

own journal (*The Resolution journal... 1772-1775*, London, 1982) he called Beaglehole's 'slough of Forster[ian] despond' an 'imaginary Tolkienish world of Teutonic druids and fantasies' (p.75). While this was not the kind of language to endear one to the scholarly community surrounding Cook, nor to many of Hoare's fellow historians in New Zealand, it demonstrates the strength of feelings that Forster was still generating two centuries after he got on board the *Resolution*. In some ways this excellent edition of Forster's main published work stands as a memorial to Michael Hoare, who died in early 1996. Like Beaglehole, Hoare had an international reputation and he is constantly referred to by the three editors, and they have made much and profitable use both of the journals he edited and of his biography, *The Tactless Philosopher* (Melbourne, 1976). While Forster may not have endeared himself to everyone, he was a major intellectual figure in the German and British enlightenment and reading this new edition lets us witness his lively mind at work as he tries to make sense of strange and new environments and peoples in the South Pacific. We do not have many accounts of New Zealand from the eighteenth century and this is one of the most erudite and interesting. I highly recommend both it and the introductory essays.

RICHARD SORRENSON

Indiana University

Infectious Diseases: Colonising the Pacific? By John Miles. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 1997. 123 pp. NZ price: \$29.95. ISBN 1-877133-26-4.

THOSE WHO APPROACH this book to further their understanding of disease as an agent of colonization in the Pacific, or of the debate between the relative roles played by natural and social history in Pacific Island depopulation, will be disappointed. The title is misleading. So too is the blurb which claims that it analyses 'the absence of acute infectious diseases and the reasons for the very high susceptibility of the islander to such infections when they were introduced'. Miles himself states that the susceptibility of the Pacific Islander to epidemic diseases post-contact is 'perhaps beyond our brief' (p.98), though his last chapter does consider a 'little of this evidence'.

In this chapter, 'The End of Isolation: Some Medical Effects', he cites Arthur Thomson, military surgeon in New Zealand from 1847 to 1858 (on page 41 he gives the incorrect dates of 1843-1854 for Thomson's sojourn in New Zealand). According to Miles, Thomson lists the causes of the decline of the Maori population as: '1. Inattention to the sick 2. Infanticide 3. Sterility 4. New Habits 5. New diseases' (p.103). While these headings are elaborated on, Thomson's views are simply reported; no attempt is made at analysis. Nor does he refer to any other historical writings on the subject (Dow's *Annotated Bibliography for the History of Health and Medicine in New Zealand*, 1994, has ten entries on Thomson). Miles's discussion of the post-contact period is at best superficial.

Also slightly bizarre, in view of the book's title, is the inclusion of a map of New Zealand opposite the opening page of the chapter on leprosy. While he provides evidence that leprosy, given the Maori name 'ngerengere', was introduced to New Zealand very early in the days of European contact, it never became an important disease in the history of Maori health and colonization.

What then does Miles view as his brief? A former professor of microbiology at the

University of Otago, with a longstanding interest in the early history of infectious disease in the Pacific, John Miles directed a laboratory to study infectious disease epidemiology in Fiji from 1963 to 1972, after which he carried out further field work in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. His aim in the book is to identify which infectious agents were present in the Pacific prior to European contact.

He organizes his material by considering each group of diseases in turn. He makes use of the diaries of the early explorers to attempt a diagnosis and cites from those diaries to describe symptoms. He concludes that 'There is solid evidence of only a very limited range of infectious agents in the Pacific islands before the late eighteenth century' (p.98). He further points out that even where there was evidence of indigenous names, it was not always certain that the disease to which the early explorers and missionaries thought that the local people were referring was what was meant by that name nowadays. Moreover, it is clear that sometimes there were several indigenous names for one aetiological entity and that the same name could sometimes be used for more than one disease. Sometimes an indigenous name might be used for a new disease which had some clinical resemblance to a syndrome already familiar to the locals. Thus he identifies problems in nomenclature and in retrospective diagnosis, and admits that his conclusions are speculative.

Miles's writing style is scientific. He shows little interest in human agency; the focus is on the independent activity of microbes and parasites. He describes diseases but makes no attempt to assess their prevalence, mortality or social significance. At most this slim volume will be a footnote in the ongoing debate about the impact of European colonization on the health of the indigenous people of the Pacific.

LINDA BRYDER

The University of Auckland

The Killing of History: How a discipline is being murdered by literary critics and social theorists. By Keith Windschuttle. Macleay Press, Sydney, 1996. 298 pp. Australian price: \$24.95. ISBN 0-646-26506-7.

THIS IS a truly bizarre book. With cover recommendations from two emeritus professors and a reviewer for the *Australian Financial Review*, and decorated with pictures of Tudor monarchs and Abraham Lincoln (icons, presumably, of 'real' history), this is a 'revised and expanded international edition' of a book originally published in 1994. It is difficult to see why it would have any international appeal. I am not privy to the hidden agendas which lurk behind the making of the *Killing*, but Windschuttle, whom I had always assumed was a sociologist, clearly bears some grudge against the University of Sydney's History Department and has a dislike of the Australian historians Greg Denning and Paul Carter that borders on the pathological.

Of course there are important issues about objectivity and the status of truth in history, but the reader will not find them seriously addressed in the *Killing*. It is not an intellectual history of a profession like Peter Novick's brilliant *That Noble Dream*. Nor is it a Marxist critique of poststructuralism in the vein of Bryan Palmer's *Descent into Discourse*. Windschuttle seems unaware of either book. Rather, this muddled, ignorant, intemperate work consists of a series of chapters — the word essays would imply a coherence which does not exist — charting the baneful influences which Windschuttle detects in the current world of history writing. So we have chapters on cultural studies (he seems unable to get past the introduction to the important Grossberg, Nelson, and Treichler collection),