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Minions, masters and migration: Challenging power structures in Gavin Bishop's *Cook's cook: The cook who cooked for Captain Cook*
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Minions, masters and migration: Challenging power structures in Gavin Bishop's *Cook's cook: The cook who cooked for Captain Cook*

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Abstract

Arguably New Zealand's best loved picturebook author/illustrator, Gavin Bishop invariably challenges populist power structures in his fiction and non-fiction. As such, his books are ideal vehicles for teaching children about such broad topics as race relations, colonisation, migration, class conflicts, gender relationships, environmental issues and spiritual beliefs. The fact that Bishop often addresses several of these simultaneously, and draws on found texts to do so, paves the way for the teacher to encourage the child to read not only the lines and images but between and beyond these in order to construct a fuller meaning.

*This article will discuss Bishop's (2018a) picturebook, *Cook's Cook: The Cook Who Cooked for Captain Cook*, which qualifies as "faction", a genre that mixes fact and fiction, with Bishop reproducing historical events and characters whilst investing them with an imaginative dimension. Most obviously, the selected book portrays migration, including the colonisation of New Zealand and the Pacific, and its longer-term effects. Hence, it focuses on the subjugation of the indigenous people, culture, flora and fauna to those that are imported, as well as the domination of the working class by the upper class. However, Bishop is too skilful an author/artist to suggest that everything is black and white. Rather, through paralleling and fusing the aforementioned foci, and in the ways in which the print and pictures work separately, together, sometimes against each other, and in interaction with fore texts, he suggests that dichotomies are mixed.*

The article will examine those portrayed as minions and masters (whether human or non-human), their conflicts and connotations, and Bishop's use of verbal and visual techniques and fore texts to challenge dominant power structures. It will also argue that, while emphasising dichotomies, Bishop, the master storyteller and artist, creates structures that ensure his picturebook is balanced and whole and that, rather than treating the reader as a minion, allow him or her to become a master of meaning making.

Keywords

Migration; colonisation; narrative and illustrative technique; minions; masters



Introduction, context, research questions and methodologies

The recently rewritten history curriculum, *Aotearoa New Zealand's Histories and Te Takanga o te Wā* (due to be taught in New Zealand schools from the beginning of 2023), and its emphasis on Māori perspectives and colonisation, provide a valid context for considering hegemony as it may occur in depictions of indigenous peoples and colonisation in children's books and how these might be read in the classroom. This article therefore focuses on Gavin Bishop's picturebook, *Cook's Cook: The Cook Who Cooked for Captain Cook* (Bishop, 2018a) which explores the colonisation of the South Pacific, and migration in terms of class and culture, and in its broadest sense simply as movement. It addresses levels that are personal, socio-political, cultural and environmental and ways in which they mix; encounters between minions and masters; and the part played by Bishop in depicting appropriation and assimilation.

Like many of his picturebooks, *Cook's Cook* is intertextual, with Bishop borrowing from historical texts and adapting their features to suit his narrative and political purposes. It is a process that could, itself, be considered as a form of colonisation, particularly if a certain doctrine is promoted and the young reader is effectively colonised in the process (Bradford, 2007; McGillis, 2000). The article therefore asks two interrelated questions: First, does Bishop overcompensate for perceived historical injustices to indoctrinate the reader into an essentialist view of indigeneity and class? Second, and conversely, does Bishop convey a fair and balanced view of social systems with options that allow the reader freedom of interpretation? Hence, the article examines the power relationship between the author and reader, with each potentially being a master and minion in meaning making.

Reflecting the new history curriculum's broad aim of "thinking critically about the past", and the "thinking critically" and "close reading" achievement objectives in the 1994 and 2007 English curricular and handbooks, the article adopts a mixed methods approach. It therefore applies a Critical Literacy methodology, which draws on Luke and Freebody (1997) who explicitly address reading, its social practices and colonisation, stating:

All texts are motivated—there is no neutral position from which a text can be read or written. All language, all text, all discourse thus 'refracts' the world; bending, shaping, constructing particular versions and visions of the social and natural world that act in the interests of particular class, gender, and cultural groups. (p. 193)

Bishop's personal and political agendas, and ways in which he refracts the world will therefore be examined.

