

Taking the longer view, it is more likely that, instead of weakening the 'Ngai Tahu-ness' of the community, intermarriage has played a major role in supporting and sustaining it. Whether it is due to the inclusiveness of whakapapa and the strength of Maori identity, to considerable foresight shown by Maori communities first interacting with Pakeha, and/or to broader global processes, iwi populations continue to grow and a fair proportion of that growth remains due to both historical and current intermarriage. While asserting that intermarriage contributed to the dispersal of Maitapapa families in search of better economic opportunities, and their assimilation into mainstream New Zealand society, Wanhalla's own research suggests that intermarriage has ultimately worked to support the future of Ngai Tahu by drawing Maitapapa descendants back into the Ngai Tahu community, and thereby extending the voice of Ngai Tahu at every level of New Zealand society. It is intriguing to wonder what nineteenth-century census enumerators would make of that.

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This Horrid Practice: The Myth and Reality of Traditional Maori Cannibalism. By Paul Moon. Penguin, Auckland, 2008. 303 pages. NZ price: \$40.00. ISBN 978-0-14-300671-8.

IN PUTTING TANGATA WHENUA on trial for the crime of cannibalism Paul Moon was confronted with an evidential deficit: a lack of support at any archaeological site anywhere in New Zealand with which to make his case, a matter he concedes (pp.115–6).¹ Thus, in order to overcome this lack and turn a foundational metaphor of capitalist imperialism into 'a comprehensive history' (p.11), he relied on the penny dreadfuls of early colonial literature and a naïve literalism to read them. The result is a pot pourri of fantasy predilections seasoned with courtroom jargon.

Take the main title: the book's back cover, as well as its epigraph (p.9), tells us it is derived from a sentence attributed to 'Captain James Cook'. The sentence, however, was invented by John Hawkesworth, commissioned by the Admiralty to make Cook's *Endeavour* journal suitable for general publication.² Fond of 'the "slab" technique', Hawkesworth interpolated the sentence into his narrative in order to link a passage he had taken from Joseph Banks's journal, modified and put into Cook's voice, to a passage he had edited from Cook's journal to give the impression that the latter was a continuation of the former and that all was Cook's work.³ Given this elementary gaffe, and that the front cover illustration is a formulaic depiction of savagism produced in nineteenth-century Paris by an artist who almost certainly never visited New Zealand, we might be forgiven for thinking that *This Horrid Practice* refers not to its subtitle but to the author's praxis.

Promoting himself as an intrepid seeker of truth in an area where others have feared to tread, Moon opined on National Radio that 'cannibalism has been the one subject in New Zealand history that has been effectively fenced off. If you look at Keith Sinclair's *History of New Zealand*, I think he devoted all of one sentence to cannibalism. Michael King of course didn't even mention it in his history of New Zealand.'⁴ That claim is repeated in *This Horrid Practice* (p.14), despite King, although not indexing 'cannibalism', referring to it at pages 35, 87, 97, 106, 108, 132, 134–5 and 180 of *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. This is a schoolboy error which should have set alarm bells ringing at Penguin given that it had published King's bestseller just five years earlier.

Another example of the 'accurate and penetrating scholarship' found in 'this brilliant study', as Penguin described Moon's book, may be found at Chapter 9 (pp.64–75).⁵ There Moon presents four different versions of an incident, recorded by Cook, Hawkesworth, Banks and Sydney Parkinson in January 1770, as four different incidents. He not only moves Parkinson's account into February, but also claims that Hawkesworth's cut-and-

