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PACIFIC CIRCLE NEWS

MEMBERS' NEWS

Rod Home and colleagues successfully completed their long-term Ferdinand von Mueller correspondence project by publishing the third and final volume, covering the noted scientist's last two decades. Please see: *Regardfully Yours: Selected Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller, Volume 3: 1876-1896*, ed. by R. W. Home, A. M. Lucas, Sara Maroske, D. M. Sinkora, J. H. Voigt and Monika Wells (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006).

James R. Fleming has just published *The Callendar Effect: The Life and Work of Guy Stewart Callendar (1898-1964)*, the newest title from American Meteorological Society Books. This volume analyzes and discusses scientific correspondence, notebooks, family letters, and photographs to tell the story of the scientist and engineer who established the carbon dioxide theory of climate change. Callendar established that global warming could be brought about by increases in the concentration of atmospheric carbon dioxide resulting from human activities, such as burning fossil fuels.

Brian Richardson's *Longitude and Empire: How the Voyages of Captain Cook Changed the World* (University of British Columbia Press) is now available in paper (ISBN 0774811900). The book was written as "a theoretical field guide" to Cook's voyages, taking the published versions of the voyages as "philosophy by other means." Brian details how the ability to accurately measure longitude connected to a profound reorganization of the way that Europeans understood the world.

Warwick Anderson's essay on "Immunization and Hygiene in the Colonial Philippines" will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*.

MEETINGS AND BUSINESS

The Pacific Circle is sponsoring "Nuclear Peripheries: Challenging Geographic, Institutional and Disciplinary Narratives in Nuclear History," a panel at the upcoming History of Science Society meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia. Papers will be presented by Jacob Hamblin, "The Other Atomic Scientists: Oceanographers and Radioactive Waste in the Fifties;" Gabrielle Hecht, "Scenes from the Nuclear Life of Radon, Set in South Africa, Australia, and other Peripheries;" Diego Hurtado de Mendoza, "Promise and Peril of Nuclear Ambitions: Argentina During the 1976-1983 Military Regime;" and Jahnavi Phalkey, "Urgent and Highly Important: The

Organization of Nuclear Research in Postwar India (1946-1948)." Morris Low is the chair and Roy MacLeod will comment on the papers. The panel is scheduled for Saturday, November 4, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. until 11:45 a.m.

HSS NEWS

Upcoming History of Science Society meetings are planned for November 1-4, 2007 in Washington, D.C. and November 6-9, 2008 in Pittsburgh, PA (jointly with the Pacific Science Association). For information, visit http://www.hssonline.org/meeting/mf_annual.html.

FUTURE CONFERENCES, SEMINARS and CALLS FOR PAPERS

2-4 November 2006. "Health and Medicine in History: East-West Exchange," the Asian Society for the History of Medicine Conference, to be held at the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. The meeting proposes to understand the significance of issues related to health and medicine in Asia with emphasis on the exchange of medical ideas, techniques, and tools between Asia and Europe. Please contact ashm2006@rediffmail.com or Deepak Kumar, Z. H. Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India 110067.

7-9 November 2006. "Epidemics in South Asian History: A Review of Medical, Political and Social Responses," to be held in Burdwan, West Bengal, India, and jointly organized by Burdwan University and the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College, London. The meeting will include papers on official responses, impacts on different sections of society, civilian responses, and medical technologies and public health strategies. For information and an invitation please contact Dr. Sanjoy Bhattacharya (sanjoy.bhattacharya@ucl.ac.uk).

12 November 2006. "Medicalization of Spaces, Spaces of Medicalization" one-day conference, to be held at the University of Kent, Canterbury, England. This conference proposes to address in an interdisciplinary way spaces of medicine and science, including geographic, physical, and imagined ones. For additional information, please contact Dr. Patty Baker (P.A.Baker-3@kent.ac.uk) or Tal Bolton (tb40@kent.ac.uk).

13-17 November 2006. "Libraries, Archives, and Museums: Building Knowledge Networks for Vibrant Communities," the fifteenth annual conference of the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries and Archives, to be held in Koror, Republic of Palau.
16 November 2006. "Navigational Instruments as a Source of Historic Information,"

one-day symposium at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England. This meeting will explore using navigational instruments for historical research and includes contributions from maritime historians, historians of science and exploration, museum curators, and, among others, maritime archaeologists. Please contact Mrs. Janet Norton, Research Administrator, National Maritime Museum, London SE10 9NF, England. Email: jnorton@nmm.ac.uk.

24-26 November 2006. International Workshop on “Ethnic Pathology,” or Social Medicine, Medical Geography, and Health Care of Indigenous Populations, to be held at Justus-Liebig-Universitat Gieben, Germany. The workshop will discuss the concept, international practice, and legacies of “ethnic pathology.” Contact Marcos Cueto (mcueto@upch.edu.pe) or Michael Knipper (Michael.Knipper@ histor.med.unigessen.de).

12-15 February 2007. Second International Conference to Review Research in Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) Education, to be held at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (TIFR), Mumbai, India. The conference will focus on three broad strands that influence STM education: the history and philosophy of STM; cognitive bases of STM learning; and STM curriculum and its transaction. General information about the Centre and conference is available at <http://www/hbcse.tifr.res.in/episteme>. For further information or questions, please contact Chitra Natarajan, Convener (Email: episteme@hbcse.tifr.res.in).

17-19 February 2007. 18th Annual Symposium on Maritime Archaeology and History of Hawai'i and the Pacific, to be held in Honolulu, Hawai'i. This year's theme is “The Maritime Landscape.” For more information, please visit www.mahhi.org.

9 March 2007. “Medicine and Culture: Chinese-Western Medical Exchange from the Late Imperial to Modern Periods,” to be held at the University of San Francisco. For information contact Melissa Dale, Assistant Director for Research, The Ricci Institute, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080. Email: mdhuang@usfca.edu.