Also drawing on New Criticism methodology, the article applies the analytical form of close reading. As defined by Abrams (1985), this is "the detailed and subtle analysis of the complex interrelations and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the components within a work" (p. 247). Hence, Bishop's narrative and illustrative technique will be scrutinised, as well as overt and covert meanings, implications and effects.

Overall, then, this article offers an example of approaches to reading that a teacher and learners may exercise in the classroom. Finally, it spells out the necessity of using rich New Zealand picturebooks, and practices involving critical literacy and close reading to enable learners to become more aware of hegemonic elements related to their ancestral past.

Postcolonialism and the establishment of power structures

Acting as a prequel to the story of Captain Cook's third voyage to the Pacific, as told by Bishop in *The House That Jack Built* (Bishop, 2012), and similarly merging history and fiction, *Cook's Cook* describes the power structures involved in migration and colonisation. It therefore includes authentic detail concerning Captain James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific in 1768 in order to observe the transit of

Venus and discover the great southern continent, Terra Australis Incognita. But it also focuses on John Thompson, the ship's cook, about whom little was known except for the fact that he had only one hand, and so also includes fantasy, as Bishop has acknowledged (2018b).

Much is known about Captain Cook. Cook himself kept a regular record of his travels in his three journals, while New Zealand historian, J.C. Beaglehole wrote about Cook in *The Exploration of the Pacific* (1934), and *The Life of Captain James Cook* (1974). Over time, therefore, Cook came to be regarded as a master explorer-navigator and coloniser of the Pacific. However, the decolonising movement of the 21st century and revisionist histories such as James Belich's (2007) *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* dispute such a claim. Bishop, it would seem, is part of the latter movement in that he presents an alternative view of colonisation and Cook as master by conveying the perspective of Thompson whom he reinvents as one of Cook's minions. At the same time, by maintaining a Eurocentric sense of things (McGillis, 2000), Bishop typifies postcolonial positioning in that the perspective he brings to things is almost always mixed.

When viewed together, the front and back covers of *Cook's Cook* suggest the angle that Bishop will take. Thompson as the *Endeavour's* cook is centrally placed, dominating the front cover illustration, while Captain Cook is smaller in stature and placed to the left of the back cover illustration, making the point, perhaps, that although Thompson is a minion on board the *Endeavour*, he is master of his own realm and may not necessarily subscribe to Cook's colonising regime (see Bishop, 2018c, image 1). However, power structures are implicit in the scene behind Thompson in which the crew working high up on the ship's rigging is depicted in what Cotton and Daly (2015) have termed "cinematic/cartoon" format (p. 43), to appear as diminutive figures or minions, thus paving the way for an exploration of Bishop's portrayal of class and colonising systems.

The illustration on the book's first set of endpapers makes power structures explicit with the diagram of *HMS Endeavour* stretching horizontally across left and right sides whilst also being vertically layered. In implementing the Brechtian *verfremdungseffekt*,ⁱ and positioning himself and the reader at a distance from characters depicted in cinematic/cartoon style as diminutive, and in using a sepia wash, Bishop requires the reader to critique this microcosm of 18th century society's institutionalised class systems. Hence, the ship's lowest layer or hold contains supplies. The second layer up comprises the mess in which the working-class crewmembers spend their leisure time and eat and includes makeshift hammocks and collapsible tables. The third layer focuses on the premises of the lieutenants and gentlemen where they wine and dine in relative luxury at real tables. And the fourth uppermost layer depicts the deck on which Cook promenades.

Six circular framed insets resembling portholes, evenly spaced on each side of the shipboard diagram, also require the reader's gaze to move horizontally and vertically in order to recognise class strata. These range from 38 lowly able-bodied seamen, and 20 midshipmen and master's mates, to 12 middle class marines, to nine upper class civilians (or gentlemen) with their two servants and dogs, and finally to six elite warrant officers, and commission officers. Here again, characters are portrayed in cinematic/cartoon format as largely anonymous. The enclosure of the characters within circular frames suspends them in time, and imprisons them within vertical class structures, suggesting that these are not easily assailable. At the same time, the frames act as portals through which the reader may access the *Endeavour's* interior and voyage (see Figure 1).