paste version 'represents one of the most compelling examples of the proof of Maori cannibalism obtained during the *Endeavour's* journey around New Zealand to this time' (p.67), and that Banks's account is 'forensic evidence — of a compelling nature' (p.71). Four chapters later, when the only 'evidence' (p.88) Cook could muster to explain why he thought 'the New Zealanders' were 'Cannibals' was having 'a piece of [human] flesh' broiled and given to 'one of the natives to eat' (p.87), Moon, without an ellipsis, redacted 447 words — including Cook's confession that his first-voyage account of cannibalism had been 'discredited by many persons' — from a passage (pp.87–88) extracted from John Douglas's edition of Cook's second-voyage journal, and moved another incident, which had occurred the day before Cook's 'experiment' (pp.86, 87) and which had clearly been unconvincing, to two days later, presumably to support 'the fact of cannibalism taking place' (p.88).⁶ As with Moon's earlier alteration of chronology, this one is disproved by the account from which he was quoting. For on 25 November 1773, the day Moon claims 'the sailors came across confirmation that human flesh was being consumed in a Maori settlement' (p.88), the *Resolution* was weighing anchor at Totaranui 'early in the morning' in preparation for sailing south.⁷

When it comes to what is perhaps the book's largest claim — that 'cannibalism was certainly practised in the South Pacific, most probably for thousands of years prior to the Polynesian migration to New Zealand' (p.157) — Moon describes an article concerning an archaeological site in Melanesia as being 'definitive evidence for this' (p.260 n.167). He fails to notify his readers that the article's author considers the basis of his hypothesis as 'very tentative', that 'it is clearly inappropriate to characterize all, or even most, prehistoric Fijians as "cannibals"', and that he acknowledges 'that it is impossible to absolutely prove cannibalism'.⁸ Moon also lists 'K. Lukaschek, *The History of Cannibalism*, chap. 4' under the same endnote. This, however, turns out to be not a book but a 60-page M.Phil thesis in which none of the eight prehistoric archaeological sites discussed is from the Pacific and in which its author states that the 'treaty of Waitangi' refers to 'cannibalism'.⁹ Given that Moon is described by Penguin as a 'Treaty of Waitangi' specialist (p.1) and by AUT University as being 'widely recognised for his study of the Treaty of Waitangi', this would appear to be more than just a careless error.¹⁰

Arguably the most glaring flaw in Moon's methodology is his failure to examine the invention of the word *canibales*, first used by Columbus on 23 November 1492 for the purpose of enslaving indigenous people in order to turn a profit from his voyage and fund the colonization of Hispaniola.¹¹ Instead, Moon offers a simplistic definition — 'cannibalism is the act of human beings eating other human beings' (p.22) — without explaining that Columbus attached his neologism to a people and a practice he had not met or observed, and which heralded a holocaust far greater numerically than the Holocaust of World War II, as Spain, then other European countries, extirpated entire populations as they stole their geographies and plundered resources, extending that activity around the globe through colonizing projects, which, conveniently, the cannibal accompanied. Thus, it can be argued that it is precisely because this metaphor of savagism helped contemporary settler societies to justify their existence while forgetting the genocidal violence on which they are founded that the discursive cannibal still roams their cultural imaginaries.

Which returns me to the evidential deficit and Moon's final attempt to overcome it by offering an argument based on the fallacy of false dilemma. As he expressed it, 'writing down a first-hand observation of a teenage girl having her head split open, being butchered, and her body parts then cooked and eaten is not easily subject to cultural (mis)interpretations. The researcher is left with just two options in these cases: either the authors of accounts such as this were liars, or they were correct and their descriptions can be used as part of the general body of evidence on cannibalism' (pp.235–6). While Moon's praxis provides us with one answer, an excluded alternative may also be found in the example itself, which Moon implies was Joel Polack's eyewitness account (pp.106–7). For as we learn from

Polack's *New Zealand*, this was not 'a first-hand observation' (p.235) but an 'account' given to Polack by a trader later 'killed' in 'Figí', where 'his body [was] devoured by . . . the most determined sarcophagi in existence'. Moreover, we learn from the *Athenaeum* that Polack acknowledged 'that he never saw a human being killed and eaten; that he could say nothing as to the existence of cannibal rites from his own knowledge; and that his belief rested altogether on hearsay evidence and presumptions'.¹²

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NOTES

1 Ian Barber, 'Archaeology, Ethnography, and the Record of Maori Cannibalism Before 1815: A Critical Review', in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 101, 3 (1992), pp.241–92 (particularly pp.278–80).