3-6 May 2007. 80th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine, to be held in Montreal, Quebec. Contact Philip Teigen at pteigen@nih.gov.

23-27 June 2008. International Maritime History Congress (IMEHA 2008), to be held in the Old Royal Naval College, University of Greenwich, United Kingdom. Organizers are soliciting papers considering the roles of the surface of the sea, the undersea domain, and the coastal zone, as well as the sea as a cultural resource. For further information, please visit the Congress website at www.IMEHA2008.com.

EXHIBITIONS and MUSEUMS

"The Duchess of Curiosities: The Noble Naturalist, Forgotten By History," exhibition narrating the life of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Portland, at The Harley Gallery, Welbeck, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, England, continues through March 1, 2008.

The American Museum of Natural History's Research Library announces the launch of the Darwin Digital Library of Evolution at <http://darwinlibrary.amnh.org>. The goal is to make the full literature of evolution available online within an historically and topically coherent structure. Whereas Darwin's work is the focal point, the framework includes materials from the 17th century to the present concerning the history of evolution as a scientific theory.

EMPLOYMENT, GRANTS, EDUCATION, and PRIZES

Duke University has established a new interdisciplinary graduate certificate program in History and Philosophy of Science, Technology and Medicine. For more information, please visit <http://philosophy.duke.edu/hpstm>.

RESEARCH, ARCHIVES, and COLLECTIONS: PRINT & ELECTRONIC

The American Association for the Advancement of Science Archives holds collections that document twentieth-century issues in the development of science, including, but not limited to, arid lands, global climate change, population, science and ethics, science education, and the scientific aspects of human rights and international security. For further information and finding aids, please visit the AAAS History and Archives Web site at <http://archives.aaas.org/about>.

The biography of Anselm Windhausen (1882-1932), the noted German-Argentine scientist, is now available online at <http://awindhausen.blogspot.com>.

A new web site has been established for online sources for the history of science. Visit <http://ppp.unipv.it/history.htm#Anchor-28022>.

The Alaska and Polar Regions Collections at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks recently processed the papers of William O. Field (1904-1994), a glaciologist, and of Sydney Chapman (1888-1970), a geophysicist specializing in the upper atmosphere. Please contact fyapr@uaf.edu.

Interested in the history of medicine? Visit the Wellcome Trust Centre Web Site at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/histmed>.

A subject-accessible bibliography of books and dissertations covering the colonial period to the 21st century has been added to the "History of Science in the United States" Web Site. Please visit home.earthlink.net/~claeilliott/.

Looking on line for History of Science dissertations? Please visit the following: http://www.hsls.pitt.edu/guides/histmed/researchresources/dissertations/index_html.

BOOK, JOURNAL and PUBLICATION NEWS

Interested in the history of science in colonial Latin America? If so, you might find helpful the special issue of *Colonial Latin American Review* 15:1 (June 2006), devoted to questions of nature, exploration, scientific knowledge and empire in Spanish America. Among the articles are "Nature and Scientific Knowledge in the Spanish Empire" and "Empire and Knowledge: Reporting from the New World."

The American Historical Review 111:3 (June 2006) includes a special section on "Oceans of History," with an introduction and articles on the Mediterranean, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, including Matt. K. Matsuda's "The Pacific," 758-780.

The Carcinological Society of Japan recently published *William Stimpson's Journal from the North Pacific Exploring Expedition, 1853-1856, as Crustacean Research, Special Number 5*, ISBN 02873478. Contact the Carcinological Society at watanabe@s.kaiyodai.ac.jp.

The Rutherford Journal is a new online publication focusing on the history and philosophy of science and technology: <http://www.rutherfordjournal.org>.

The Japanese Association for the History of Geology (JAHIGEO) *Newsletter* Number 8 (May 2006) is available. Edited by Yasumoto Suzuki and Michiko Yajima, this issue includes: Hakuyu Okada, "The Terms *Taiseki-Gaku* (Sedimentology) and *Chiso-Gaku* (Lithology): The First Proposers in Japan," 2-6 and Mitsuo Hoshino and Kanenori Suwa, "Record of the Activities of the Nagoya University African Geological Research Project, 1962-2005," 7-14.

SELECT RECENT PACIFIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Alexander von Humboldt: A Metabiography, by Nicolaas A. Rupke (Frankfurt: Peter Lang A.G., 2005).

The Callendar Effect: The Life and Work of Guy Stewart Callendar, by James Rodger Fleming (American Meteorological Society, 2007).

Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State, by Julia Rodriguez (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Conservation is our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea, by Paige West (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

Evolution: A Scientific American Reader (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795-1850, by Sujit Sivasundaram (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Papuan Pasts: Cultural, Linguistic and Biological Histories of Papuan-Speaking Peoples, edited by Andrew Pawley, Robert Attenborough, Jack Golson, and Robin Hide (Canberra: Pacific Linguistics at Australian National University, 2005).

Public Science, Private Interests: Culture and Commerce in Canada's Networks of Centres of Excellence, by Janet Atkinson-Grosjean (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

Regardfully Yours: Selected Correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller, Volume 3: 1876-1896, ed. By R. W. Home, A. M. Lucas, Sara Maroske, D. M. Sinkora, J. H. Voigt and Monika Wells (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006).

Strangers in the South Seas: The Idea of the Pacific in Western Thought, ed. by Richard Lansdown (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006).

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

“Birds, Including Extinct Species, Encountered by the Malaspina Expedition on Vava’u, Tonga, in 1793,” by **Storrs L. Olson**, *Archives of Natural History* 33:1 (2006), 42-52.

