New Zealand writers, even though it received much of the writer’s resentment. The mainstream culture was not to blame either; but it was, of course, blamed.
Resentment about the loss of heroism was therefore also levelled at the common man who

[... is poisoned by the repressed emotions of envy, spite, hatred and revenge and seeks to dissemble the social hierarchy between him and his betters and destroy those noble values that he does not possess. (Featherstone, 1992, p. 171)

According to Andreas Huyssen's (1986) study the artist in Europe was pushed onto the margins by an increasingly powerful bourgeoisie which strongly defined itself as superior to the 'common man'. Pfau-Effinger's (2004) cross-national comparison of the development of the male breadwinner model also refers to the bourgeoisie, in this case as a formative influence for the cultural concept of the nuclear family. A closer investigation into bourgeois values in New Zealand would certainly produce intriguing results pertaining to a better understanding of the writer-nuclear family-interface.

Family life, in short, severely limited the writer's possibilities for pursuing a writer's life and to thus attain the rewards of such a life. The conformist nature of society further operated to the writer's disadvantage, especially because it did not encourage reflective and abstract thought. The National Government's early political actions, most importantly its handling of the waterfront lockout in 1951, had succeeded in not only reducing "political idealism to suspect motive" (Thompson, 1978, p. 229) but indeed in making suspicious any kind of action or thought that deviated from what was encompassed in the formula "wealth, prosperity and earthly love" (Featherstone, 1992, p. 165).

Culture mediation is political because "the version offered as a public representation depends on whose interests this presentation serves" (Bell, 1996, p. 9). In New Zealand, culture representation has always coincided with the national identity discourse (Bell, 1996). In different periods of time various themes have been more or less emphasised, and literature has contributed to this process. This final chapter aims to find out which imagery the Listener's and Landfall's representation of New Zealand and its literati served. It will close with commenting about the part historians have played in establishing the Fifties as 'golden but dull' in the public imagination.

2.1. The Listener's Role in New Zealand's Culture

The Listener during the Fifties reflected the government's image of New Zealand. This image was essentially conservative. It portrayed the patriarchal nuclear family as at the centre of post-war society, and New Zealand in its pages appears the healthy, progressive and vigorous nation other government publications claimed it to be.

Introduction to New Zealand (Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs, 1945), though published before the period covered in this study, is illustrative of how political leaders aimed to portray New Zealand to the world. Aimed at potential American immigrants, the country is described in laudatory terms, especially in the chapters on Dominion economy, sports and the war effort.

The Listener took similar stances. In the early decades it featured the "Sundowner" column which had a specific humorous angle on the land and its people – the ordinary people. These were addressed and supported in their presumed preoccupation with the state of the economy, sports and adventurous exploits of New Zealanders overseas (including war in Korea and Suez, and Sir Edmund Hillary' expeditions). The ordinary New Zealander was assured of the normalcy of his way of life in the Listener. I
suspect the Listener does what John Aldridge (1956) has called "assur[ing] that pleasureless respectability is the only worthwhile way of life, in short, that they are right to like what they are stuck with" (p. 124).

Part of this project is to praise past and present experience over intellectual sophistication. In "Outside the College Walls" (Editorial, Listener, Sept. 17, 1954) Holcroft praises the extra-mural student for his involvement in the working world which grants him a broader horizon than the intra-mural student could ever attain. The assertion that "the higher we go in learning, the harder it gets to view the world in simple terms" (Editorial, Listener, Jan. 12, 1951) and that intellectual giants like Albert Einstein are often naïve outside their specialised field (Editorial, Listener, May 6, 1955) work to the same effect.

Whilst the Listener thus portrays a certain distrust of the intellectual, no similar inhibitions can be found towards the writer or artist. It is not clear why, when talking about people who ponder life more closely, intellectuals should be treated as different from writers and artists. To me, the differences between these three groups in terms of social standing and attitude towards culture are minimal, which is why I have used all three terms interchangeably. Nonetheless, the term 'intellectual' has been a charged one in the period under scrutiny in this study. Often the intellectual suffers under what I would like to call "a superiority complex" that tempts him to snub those not as erudite as himself. If we believe that as human beings we are all prone to assume power over others whenever we can (see L. M. Hall, 1958), the intellectual might be more fallible in this respect than most (because he can always outwit others). We might then assume that he becomes alienated through no fault but his own.