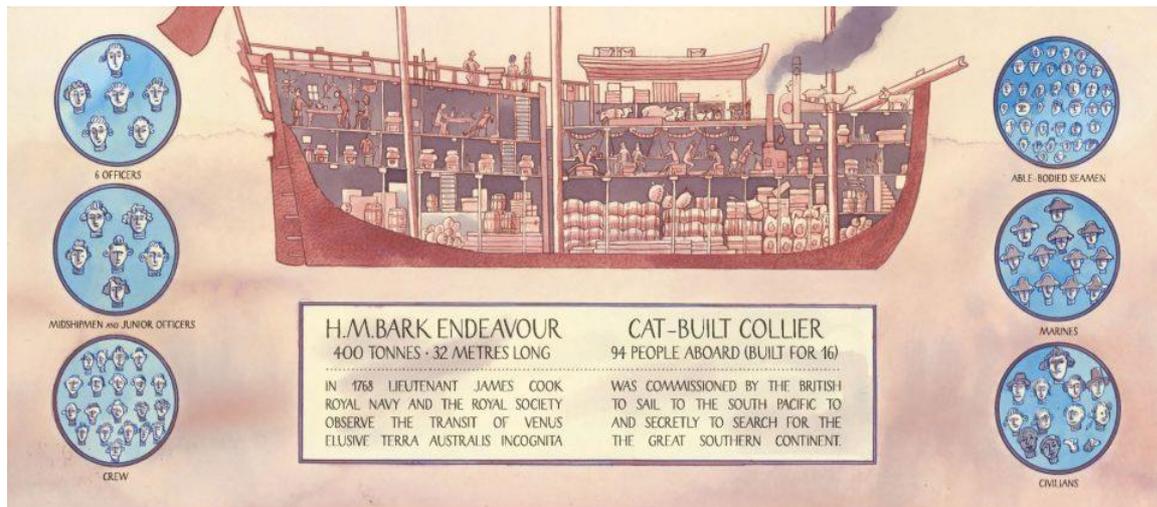


Figure 1. Horizontal and vertical social structures on board *HMS Endeavour*. (Bishop, 2018a, front endpapers)

Within the insets, Thompson is indistinguishable, but on the title page, Bishop gives him a circular frame all to himself in that it records the book's title with its focus on his role as cook. Images of foodstuffs around the frame emphasise the ship's social structures, with luxury items, such as roast turkey, wine and fine tableware, at the top and basic items, such as bread and pease porridge, at the bottom. Here, however, Bishop suggests the possible transcendence of power structures by sketching common pests between each item of food. As indiscriminating lowly bearers of disease, these are presented ironically as social levellers.

As a closer look at the book's title suggests it is also circular being of a chiasmic structure,ⁱⁱ with the name of Cook, the master explorer-navigator, repeated at the beginning and end, forming a frame around his cook, the minion. Recalling the initial endpapers' circular imprisoning porthole frames, the title questions whether Thompson will ever escape Cook's regime.

The dichotomised, static view of the *Endeavour* establishes the possibility of movement and mixture. Hence, the close-up illustration on the page adjacent to the title page showing the one-handed Thompson engaged in the menial task of polishing the ship's bell suggests that he is a minion, but that he is assertive rather than meek is apparent in his comment: "How'd I lose my hand? None of your bleed'n business!" (Bishop, 2018a, title pages). Moreover, in spite of his lower-class status and idiomatic speech, Thompson is literate: he writes up the cook's log left-handed, and also his recipes are recorded on rectangular insets resembling pages from a cook book. Thompson's articulated thoughts and words are similarly enclosed in rope frames, and in speech bubbles, a form Bishop has claimed as being popular in 18th century drawings (2018b). Like the circularly framed insets, these structures have an eternalising function while emphasising Thompson as a character who might step outside them. Typifying a post-colonial stance, Bishop attempts to redress historically social inequities by portraying Thompson as working class, comic and sympathetic to the reader. At the same time, however, he shows the *Endeavour's* upper classes also to be imprisoned within societal structures.