“Bird Pollination in an Angraecoid Orchid on Reunion Island (Mascarene Archipelago, Indian Ocean)” by **Aclaire Micheneau, Jacques Fournel and Thierry Pailler**, *Annals of Botany* 97:6 (2006), 965-974.

“Frequency of Cyanogenesis in Tropical Rainforests of Far North Queensland, Australia,” by **Rebecca E. Miller, Rigel Jensen and Ian E. Woodrow**, *Annals of Botany* 97:6 (2006), 1017-1044.

“Making the First Anti-Depressant: Amphetamine in American Medicine, 1929-1950,” by **Nicolas Rasmussen**, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 61:3 (July 2006), 288-323.

“A Multi-Species Assessment of Post-Dispersal Seed Predation in the Central Chilean Andes,” by **Alejandro A. Munoz and Lohengrin A. Cavieres**, *Annals of Botany* (2006), 373-392.

“‘Polyhybrid Heterogeneous Bastards’: Promoting Medical Genetics in America in the 1930s and 1940s,” by **Nathaniel Comfort**, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 61:4 (2006), 415-455.

“An Unpublished Eighteenth Century Treatise on the Birds of Colonial Mexico,” by **J. L. Maldonado and M. A. Puig-Samper**, *Archives of Natural History* 33:1 (2006), 53-70.

“William Buckland (1784-1856),” by **Christopher J. Duffin**, *Geology Today* 22:3 (May 2006), 104-108.

BOOK REVIEWS

Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005. Pp. xx + 320 B/W Illus. Maps. Index. Cloth US\$ 55.00 and ISBN 0522343072 and Paper US\$21.95 ISBN 0520243080.

The South Pacific, and specifically the South Pacific as it has existed in European thought, has become a key field of inquiry for postcolonial and other academic writers. Often constructed in mythical ways, whether as cannibals or as muses, as hell or as paradise, South Pacific islanders and the South Pacific have been a part of the European imagination for centuries, beginning with the Spanish, but intensifying with the voyages of Cook and others in the late 18th century. Recent discussions have centered on the debates between Gananath Obeyesekere and Marshall Sahlins. While there are many points of debate, a key issue between the two scholars is the nature, or even the possibility, of knowledge, especially in relation to European attempts to understand events, peoples, and places in the South Pacific. Obeyesekere's *Cannibal Talk*, the latest addition to this ongoing controversy, focuses on the European understanding of cannibalism, both in the South Pacific and in other areas (including the Americas and Europe), which was less an understanding than a mythologizing of cannibalism.

At its most direct *Cannibal Talk* is a challenge to the typical European belief that South Sea natives are guilty of cannibalism. Focusing on some specific texts that purport to offer first-hand or unquestionable accounts of native cannibalism, Obeyesekere attacks the credibility of the texts, undermines the believability of the authors, and shows how every account is at least suspect and probably no better than fiction. *Cannibal Talk* is written in the genre of a lawyer's summation in a criminal trial, a genre that has little concern for truth and a great concern for convincing the audience to give the correct verdict. Whether attacking the texts or the authors, or protecting his own client from attack, Obeyesekere uses any and all tactics to establish his point. There are plenty of sarcastic asides, there are plenty of words in quotation marks as a way to undercut the credibility of what is being said, and there are plenty of arguments that are merely a series of accusatory questions—which are really not arguments at all. Of course, these can be effective courtroom tactics, but the showmanship appropriate to a trial lawyer is not appropriate for an academic writer.

Criticizing the Authors

One of the essential elements of any courtroom battle is to attack the witnesses that are called to the stand by your opponent. There are some typical tactics.

First, you can undermine the witness based on the amount of time that the witness had to observe the events. Obeyesekere, for instance, criticizes one account because the author was only in New Zealand for six and a half weeks, but doesn't say why the length of time in New Zealand would matter if someone is claiming to be an eyewitness to a specific event (113).

Second, you can point out that the witness, even if present, could have not have seen the events clearly. Obeyesekere claims, when attacking Dillon's account of a battle between Europeans and Fijians, that "it is quite unlikely that Dillon holed up in his rock would have seen these activities in all their details" (199). But Obeyesekere admits that no one really knows what rock Dillon was on, and it is misleading to say that Dillon was "holed up" in a rock when in fact he was standing on a rock — which is described as a hill on the previous page — and could thus at least look over the events occurring below.

Third, you can attack the witness based on their motivations or biases. For instance, Obeyesekere repeatedly points out the "practical usefulness" of different accounts of cannibalism, meaning of course that the description of cannibalism was useful to someone (perhaps to raise money for missionary activities), which means that their accounts cannot be taken as true. Likewise, because Europeans expected to find cannibalism, Obeyesekere argues, "... it is not surprising that cannibalism has been found in virtually every part of the expanding world after the fifteenth century" (152). But his argument runs: because people desired to find it and they found it, therefore it didn't exist or at the very least the evidence is falsified. It is as if the only credible thing that can be described are things that are not looked for. However, while motives are important, it is not enough to point out possible motives and then conclude the person was lying. If that were true, then one could merely point out that Obeyesekere has a motive to find these cannibal texts suspect, and therefore they are beyond suspicion.

The guilt by motivation is often surrounded by tedious sarcasm and heavy-handed rhetoric. "One tends to assume that an Evangelical missionary, the embodiment of a true Christian, cannot lie; consequently, it is easy for many to accept the truth of this statement of an eyewitness account of cannibalism printed in the *Evangelical Magazine*." (112). Obeyesekere fails to name anyone who has these assumptions, and so his argument is no better than some disreputable politicians who invent opponents with extreme ideas in order to have an easy target to argue against.