More than inherent snobbishness it seems to be the intellectual's detachment from experience that brought him outside the range of Holcroft's own cultural compass. On more than one occasion he criticised the currently existing gap between writers' experiences and their writing, and the need for this to be remedied (e.g. Editorial, Listener, Feb. 18, 1955). "Writers must write about what they know" (ibid.), Holcroft declares. To me this clearly evidences a close affiliation with conservative philosophy, which also has
"more trust in experience than in abstract, deductive thought" (Nisbet, 1986, p. 23).

Cultural production, for Holcroft as for most other writers between 1930 and 1960, had to relate to experience, had to be tangible in this way. Some achievements in this direction had been made, even in a young country like New Zealand, but insecurity or 'culture-consciousness' abounded even there:

Under examination, we discover that we are not altogether illiterate people, and that we are beginning to build up a tradition. We have writers and artists, and some of them are good. We have contributed to the march of science. We nurture a variety of religious belief and practice. We go to school and college. We read many books. The printing-press is active among us, and our newspapers report the world for us with zeal but decorum. We share in the blessings of radio, and listen alike to the voice of the B.B.C., the voices of America, and our own voices. We even produce movies for ourselves. In fact we lay the usual claims to civilisation.

(Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs, 1945, p. 170)

The Listener implicitly repeated this message: that New Zealanders have a just claim to think of themselves as civilised, as a nation even. No one was very clear how this nation would be defined in its exact character, and this question does not seem to be resolved even today; but the important point was that New Zealand was no longer a British colony. It was a nation in its own right; it was civilised, cultured even, and increasingly prosperous.

The wide-spread distribution of higher-priced consumer goods in the Fifties (Bittmann, Rice, & Wajcman, 2004; O'Donnell, 1992) links with the national identity discourse. We can postulate that prosperity-levels that were outstanding even in international comparison have contributed to boost the nation's self-confidence and to help to believe in oneself as a political entity deserving of respect and admiration, even by the Queen herself (Phillips, 1993). This implies, of course, that material wealth is something to be appreciated.

Let us not underestimate the impact that being in a position to provide, on one income, for a family which lives in a 'pretty' house with a little bit of land attached to it, where the wife stays at home and looks after the children may have had on the New Zealand soul. New Zealanders
forming families in the Fifties had been reared to be 'better Britons' (Belich, 2001), and in terms of material achievement, New Zealanders truly were better. Cultural achievement must have been a sore point in comparison, and maybe this accounts for the immense ardour with which all matters cultural were debated in the Fifties.

These comments imply that the *Listener* has contributed to the ongoing national identity discourse, which I think holds true overall. But some qualifications need to be made. Despite publishing substantial amounts of New Zealand writing, the *Listener* was never part of the cultural nationalism movement. Furthermore, because the *Listener* in the Fifties was read by the majority of New Zealanders, it reflected as well as shaped their perception of New Zealand.

The *Listener*, in conclusion, has contributed to diminish New Zealanders' culture-consciousness precisely through speaking positively about most aspects of everyday life as well as some political matters, and by including literary writing in every issue. Claudia Bell (1996) said that "the loudest voice proclaiming identity is the one that persuades the nation" (p. 13); for the cultural mainstream, apart from the government itself, the *Listener* was among the louder voices.

I am not aware of writers having encountered problems with the *Listener*. Whilst the *Listener* at times assumed an ambivalent position towards the writers, no writer ever expressed himself disparagingly of it. To the contrary, the journal's correspondence columns were widely appreciated among writers and journalists, and the *Listener* generally enjoyed a favourable reputation, if not the highest cultural standing. That was reserved for *Landfall*.

### 2.2. *Landfall*'s Role in New Zealand's Culture

*Landfall*'s impact on New Zealand post-war culture was tremendous. It is established that "no publisher in the twenty years after the Second World War had the influence on letters in New Zealand which was exercised from its beginning by *Landfall*" (McEldowney, 1998, p. 666). A special *Landfall*
issue dedicated to the Fifties appeared in 1997 (No. 1), which served to document *Landfall's* lasting imprint in New Zealand's culture.