2 The attribution of 'this horrid practice' to Cook was made by Moon on TV One's *Breakfast*, TV One's *Good Morning* and 95bFM. It was also made by Rod Vaughan in 'Close to the Bone', aired by TV3's *60 Minutes*. It appears in the Spring 2008 edition of *Insight*, AUT University's magazine, and on the websites of Penguin New Zealand, Penguin Australia and Google Books. This list may not be exhaustive.

3 John Beaglehole, *Cook the Writer*, Sydney, 1970, p.11.

4 Paul Moon, 'Cannibalism – This Horrid Practice', interview with Chris Laidlaw, Radio New Zealand: Te Reo Irirangi o Aotearoa, Wellington, 3 August 2008. Available online at: http://www.radionz.co.nz/search?mode=results¤t_result_page=2&results_per_page=15&queries_all_query=Paul+Moon.

5 Penguin Group (NZ) Press Release, 'This Horrid Practice: The Myth and Reality of Traditional Maori Cannibalism'. Available online at: Cannibalism'. Available online at: http://www.penguin.co.nz/webfiles/PenguinGroupNZ/files/This_Horrid_Practice_press_release.pdf.

6 James Cook (John Beaglehole, ed.), *The Journals of Captain Cook on His Voyages of Discovery, Volume II: The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772–1775*, Cambridge, 1959, p. 294; James Cook, (John Douglas, ed.), *A Voyage Towards the South Pole, and Round the World. Performed in His Majesty's Ships the Resolution and Adventure, in the Years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775. Written by James Cook, Commander of the Resolution. In which is included, Captain Furneaux's Narrative of his Proceedings in the Adventure during the Separation of the Ships. In Two Volumes: Volume I*, London, 1777, pp.243–6. The incident which Moon claims occurred 'two days after' (p.88) Cook's 'experiment' and which he references with endnote 89 (88) but for which he gives no page reference number at the endnote itself (p.248), is taken from pp.241–2 of *Volume I* of the Cook/Douglas London 1777 edition – that is, two pages earlier than the event he claims occurred 'two days after' (p.88) the 'experiment'. The marginal date at pp.241–2 of *Volume I* of the Cook/Douglas London 1777 edition is shown as Monday 15 November 1773 (not 25 November 1773 as Moon has positioned it). However, this date is almost certainly a publishing error given that the preceding date on the previous page, p.240, is Monday 22 November 1773. The correct date for this occurrence is 22 November 1773, as shown at pp.238–9 of the Dublin 1784 edition of the Cook/Douglas account.

7 Cook (Douglas), *A Voyage Towards the South Pole, and Round the World*, p.247.

8 David DeGusta, 'Fijian Cannibalism and Mortuary Ritual: Bioarchaeological Evidence from Vunda', in *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, 10, Chichester, 2000, pp. 90–91.

9 Karoline Lukaschek, 'The History of Cannibalism', M. Phil. thesis (unpublished), Cambridge, 2001, p.16.

10 AUT University, 'Professor Paul Moon'. Available online at: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/te-ara-poutama/our-people/paul-moon>.

11 Christopher Columbus (ed. and trans. by Marc Beckwith and Luciano Farina), *The Journal: Account of the First Voyage and Discovery of the Indies*, Rome, 1992, pp.118–9.

12 Joel Polack, *New Zealand: Being a Narrative of Travels and Adventures During a Residence in that Country between the Years 1830 and 1837: Volume II*, London, 1840, pp.7–8; Editor, 'Manners and Customs of the New Zealanders. By J. S. Polack, Esq. 2 vols.', *Athenaeum*, 11 April 1840, p.288.