One important tactic in *Cannibal Talk* for discrediting authors is to connect the author's texts to a specific genre and then, by attacking the genre, you can attack the book. For instance, Obeyesekere argues that a narrative supposedly written by Endicott on Fiji "belongs to the genre of sailors' yarns" (170), and calling it a yarn is enough to start treating it as fiction. One useful consequence of this tactic is that any facts in a text become part of the fiction. We should be suspicious of people who include information on native languages: "... language knowledge is also a fictional device to render the authenticity of the narrative. This is true of almost everyone writing 'authentic' cannibal texts" (176), but it would also be true of anyone writing "authentic cannibal texts." Language knowledge is used in fiction, but finding language knowledge in a text is not enough to say that the text is fiction. It is a bad argument to say that because facts are used in fiction, therefore every use of fact indicates that something is fictional.

A related strategy for attacking an author is to analyze the author's "discursive space." Europeans, so the argument runs, were too trapped by European myths or the desires of a European readership for the truth to ever be a real goal. Individual

motivations and cultural prejudices made it all but impossible for people to accurately describe anything. But this is simply guilt by association, or mere name-calling. When Obeyesekere writes, for instance, that “As a colonial historian Thomson simply exonerates Europe and refuses to recognize that the beginnings of conspicuous anthropophagy from a sacrificial base occurred in this region after the arrival of Europeans” (192), he is at the very least begging the question because he has not established that Thomson was simply a colonial historian or that colonial historians were unable to do anything but exonerate Europeans. Of course, there can be profound problems with historical interpretations, but Obeyesekere uses the possibility of those problems to reject historians outright with no real trial.

On the other hand, where convenient, as with a quote from George Hamilton on native anxieties towards children born from Europeans and Tahitians, Obeyesekere is willing to accept what Europeans say without criticism (92). But this is the convenience of the lawyer, of one who accepts and stresses everything that helps the client and challenges everything that does not. It is left to the reader to determine the strategy and to decide what texts to believe

Obeyesekere makes a lot out of the childhood stories (sometimes labeled “primordial” or understood as a psychological given) that the English sailors heard, which prompted them to find cannibals in the South Seas. “Cannibal talk or discourse has to be understood in terms of a pervasive fantasy resulting from European socialization of that period and, more narrowly, from a subculture of sailors with a tradition of the practice of anthropophagy that in turn gets locked into primordial fantasy and then, cumulatively, produces shipboard narratives and ballad literature on her subject” (43). He never gives an example of one of these stories, and never explains why the main characters in some of the stories were found and others were not. Obeyesekere hints at, but does not analyze, the connection between cannibalism and vampirism in European culture. He notes, without offering any numbers, that there was a proliferation of novels on cannibalism (18). However, the appeal to childhood fantasies and European fears is not used to make an interesting point. Rather, the pervasiveness of childhood stories (and sailors’ yarns) is used to make Europeans incapable of understanding (or even describing in the barest of details) what is going on in the South Pacific. The authors are simply incapable of offering an authentic account.

Obeyesekere has his own claims to authenticity, which are themselves questionable. When he writes about how the Maori killed their prisoners, and argues that these practices were learned from the Europeans, for instance, he claims: “My interpretation is based on my Sri Lankan experience and knowledge of European quartering” (189). Another time, he mentions that: “It required several months of hard work at the National Library of Australia examining Davidson’s original notes and archival sources to deconstruct Dillon’s narrative...” (193), as if the length of time spent working in a library helped establish the relevance or quality of the writing that resulted. The reader seldom needs to know about the author’s nationality or how much time was spent doing research. What matters is the quality of the argument.

Criticizing the Accounts

In addition to criticizing the motivations, social status, believability, and mental capacity of the author, Obeyesekere also spends considerable time attacking the details of the accounts themselves. Obeyesekere is good at tracing how different versions of the story change. Some authors are clearly liars. Others are clearly drawing on stories that have nothing to do with the events being discussed. Many others somehow change their stories, which makes their stories suspect at best. Unfortunately, there are times when the comparison of passages is confusing as Obeyesekere shifts quickly from one source to another. It is as if the reader were encouraged to simply give up and accept the flurry of details. But the general strategy works well, and at least for the texts that Obeyesekere chooses to analyze, he is able to raise serious questions about the coherence of the accounts.

Obeyesekere sometimes holds texts to very high standards of completeness and uses any gaps in the account to criticize the account as a whole. For instance, he notes that “In any case Mariner does not explain why most of the bodies were buried and the others disposed of in the most unusual manner” (87). If an author is not telling the whole truth, in other words, he is merely lying. But why should he have to provide every detail? Obeyesekere’s strategy here—and it is good lawyerly strategy—is to suggest that someone is hiding something because he has not described everything. But this is nonsense, at least in the extreme. Of course, the general point may still be true, which is that English writers fabricated or reformulated accounts of cannibalism, but there are better reasons for believing this than the fact that someone didn’t describe everything in detail.

On the other hand, while Obeyesekere criticizes those who do not offer accurate accounts, he also claims that an accurate account must be fictional, because no one can write every detail down of what they are experiencing. Thus, he claims, “perfect verisimilitude is only possible in invented genres or fiction” (197). In other words, accuracy is criticized for being fiction and inaccuracy is criticized for being fiction. Obeyesekere’s opponents simply cannot win, so long as he can flip from one tactic to another, criticizing those who are not completely factual and then criticizing those who are. It is great theatrics.

And while Obeyesekere holds other texts to high standards of truth, there are times, especially if they are tactically useful, when Obeyesekere feigns ignorance, such as when he writes: “I do not know whether [native, or indigenous] slavery was a ‘traditional’ institution or one influenced by European labor practices of the time...” (128). Of course, he is trying to downplay the negative descriptions of his presumed client. There must be some evidence to decide this question, and there is almost certainly more evidence on this point than there is on countless events about which Obeyesekere is willing to make unwavering claims. Of course, he may not “know” anything, but this modesty is not evident elsewhere in the book.