For the purpose of this study it is of special interest to determine how, on the one hand, *Landfall* positioned itself to the cultural mainstream and, on the other hand, how it related to the masculinist literary field. How were Brasch's concerns with national identity connected with writers' quest for masculinity and 'high culture'?

*Landfall*'s merit in the Fifties is that it stood for high intellectual and artistic standards and nonconformity in an age where higher learning, intellectual debate artistic sophistication had simply not taken root in society yet. *Landfall* therefore catered for a niche market, for New Zealand's writers, artists and all kinds of thinkers. Within these groups, *Landfall*'s impact was quite considerable; outside it, however, entirely negligible (Geraets, 2003).

*Landfall*'s main purpose was "to reverse the perceived marginalisation of the artistic process, to see it accorded a central, acknowledged position in its society" (Geraets, 2003, p. 132). In pursuing this aim, *Landfall* created the image of the artist as "the last remaining nonconformist" (Notes, *Landfall*, 1951, p. 244). It is intriguing that it was essential for the artist to be outside the conformist mainstream and on the margins of society, and that at the same time his work was supposed to be accorded a 'central, acknowledged position'. This is like saying that the deviant, the law-breaker, be respected as someone who knows best about how to adhere to the law. This clash between conflicting expectations was not resolved in the Fifties.

Again, I think, we have to remember that in as young a country as New Zealand after the Second World War the existence of a literary journal like *Landfall* and of people with special talents both artistic and intellectual, was nothing that was to be taken for granted. Brasch essentially tried to create a New Zealand tradition of literary expression in an environment that perceived of no need for it yet. As a result, literature was in constant combat with the surrounding culture because it needed to justify its existence (Geraets, 2003).
Juliet Batten (1989) suggests that all artists were subject to such societal pressures. Learning about New Zealand art in the Fifties she quickly realised New Zealandness in art and literature was defined in terms that entirely excluded her own experience of her country. This led her to conclude that New Zealandness actually referred to the country as "white Pakeha male" (Batten, 1989, p. 218) experienced it. Her own experience as a woman as well as Maori views were not part of this version of New Zealand.

Clearly, the New Zealander is a white male, struggling to 'do it himself', pushing through the bush, hacking through the supplejack in search of his identity. [...] I wonder if you can have a New Zealand identity in a kitchen or at the clothes-line. I wonder if you can have one on a marae. (Batten, 1989, p. 219)

*Landfall* evidences the 'Pakeha male centredness' of the national identity project. Awareness of issues relating to te ao Māori was negligible, and from 1952 onwards *Te Ao Hou*, published by the Māori Affairs Department, discussed those. The absence of women writers is marked, as well. *Landfall Country* (Brasch, 1962), a hand-picked collection of the best writing in *Landfall* until 1961, is a good example of this. It includes only two women authors (out of thirty-six altogether), Ruth Dallas and Fleur Adock, with one poem each. This means that no exceptional short story or essay by a woman writer had been published until 1961.

Writing, as Kai Jensen (1996) explained, could "generate a sense of masculinity" (Jensen, 1996, p. 62) through choice of subject matter and style. I hold that for the time under scrutiny here it also provided a sense of the heroic. Opposing the majority, especially when it is ideals that put one into this position, is always an act of heroism. Sadly, though, such acts largely go unrewarded because most "organisations, groups and governments prize harmony" (Sunstein, 2003, p. 76).

Not so *Landfall*; *Landfall* in fact prized nonconformity. Translated into sociological terms this means that *Landfall* rewarded deviance from the cultural mainstream in regards to intellectual achievement. Despite the existence of other literary-cum-social-cum-cultural journals (e.g. *Hilltop, Arachne, Numbers, Her and Now*), most of which were ephemeral or not
quite sure about their mission or both, this statement holds true into the Sixties. It must be noted, however, that Landfall on the whole did not cater for a broad range of intellectuals and artists. More radical opinions were only published occasionally (see esp. Lees, 1950, 1951) and only in the early years.

