

Master's thesis, the research for which was done in New Zealand but the submission of which took place in the United States. Part of the answer arises from the fact that my primary concern was with the Ringatu movement, and I was intent upon putting distance between a movement which I fancied that I understood and rather admired, a movement I saw my thesis defending, and its more disreputable precursor. (Greenwood shared this fault.) Through Paul Delamere, the *poutikanga* of the Ringatu Church, I had been given access to a substantial body of Ringatu manuscripts, and it was on the latter movement that I had intended to place the emphasis of my study. As it happened, the Master's essay never drew upon the Delamere materials, which to this day remain untapped in a filing drawer. I would like to think that now I could return to those records and relate a far different story than I was able to do in 1952.

Despite the excellence of Paul Clark's book, that story still requires telling. Te Kooti and Ringatu need their historian, and had Clark been able to carry out field research and to extend his study, he would have been the person to fill that role. But he has provided an excellent beginning, showing how Pai Marire, 'as part of the process of Maori modernization, pointed the way for the more permanent Parihaka, Ringatu, and Ratana movements, and even for the Young Maori Party,' which added to the revivalist zeal the necessary organizational skills. And surely here is proof that more of those Master's theses written in New Zealand should be published.

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*The Tactless Philosopher: Johann Reinhold Forster 1729-1798.* By Michael Hoare. The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1976. x, 420 pp. Australian price: \$15.95.

JOHANN REINHOLD FORSTER, the 'Tactless Philosopher' of Michael Hoare's scholarly biography, exemplifies one of the principal difficulties facing an historian of eighteenth-century science. Two conflicting opinions of Forster reveal the problem. Writing to a friend in 1778, the scientific traveller, Peter Simon Pallas observed: 'He is one of those Polyhistorians, that will write upon every subject but very superficially.' Almost twenty years later an anonymous writer singled Forster out as the most illustrious professor at the University of Halle: 'He is one of the first polyhistorians of our century, worthy of comparison with a Conning or Hugo Grotius.' A century which could produce men like Linnaeus, Priestley, Lavoisier and Black, also brought forth men such as Banks, Nollet, Blumenbach and Forster whose boundless curiosity defied any attempts to force them within the paradigms of any particular discipline. To some historians of science, looking forward to the specialization of the nineteenth century, the second group of men represent the dilettantes of their age — here Hoare firmly places Banks. Others, with a view to the Bacon legacy, see the 'polyhistorians' as part of a true but older scientific tradition which resisted any strict categorization of a philosopher's interests.

The further Johann Forster moved away from his closest interest, the less 'scientific' he became. His writings on natural history and ethnology were for

the most part sound and respected, although often derivative, and his pretensions to knowledge in the fields of military strategy and politics were clearly ludicrous. But how did such men develop such wide-ranging interests? Travel in Forster's case (as in Banks's) certainly broadened the mind. Born in Polish Prussia of Scottish descent, Forster gave up the life of a small town pastor in 1765 to take up a commission under Catherine the Great, investigating the condition of German colonists in Russia. Taking his ten-year-old son with him as an assistant, he spent six months along the Volga, honestly fulfilling his commission, but also developing that encyclopaedic range of scientific and antiquarian interests which were to make him one of the remarkable men of his age. When his obstinacy and tactlessness destroyed prospects of advancement in Russia, he sought his fortune in England. After a spell at the Warrington Academy, from which he was sacked in 1769, Forster joined Captain Cook's second voyage of discovery in the place of a truculent Joseph Banks.

That voyage was both the making and the unmaking of Johann Reinhold Forster — and of his dutiful son, George. To a scientist with his open and enquiring mind it exposed a wealth of data and raw materials. His primary concern might have been zoology, but it became impossible for him not to take an interest in botany, geology, hydrology, geography and ethnology. There was too much to stimulate the mind. Working feverishly with his assistants in a damp and crowded cabin, he examined and classified his specimens and drawings, and in subsequent years published his analyses of this valuable material. Even the last eighteen years of his life as a professor at Halle from 1780 to 1798, can be seen as an aftermath to this voyage. Forster continued to work up the materials he had gathered, and furthered his interest in the natural history, ethnology and discovery of the Pacific.

But Captain Cook's greatest voyage also revealed Forster's weaknesses, and the aspects of his character which were to circumscribe his career and even undermine his reputation as a scientist. Dr Hoare quite frankly faces up to these personality problems. Forster was obstinate, suspicious and self-righteous. He could be coarse and crude. Grasping and at the same time financially incompetent he doomed his family to a life of indebtedness and insecurity. Contemporaries provided a bounty of epithets about him: 'a clever but a litigious quarrelsome fellow'; a man of 'malevolent heart'; 'An Utterly Impracticable Man'. Too often this unhealthy side of Forster's personality impinged upon his scientific work, preventing the publication of important works such as the *Descriptiones animalium*. Most tragically it prevented the full realization of Forster's undoubted talents.

Forster is not an easy subject for a biographer and this book is not always easy reading. However Dr Hoare has handled his difficult subject with great skill and honesty, retrieving the great deal there is to be retrieved, but refusing to hide the darker side of Forster's character. This is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Cook's voyages and of eighteenth-century science, and the Australian publishers have served Dr Hoare well by producing an attractive and fine volume.

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