Obeyesekere frequently makes the reader come to accept the argument by personalizing the discussion. He claims, for instance, that “Few would disagree that the

myths and stories of cannibalism far outnumber the practice of anthropophagy" (15), as if the reader would be odd, or at least outnumbered, for disagreeing with the claim. However, he offers no justification for this claim, and it's not clear how anyone could one come up with a number for the practice of anthropophagy. Obeyesekere likewise uses false modesty quite effectively. He writes, for instance, that it is "No wonder Davidson and I joined the ranks of the many readers who fell for it" (198). In this case, Obeyesekere admits he was taken in, but only as a way for readers to accept that he knows the truth now.

Every once in a while, Obeyesekere will use phrases like "what really had happened," which at the very least flies in the face of his methodology and metaphysical commitments. At times, when Obeyesekere talks about the obviousness of things, the things are really not obvious. For instance, after relating a conflict between the Maori living near the Bay of Islands and Marion du Fresne, Obeyesekere notes: "This naturally was the worst that any Polynesian group had thus far experienced in their encounter with Europeans..." (71). But the naturalness of this fact is questionable at best. Even admitting, as Obeyesekere does two sentences earlier, that "gross numbers are unreliable," du Frense was killed in New Zealand in 1772, which means that this conflict, which may have killed anywhere between 250 and 500 Maori, occurred after Wallis's attack on the Tahitians in 1767 and after over two centuries of the Spanish in the South Pacific. Obeyesekere is also very confident when he describes what native practices were like prior to the arrival of Europeans. He notes that before Cook, "not only was thieving not a common occurrence, but the punishment for thieving was not beating and death" (89). Likewise, he notes, "We know that pronounced anthropophagy existed in New Zealand mainly, though not exclusively, in the Bay of Islands area" (151). While the contrast between pre- and post-contact native practices is key to Obeyesekere's discussion, what is lacking throughout the book is any sense of where Obeyesekere's account of pre-contact native practices comes from. How do we know about such practices? Where did he get his information? Obeyesekere gives no evidence at all. In fact, *Cannibal Talk* does not even include a bibliography, which causes confusion, of course, and is somewhat troubling for any serious reader.

Competing Evidence

Obeyesekere uses competing accounts of the same events effectively to undermine the understanding of what happened, sometimes comparing manuscript journals with published accounts, sometimes comparing accounts from different people. The general plan of attack is that if there are any differences between accounts, then the credibility of the witnesses is undermined. So, for instance, because Endicott makes no mention of "having witnessed a cannibal feast" in his personal log, but mentions it in a later published work, that means that the account is fictional.

It therefore seems to me that one has no choice but to be skeptical of Endicott and Oliver on the cannibal feast. And one must be equally skeptical of ethnographers like Marshall Sahlins who, in a very recent paper, finds Oliver's reference to this 'cannibal feast' proof of the empirical reality of that elusive object of scholarly desire (165).

Clearly Obeyesekere has been stalking Sahlins for some time, and if the reader has access to Sahlins's article in the June, 2003 issue of *Anthropology Today*, which is where Obeyesekere draws the quote, it is worth reading as a counterpoint to Obeyesekere's analysis here. Sahlins writes of the same event:

But as it did actually happen, several of the *Glide*'s crew were on shore that afternoon and indeed attended the ceremonies — a circumstance that Obeyesekere's criticism had explicitly ruled out. From these witnesses, one of their fellow seamen who had remained on board the *Glide*, James Oliver, gathered a report sufficiently different from and similar to Endicott's as to confirm that the cannibal rites the latter described had indeed occurred, and had been witnessed by more than one of the crew (5).

There is a clear tactical difference between Sahlins and Obeyesekere. While Obeyesekere focuses on very specific texts to find logical or factual gaps, Sahlins lists as many sources as possible, hoping that the quantity of reports will be sufficient. One can imagine how Obeyesekere would respond to Sahlin's reliance on Oliver as a reporter of other people's first hand accounts (which is that people could make things up, they could repeat typical sailors' yarns, they could have provided little verifiable detail, or they could have heard what happened from someone else before they talked with Oliver). The witnesses could have been tampered with. But for Sahlins, there are so many witnesses, that at least some of them must be telling some of the truth. The challenge posed by Obeyesekere is to find a text that is above reproach while the challenge posed by Sahlins is to account for so many different, but similar texts.

Obeyesekere chooses to discuss what works for his argument, and leaves the reader to find the text, test the argument, and respond. Given these tactics, however, readers are not given a sense of the entire books or the entire literature, but only of whatever supports Obeyesekere's argument. He chooses whatever passages fit what he wants to say, and so there is never a time when he considers what Europeans as a whole were saying about savage cannibalism — it is always about this particular person and that particular text. As a result, Obeyesekere does not demonstrate an awareness of how Forster differs from Cook and others on the voyage. Forster was influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the ideals of the noble savage. This too is mythical, but Obeyesekere seems unwilling to show that there were competing myths in European thought which had different ways of writing about cannibalism. If fact, it is not until almost half way into the book that Obeyesekere includes a counter image of the Maori. He quotes John Savage, whose views were "startlingly different from both Cook and the missionary magazines" (124). For someone who is concerned with myth-making, Obeyesekere seems very unconcerned with the social complexity of the myths or with offering a sense of the debate within Europe. He never mentions Rousseau or Gauguin. He never mentions Herodotus or Roman sources. He never lets European thought become interesting, if only because simplifying European thought to a singular mythology helps to give his argument an edge, or at least a simple target.

Competing Plausible Counter-Stories

As part of his reaction to European accounts of cannibalism, Obeyesekere sometimes offers other possible explanations of what the Europeans experienced. Given the facts that he is willing to accept from the European stories, Obeyesekere weaves a different story, where he will tell readers what really happened and what people were really thinking (96). If there is plausible doubt, if there are several possible stories, then the European claims that South Pacific peoples were cannibals becomes that much less plausible. On the other hand, there are times when these alternate stories sound like a lawyer grasping to establish reasonable doubt and are no better than fiction — or conjecture, as the lawyers say.