Women writers' opinions were not considered either. In part, Brasch's concern with the 'Pakeha male' New Zealand identity accounts for this. Also, thinking of writing as an act of heroism, women had to be exempted from it for the heroic life is in every way possible the opposite of the feminine (Featherstone, 1992). In sum, for whatever reason, Landfall mirrored the general writers' culture's prejudice against women. Hence, for a number of years, it became "one of the institutions of masculinism" (Jensen, 1996, p. 92) without, however, having a stake in masculinism as such. Ultimately Landfall and the project of masculinism parted due to the latter's "distrust of literature, art and scholarship that seems too purely academic and thus cut off from the life of the community" (Jensen, 1996, p. 171).

Landfall's attitude toward the mainstream wavered between benign condescension and spiteful superiority. Brasch expressed his sentiments quite affably, but the same tactful diplomacy was not demonstrated by all other contributors. If we assume that Landfall's readership was of much the same background as its contributors, then what we are presented with is the male intelligentsia sharing their opinions about the rest of New Zealand. This 'inbreeding' of ideas increased the social distance between literati and the public.

Bill Pearson's 'Fretful Sleepers' and Robert Chapman's 'Fiction and the Social Pattern' (and similar cultural commentary) supported the attitude that the writers' marginalisation was to be expected given the character of the surrounding society. This implies that there was no need to break down the barriers between writers and the public, and that the situation as it was required no mending. Landfall thus strongly positioned itself in favour of a class of thinkers superior to the rest of society, and harsh criticism of the mainstream culture helped to perpetuate the feeling of superiority. This is clear evidence of a lack of self-esteem, which was difficult to obtain in a
country that did not seem to appreciate one's work, let alone one's way of life and political outlook.

Some writers, as a result, adopted a hostile stance towards the mainstream, which has served to perpetuate their feeling of alienation — and hence of heroism. Statements like "the literati disliked mainstream society because it disliked them, and it disliked them because they disliked it" (Belich, 2001, p. 336) must therefore be treated carefully. Whilst it is more probable that the powerless minority passionately rejected the far superior majority, meaning that the rejection went from the literary culture towards the cultural mainstream, the generalisation 'the literati' certainly does not hold.

2.3. Writing History or Writing Stories?

Stipulating the general image New Zealand thinkers have about the Fifties, I would declare that they predominantly 'know' that the Fifties were about the dullest decade one can find in New Zealand's history. Some New Zealanders might protest, believing that "it is unlikely that most men and women found New Zealand in the 1950s as dull and conformist as some historians and most writers have suggested" (Gustafson, 1990, p. 274), but those voices more often than not die away unheard in the face of the general prejudice against the Fifties.

For a prejudice, I hold, it is. Among intellectuals, the prejudice is firmly rooted in the rejection of conservatism as "false consciousness or disguised self-interest" (Brett, 1997, p. 156). In looking at conservatism in this way, intellectuals, themselves predominantly leftist, refuse to take everyday concerns that are centred on the family, the home, one's property or the church serious. This, I hold, is one of the main reasons for why there is not much scholarship about the Fifties.

Unfortunately, 'anti-conservative propaganda' has become institutionalised in New Zealand universities, the main centres of intellectual output. John Stenhouse (2004) assigns a vital role in this process to Keith Sinclair and his followers. Sinclair aimed to stand for a secular, left-liberal, egalitarian nationalism, and consequently disliked Puritanism,
Christianity, Britishness and elitism (Stenhouse, 2004). Since the ascension of his school to dominance in the local history departments, these four aspects of New Zealand's past have received minimal attention and even less sympathy (Stenhouse, 2004). By implication, instances of rejection of especially Puritanism and Britishness would have been received joyfully.

Among New Zealand's writers in the Fifties, only a very small number have expressed rebellious sentiments against "the formative, constricting and distorting effect of the mores and values of New Zealand Puritanism on our human scene" (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951, p. 226). Due to Sinclairian historiography, however, those have received an exaggerated importance. Why, I wonder, out of the selection of superb essays published in Landfall Country (Brasch, 1962), is it 'Pretful Sleepers' that appears in most anthologies of New Zealand writing, culture and national identity? Why not instead Erik Olssen's (1949) excellent essay 'The Conditions of Culture', for instance?