The main problem here is when natives admit that they are cannibals. Obeyesekere responds by claiming that the native discourses of cannibalism were a defense, if not a counter-attack, against the Europeans. A key source for this argument is Reinhold Forster, who noted in his journal from Cook's second voyage that the natives of Tanna said that they were cannibals as a way to protect themselves from the Europeans (53). While this obviously happened, Obeyesekere takes one example as a primary explanation for every instance where natives claim to be cannibals and could then say, without qualification or evidence, that the "Maori began to give a version of their cannibalism to the white visitors to terrify them, and they enjoyed the terror written on their faces" (70).

The Maori made up the fact that they were cannibals in order to scare the British and it was "the British discourse that literalizes Maori speech." (107) For Obeyesekere, natives learned how to talk about cannibalism from Europeans, who constantly asked them if they were cannibals, and thus taught them to say that they were. In other words, because the Europeans asked if they were cannibals, they learned how to pretend to be cannibals. And while the British started to take the natives at their word, Obeyesekere has constructed his account in such a way that even if natives admit to being cannibals, their admission is not to be taken seriously.

The final step, which Obeyesekere quickly makes, is that the Europeans ultimately taught the natives to actually be cannibals. There are two main stages in this story. First, he claims that "the traditional rules did not apply to them [the Europeans], or could be suspended, ignored, or reformulated" (73). In other words, because the Europeans were foreigners, they did not fit into the Maori system, and so the system was no longer relevant. For instance, he argues that "It is unlikely that the Maori simply fitted the British into their preexistent cultural forms and treated them as if they were traditional tribal enemies, because the British were *not* their traditional enemies" (59). But this is not a good argument in the sense that it denies that the Maori could connect their traditional enemies with new enemies, or that when faced with some novelty, the system simply falls apart. Obeyesekere's argument here also contradicts what he claims elsewhere in the book, which is that the Europeans understood the South Pacific islanders in terms of the Caribbean islanders. If the Europeans can shift preexisting cultural forms, then why are the Maori unable to?

After showing how the very presence of Europeans undermined traditional rules, Obeyesekere then shows how the relationship between Europeans and natives caused the natives to become cannibals. He writes: “I have shown how the colonial presence not only changed the tenor and directions of native life and warfare but also produced the occasional practice of conspicuous anthropophagy (that is, the empirical realization of cannibalism)” (263). In Fiji, he claims that “there developed a form of pronounced anthropophagy that must be seen in terms of the European presence” (151). This is the most provocative, but also the most problematic, point in the book. Clearly, Europeans had an impact on the peoples of the South Pacific. It is shocking, for instance, when one thinks about how many Maori heads were purchased by Europeans and brought back to Europe for private collections, museums, and anthropology departments (120) and how this market increased the Maori willingness to kill other Maori. Obeyesekere draws a parallel to the Spanish in South America: “The presence of the conquistadors and their threat to the very existence of Aztec society would have resulted in the multiplication of sacrificial victims. It is an error to make the inference that such was the case in more normal times” (258). While he is correct to say that the inference is not supported, the alternative, which is that the normal times had fewer sacrifices, is also not supported. What is needed, and what Obeyesekere never offers his readers, is a justified sense of what life was like before Europeans. All that he established is that Europeans had a great impact, but this conclusion, such as it is, is not new.

Conclusion

The book is very good at making the reader suspicious of different European accounts of cannibalism. At his best, Obeyesekere is effective in pointing out exaggerations and inconsistencies in accounts of savage cannibalism. Cannibalism, as presented to readers in Europe, was permeated by European anxieties and myth-making. Obeyesekere is also good at challenging the lack of critical thinking on the part of academics, who build accounts of cannibalism on first person accounts which are not actually first person accounts. There is a false empirical foundation to much of what has been written. In the conclusion, Obeyesekere writes: “My work indicates that one can no longer view cannibal narratives as innocent statements of truth, nor can we take missionary and settler accounts of natives eating loads of human flesh as empirically true” (263). But such a claim is not controversial, at least in its general outlines. It is important to be suspicious.

But suspicion and denial are not the same thing, and Obeyesekere will often follow a good analysis of a text establishing suspicion with an account of what “really happened,” even if he offers no direct evidence or sources that indicate where the account of what really happened can be found. In other words, while he has effectively challenged the claims made by others, he has failed to offer an alternative that is grounded on anything better. The court tactic is clear: by challenging the character and trustworthiness of his opponents, he is able to establish, by implication, the innocence of his client. It up to the prosecution to offer the cross-examination.

One of the most important goals when debating in court is to have the legal question articulated in your terms. If you can define how the debate will proceed, then you are at a clear advantage. For Obeyesekere, the argument depends on a distinction between human sacrifice, anthropophagy, and cannibalism. Human sacrifice is the ritualized killing of a human being. Anthropophagy is the eating of a human being who has been sacrificed. Cannibalism, on the other hand, is a "fantasy that the Other is going to eat us" (14). But with this definition, there is a sense that the general project of the book is tautological: cannibalism is myth-making precisely because cannibalism is by definition fantasy. Of course, there can then be no evidence of cannibalism, because if there were evidence, then it wouldn't be cannibalism, it would be anthropophagy. The natives of the South Pacific would then not be cannibals, but perhaps only on a technicality.

Obeyesekere is at his lawyerly best when he weaves an alternative account of events, from whatever witnesses are suitable, and acting as if this is the only account that is seriously possible. The reader can almost see him shaking his finger at the defendant, and then turning thoughtfully to the jury: "How can you possibly believe this person?" This is court theatre at its best. But it is not suitable for an academic text. Of course, some readers may agree with him — "he may write like a polemicist, but at least he's our polemicist" — but to everyone who was not convinced of the conclusions before the book started, it is difficult to see why the book should change their minds.