Though named more for argument's sake, Olssen's discussion of New Zealand culture in Landfall is actually a quite pertinent example. Olssen in this essay argued for an egalitarian society and better education, complained about the low interest in politics and mused how conformity could be avoided (Olssen, 1949). He essentially criticised the same conditions in society that Pearson criticised in 'Pretful Sleepers'. But Olssen did not shy from connecting the ideal of the nuclear family with aristocratic notions, nor did he abstain from pointing out the advantages of social hierarchies. The basic reference of Olssen's essay is T.S. Eliot's (1948) Notes Toward the Definition of Culture, which means that he drew heavily on British culturalist thought (see pp. 95) for making sense of a New Zealand situation.

Olssen's essay delivered a brilliant insight into the Fifties, but in ways that the Sinclair school could not accommodate. For part of Sinclair's secular, left-liberal egalitarian nationalism was "pretending that it had long existed" (Belich, 2001, p. 338) which required the obliteration of contradicting voices from the past. Altogether this was not an uncommon development among older historians in the post-war decades, as Patrick Allitt's (2005) comments about the United States equivalent evidence:
Historians of my generation, too young to have been part of the "Vietnam generation", tend to get irritable at that cohort's attempt to glorify itself by denigrating the decade of their childhood. The real 1950s were full of fascination, energy, intellectual excitement, religious ferment, and rapid social change. Only polemics could substitute for their picture of a "lost generation" and the alleged drab conformity of the man in the grey flannel suit. (Allitt, 2005, p. 178)

How does denigrating a segment of one's past work produce glorification? Alan Mulgan (1953) suggests that a certain condescension towards the past affords the feeling of superiority over it. This might have been a welcome effect to many in the Fifties, the 'age of anxiety'. It is, furthermore, one of the two established strategies recommended to young academics: in order to make a name for themselves, young academics can either be utter iconoclasts, which means that they stand out but have to overcome attacks from all sides, or they can join the most popular theory of the day (in their field) and hope to distinguish themselves somehow from the crowd. The Sinclairian school essentially rejected the Oliverian school, which was quite accommodating toward authority and Britishness (Oliver, 2002; Stenhouse, 2004). The effect was as Allitt (2005) suggested, a peculiar glorification of the present with a concomitant denigration of the past.

I do not think that due to the distorting influences of historiography we have to reject the idea that the Fifties were a conformist decade. Most New Zealanders themselves believed that they lived far more uniformly than they had done in previous decades (see I.2.2.). However, Patrick Allitt's words suggest that not all was wrong with this; life can indeed not have been as dull as most histories suggest (Gustafson, 1990). 'Fascination, energy, intellectual excitement, religious ferment, and rapid social change' also determined New Zealand's course of the decade, but this view on the Fifties is barred to us through prejudice and a lack of scholarship.
3. CLOSING COMMENTS

Most writers in the Fifties seem to have had their feet firmly on the ground. Not comparing oneself so much with other former colonies or European 'high culture' might have promoted feelings of satisfaction with the state their society was in. A general willingness to be excited about New Zealand arts and letters might have helped as well. Such excitement was well-funded as well. Colin McCahon and Toss Woollaston were after all not the only modern and successful New Zealand painters, and the musical scene was throbbing with new composers and inventive styles. For one who was inclined to be proud about cultural developments in New Zealand, there was enough to find to satisfy his pride.

An amazing variety of developments might not have been notable because of the smallness of the artistic community. This has always been problematic for New Zealand writers, of course, and continues to be so. Kelly Ana Morey, a young New Zealand writer, underlines this fact in her new book, How to Read a Book:

My in-house editor, Miss Lal, edits an awful lot of books over multiple genres and doesn't have much time to phaff about discussing 'the big picture' in a New Zealand novel that might sell at best 1,000 copies. Her job is to pick up the spelling and continuity errors my other editor misses – things like making sure the stretch of water seen from the balcony of an apartment in Mumbai is correctly identified. (Morey, 2005, p. 72)