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Kavita Philip, *Civilizing Natures: Race, Resources, and Modernity in Colonial South India*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004. Pp. viii + 248. Notes. Bibliography. B/W illustrations. Index. Cloth: US\$65.00 and Paper: US\$27.95. ISBN 0813533619.

In *Civilizing Natures*, Kavita Philip seeks to interrogate nineteenth and early twentieth-century practices of science in British colonial India in order to track the ways in which “scientific modernity functioned at the level of everyday experience, and the modes by which it rendered commonsensical—and thus remarkably persistent—its historically and culturally particular modes of perception and action” (1). Philip adds that the “book is motivated by the desire to historicize thoroughly our current understandings of the myriad interests aspiring to preserve, use, nurture, protect, or speak on behalf of nature”(3). Philip also seeks to add to existing debates on the constitution of colonial modernities by showing the interpenetrating character of the colonial discourses of natural history, ethnography, forestry, plantations, and Christian missions in south India (the forest areas of the Nilgiris, northern Malabar, and upper Godavari) during the years spanning 1858-1930. She seeks to present a more nuanced approach that sidesteps stark dichotomies, as it embraces ambiguities, contradictions, and complexities both at the level of the global and the local. In particular, she takes care to reveal the interpenetrating political and economic interests that often underlie the creation of scientific knowledge.

The book is divided into eight chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The first four chapters examine the changing colonial attitudes towards nature through an examination of English representations of landscapes (chapter 2), forests (chapter 3), and plantations (chapter 4). In these chapters, Philip reveals European attitudes towards forestry, indigenous tribes, labor, and work. These narratives generally celebrated the superiority of western science in the rational extraction of resources while they decried the unscientific logging, and cultivating practices of tribes (such as the Badagas, Chenchus, Kurumbas, Sholagas, Todas, etc), as well as their “slothful” nature. They viewed these forested landscapes as awaiting the improving hand of the European as they were converted into forest reserves and plantations, and their resources extracted for distant markets. Philip tries to show that this was a complicated process, involving a multitude of interacting agents (officials, missionaries, planters, and tribals). In chapters five and six, Philip examines the cultural authority of colonial anthropology and European Christianity. Both attempted to represent and discipline indigenous peoples in various ways. In her study of colonial anthropology, Philip’s focus is not on professional anthropology; rather she examines the impact of the “practical anthropology” produced by a host of non-academic amateur anthropologists like colonial officials, and missionaries belonging to organizations such as the Basel Mission and the Church Missionary Society. While colonial anthropology produced racialized frameworks of evolution, European missionaries used their faith to create a new species of disciplined workforce that would contribute to capitalist production and distant markets.

By examining these issues at the level of everyday life, Philip is able to complicate our stories of colonial modernity by tracing the interconnections between the themes she explores. So for instance, she is able to show how the knowledge created by “practical anthropology” was ultimately used by missionaries to explain and change the “laziness” of “natives,” which in the long run served the interests of the emerging capitalist world economy. In short, by the late 19th century, scientific categories fundamentally changed the ways many religious missions conceptualized their own civilizational tasks. In the final chapter she examines the case of the Cinchona tree which was smuggled out of the forests of Peru in the 19th century and sent to different parts of the world. Philip suggests that while the tree symbolized a global story of the transmission of botanical specimens, it also needs to be understood within specific localized contexts of culture, power, and history. Philip concludes that the emergence of modern science cannot be understood merely in terms of the emergence of a form of knowledge or ideology. Rather, it needs to be understood against a range of political, economic, and social forces that were locked in a mutually constitutive embrace.

Philip’s narrative is not a simple story of the triumph of Western Science. Within the specific context of south India, this meant that indigenous groups such as ‘tribals’ resisted in all kinds of ways—non-violent and violent—the disruption of their culture. Philip constantly reminds her readers that local cultures invariably blunted the impositions of European colonization. The modernity that emerged from this encounter possessed a hybrid quality—a mix of the old and the new. In emphasizing this and examining this at the level of everyday life, she seeks to provide a corrective to the important work of scholars such as Daniel Headrick who have ignored the connections between the old and the new, between science, politics, and economics to produce hybrid colonial modernities. Scientific knowledge and environmental history in this sense interweave with all kinds of political, military, and economic interests.

In revealing these insights, the book tends to be plagued by a dense and repetitious prose that can distract the reader. In trying to show the connections between scientific knowledge and the social world the reader is left with the no terribly insightful impression that all things social are the product of mutually constituting political, social, and economic relationships. This at times gives rise to the impression that Philip herself has fallen victim to an “infinite regress hypothesis, by which one would suggest that academics are doomed to the continual tracing of ever expanding, equally significant, circles of social construction” (199). Nevertheless, despite this tendency, *Civilizing Natures* is a welcome addition to the existing work on social constructionist studies of colonial science. Its theoretical sophistication supported by empirical evidence makes it a very worthwhile read.

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Sara Tjossem, *The Journey to PICES: Scientific Cooperation in the North Pacific*. Fairbanks, Alaska: Alaska Sea Grant College Program, 2005. Pp. xii + 194. Charts. Graphs. Cloth: US\$20.00 and ISBN 1566120993.

Marine scientists in the twentieth century witnessed extraordinary changes to their discipline. New ideas revolutionized theories of ocean dynamics and the sea floor. Technological innovations utilized the sea, air, and space. Institutional dominance shifted from Europe to the United States, with marine sciences growing stronger also in Japan and the Soviet Union. Maritime nations invested large amounts of money into scientific research for defense and economic reasons, including fisheries management. And international cooperation played an increasingly important role in all of these. Only recently have historians begun to explore these trends, and very few have focused on the issues particularly relevant to the peoples bordering the Pacific Ocean.

Sara Tjossem has written a short history of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization, which its members know more familiarly as PICES. The latter is a play off of ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, a predominantly European group that began to tackle fisheries problems at the dawn of the twentieth century. PICES is a relatively new organization, which came into being only in the early 1990s. One could argue that there is not enough distance from the story to give a balanced history, but Tjossem avoids this potential problem by also focusing on the decades-long genesis of the organization. This allows her to devote considerable attention to the history of North Pacific fisheries and the many diplomatic issues that have hampered scientific cooperation in the area since the end of the Second World War.

The idea for PICES sparked at a fisheries conference at Vancouver in 1973. Scientists from the United States, Canada, Japan, and the Soviet Union agreed in principle that a regional organization was needed to link the disparate scientific problems from all sides of the vast northern Pacific region. This meeting produced very little action, however, and it was not until Warren Wooster took an interest in the organization that it began to take shape. Much of Tjossem's book focuses on the activities of Wooster, who championed the cause of PICES when he took up a position at the University of Washington in 1976. Wooster brought a wealth of experience from his years at the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in the early 1960s and his involvement with ICES as a United States delegate. Tjossem highlights the political problems that have preoccupied Wooster over the years, particularly the issue of freedom of the seas. When states began to claim Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) under the rules being discussed under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, scientists (and fishermen) needed permission from coastal states to enter nearby waters. As an intergovernmental organization, PICES had the potential to circumvent any sticky political problems about access to coastal waters.

Convincing governments of PICES's usefulness was no easy task, Tjossem reveals. Some governments were somewhat skeptical that a Pacific-wide organization focusing on scientific research could help them. Although scientists claimed to conduct

value-free research and to offer objective advice, government officials were well aware of the power such organizations could wield. Particularly in countries with booming fishing industries, like Japan, what incentive was there to finance an organization whose scientific research was likely to criticize its policies? For many years, Japan was reticent to become involved in PICES for this very reason. PICES advocates argued that their recommendations would not be enforceable, but the Japanese knew that the political burden of ignoring scientists' advice might be heavy. According to Tjossem, Japan feared PICES would simply become another vehicle for "Japan-bashing" in international circles. Even after Japan decided to participate in the organization's planning meetings, it sent only people from government agencies, not academic scientists, to ensure that Japan's interests were not undermined.

Once PICES was formed and had its first annual meeting in 1992, it became bogged down in the time-honored ambiguity about applied and basic research. Should its principal goal be fostering marine science for its own sake, or should it focus on problems directed at fisheries management? Oceanographers pointed out that studies of the North Pacific thus far had been conducted piecemeal, without much coordination, and that this was a major opportunity for marine research. They tried to convince governments that research was critical for the world's future. But that claim begged the question: if the purpose of doing the science was to shed light on fisheries, was it not proper to conduct research locally, to help national industries? PICES advocates answered this by arguing for an ecosystem approach to the entire North Pacific. Assuming the interconnectedness of the whole region, studies of the region would be better served through international coordination. According to such reasoning, knowledge of fish migrations, habitats, and other economically useful subjects would follow.

In the late 1970s the planners of the organization agreed that PICES should have no advisory responsibilities. Yet by the 1990s, officials in the Canadian and U.S. governments began to put pressure on PICES to use their expertise to give advice. PICES firmly stuck to marine research, noting that it was primarily concerned with long-term trends—studies of climate, weather, and human impact on ecosystems—than with identifying fish quotas. As Warren Wooster put it, PICES was not 'PISCES.' PICES consistently sold itself as a scientific body with no policy teeth, but as Tjossem notes, PICES founders always envisioned some kind of advisory role—as in the case of ICES. A cynic might have concluded that PICES spun itself as a fisheries body when it needed governments to support its existence, and as a purely scientific body when governments demanded specific advice. The persistence of confusion among governments as to the nature of PICES suggests that the lines between fisheries management and scientific research have remained blurry.

Tjossem concludes with some comments about the difficulties in running an organization that tried to balance government interest with "curiosity-driven" science. She reveals that the strategy of PICES leaders was to cast the whole North Pacific as an ecosystem. This made their studies indirectly related to fisheries without tying them directly to fisheries management. It also necessitated international cooperation to fully

understand the ecological interconnections in such a vast region. But despite this clever strategy, which Tjossem justly highlights, it is hard to see PICES as an unqualified success story. The spirit of international cooperation that sparked PICES saw its zenith during the Cold War, but the Soviet Union collapsed before the organization came into existence. The Japanese seemed to distrust it, the Russians could not afford it, and both saw it as a fisheries organization. The Chinese tried to use it to advise on coastal fish farming, a booming industry but a hardly Pacific-wide one requiring cooperation. Still, as Tjossem points out, PICES forged ahead, trying to promote cooperative projects that involved fish, but were not explicitly geared toward fisheries policy. Fortunately, the 1990s fascination with climate change saved the day, giving PICES a more specific *raison d'être*. It began a project on Climate Change and Carrying Capacity (CCCC) to put the international ecosystem approach in touch with a scientific problem of global proportions. The CCCC project coordinated disparate national projects, but also became, as Tjossem notes, a unifying vehicle for the member states who wanted to implement the ecosystem approach and to foster international, intergovernmental, and interdisciplinary cooperation in the North Pacific.

Tjossem's book is a useful institutional history, not summarizing and celebrating, but instead placing the PICES story into an analytic framework by focusing on the ecosystem approach to international cooperation. For source material she draws on the existing literature in the history of the marine sciences, American archival materials, and her own interviews with some of the key participants. Ultimately she has made a persuasive study of how the changing winds of international politics have shaped the scientific study of the North Pacific.

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