Writers and editors in New Zealand apparently live different lives compared to their European counterparts. Selling 1,000 copies is not the way to high literary acclaim, and things might quite possibly be better in other parts of the world, especially in Europe. In saying that I am not implying that anyone knows in detail in which way exactly things are different but better in Europe. But for the longest time everything European had to be better, as if by default. Slowly, even in the Fifties, this perception changed, and almost ceased in the early Sixties. This process of New Zealanders winning self-confidence despite their geographical isolation is on-going.
Isolation has not been considered as a factor contributing to the feeling of marginalisation that was experienced by some writers, but it certainly had an impact. In a country with a population that reached the 2 million mark by 1952, the overall number of artists must have been quite small. And despite considerable clustering in the four main centres, a genuine writers' community does not seem to have been established. To the contrary, writers were continually seen as individualists (Oliver, Cole, & Chapman, 1951).

Overall the New Zealand writer's situation in society was probably not much different from any other writer's anywhere else. Writers here have not been ostracised to an unnaturally severe degree. The majority of the people anywhere are of an unreflective turn of mind, and the writer is always the reflective minority. But it is easier to bear this lot as part of a minority when, because there exists a substantial number of artists like oneself, one is at least part of a community. In the Fifties in New Zealand, there was no writers' community. Groups of friends there were many, and thanks to the 'village atmosphere' everyone knew everyone else. But numbers were small and social distances large.

At the same time the writer struggled to come to understand the changing society around him and his place within it. In a young country like New Zealand after the Second World War, what was he to strive for? To represent "European civilisation in a philistine province" (Phillips, 1990, p. 125) like the universities did? This would have meant a continuation of colonial writing and also the acknowledgement of Britain's cultural superiority. Alternatively he could become a realist chronicler of his times, which many writers did.

The question of the writers' position in society is closely linked with questions of cultural identity and culture appreciation. Artists, especially if they view themselves as producing for their society, are in desperate need of appreciation for their work. Comment and discussion keep the artist connected with his surroundings which is what he needs. He might have a vocation to do what he does, but he must share his work with others somehow, with an audience of some nature (other artists or larger public). In a small community of individualists such as the literary field in New
Zealand during the Fifties, this whole process of cultural production and appreciation was impeded on many levels.

As regards the relation between the culturally non-interested that Pearson agitated against in 'Fretful Sleepers' and the 'enlightened minorities' (Holcroft, 1969), they do in fact seem to be parted by an unusually wide gap to the present day. In European countries, the bourgeoisie, the 'gebildete Bürgertum', fills this gap. The Bürgertum is wedged between the middle and the upper classes and, most characteristically, is liberal and relatively well educated. From my limited perspective on New Zealand society it appears that here no comparable stratum carried liberal attitudes towards 'Bildung', education. I do not think that the resulting disparity between the well-educated and the badly educated is greater in New Zealand than elsewhere, and therefore I personally do not support the claim that the ordinary New Zealander is uncommonly ignorant and even anti-intellectualist. Rather it is the absence of a middle stratum in society that continues to cause some of the problems I have addressed in this study.

It seems that present-day New Zealand has still much in common with the New Zealand of fifty years ago. Gender relations are quite similar, interest in politics still low among the general population, and appreciation of material belongings surprisingly high (hence the recent plunge in the market). Thinkers today criticise the same aspects of society that have been problematic back then, and sometimes they employ prejudices against the ordinary New Zealander that have been formulated in Landfall. Academics especially display a pet liking for Pearson-like sarcasm towards the ordinary New Zealander.

I do not think that condescension towards the public is becoming of an academic, and it is hardly a healthy attitude either. Personally I am convinced that setting intellectuals apart from the cultural mainstream in this way inhibits the production of work of high quality and utility. Academics are obligated to produce work about and for their society which means that they carry a tremendous responsibility. The intellectual's mission is meliorative mission, and whilst snubbing the non-academic and rather unreflective public for some harbours infinite pleasures, such attitudes must ultimately impede the fulfilment of their social responsibility.
New Zealand artists, in contrast, overall seem to have come to grips with their society. Impressive developments have been made in New Zealand writing, and several New Zealand 'voices' in literature have been found. Cultural production here is well comparable to cultural production in longer-established centres such as Europe. It is pleasant to read New Zealanders talking about their country with a quiet pride, in wonderfully flowing ways, with freedom and mystery in their words.
Bibliography


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