Antitheses and parallels

Although establishing Cook and his cook as antitheses in terms of status, class and concerns, Bishop suggests ironic parallels: they are similarly named, responsible for the crew's lives, locked within their shipboard roles, and keep logs of events. Bishop himself may also be compared to Captain Cook and his cook. As the author's notes in the front of the book state, he is a descendent of the navy elite, namely

Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, a baronet and British naval officer and, incidentally, the subject of Lord Nelson's dying words, "Kiss me, Hardy" (Hardy, n.d., para. 1), which puts him on a par with Cook. And, like Cook and his cook, Bishop is documenting recipes and historic events, and following the route taken by the two, albeit using fine ink and watercolour illustrations and the epistolary technique to convey history and fantasy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Throughout the book, Bishop repeatedly uses the double-page spread to depict separate social sectors, their similarities and differences, and the gap between them. For example, dated July 29 1768, the scene prior to the *Endeavour's* departure includes a small illustration in the upper left corner of the idealistic Cook, armed with his "letter from the Admiralty" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 1) farewelling his wife. This is balanced by the larger illustration of the pragmatic cook in the lower right corner where, armed with his signature recipe for "Pease Porridge" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 2), he stirs a pot of porridge. Centrally placed across the two pages, images of foodstuffs such as the "1,000 pounds of portable soup issued by the Sick and Hurt Board" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 2) evoke the social contexts from which they have come, and the working-class crew whom they are for. Similarly, "the ration of flour, suet and raisins" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 6) that the messmates are fed once on board suggests their lower social status and collective uniformity. Conversely, Cook and the lieutenants dine in "the great cabin above" and are fed "special meats, wines and cheese", served on "fine china, glassware, silver cutlery and linen tablecloths" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 6).

Bishop has noted that food in *Cook's Cook* is "a point of contact" (2018b, 2:07/3:00). As we shall see, food becomes a metaphor not only for class systems involving the crew and indigenous peoples and the migratory patterns occurring within and between them, but also for historical events while Thompson's recipes chart the ship's journey almost as much as his log entries. Hence, Bishop's portrayal of both sides, and establishment of ironic antitheses emphasise unjust social structures and historical inequities, and encourage the reader to form a more balanced view of these.

The collective versus the individual

The double-page illustration depicting Cook and his cook welcoming the civilians on board the *Endeavour* provides a more realistic and colourful close-up view of characters while emphasising the stratified British class system and pitting the collective against the individual. Here, positioned on the left, and labelled by Bishop with their names, the civilians form a mostly unsmiling, uniform group which is organised in descending order from Joseph Banks Esq. at their head; to Charles Green Astronomer behind him; to Alexander Buchanan Artist, Herman Spöring Naturalist, Sydney Parkinson Artist, and Daniel Solander Naturalist behind them; and then finally at the very back, the servants, James Roberts, Peter Briscoe, Thomas Richmond, John Reynolds and George Durlton (see Bishop, 2018c, image 3). Although the group members are portrayed as similar and largely conformist, Bishop's naming process affirms their existence as individuals.

Within Banks' group, however, the servants Durlton and Richmond stand out for their different ethnicity. In the author's notes Bishop comments that "Thomas Richmond, likely to have been a freed slave from Jamaica, was trained by a botanist and sent to work for Banks" (Bishop, 2018a, final endpaper), thereby acknowledging the servant's indigeneity and identity as a social being. Durlton, similarly, had been a Jamaican slave, as is recorded on the *Endeavour's* crew list (Macarthur, 1997). That Bishop's (2018a) random historical facts are entitled "Tidbits" (final endpaper) confirms his intention of paralleling foodstuff to historical detail and its record in writing, perhaps suggesting that morsels of food and morsels of information are equally nourishing.

The illustration of Cook greeting the civilians on board as "gentlemen" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 3) who are socially on a par with him is one of the few moments in the book when he looks at people rather than into the distance. Centrally placed, and with a stern demeanour, he is depicted as solitary and individualistic, in contrast to the conformist group standing before but apart from him. Although aligned

to the group of gentlemen behind him, Banks also stands separate to them and, unlike the others, smiles slightly. As Fara (2013) has noted, the young Banks, known historically as Macaroni, “was lean, foppish, over six feet in height, independent and resourceful, and thus a man apart from others” (para. 3). In capturing Banks’ character, Bishop emphasises him as being as individualistic as Cook but amenable where Cook is stern.

Positioned behind Cook, but on the right-hand page, Thompson is also distinctive, separated as he is from the domestic animals behind him, and from “Thomas Matthews—the cook’s servant” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 4) or minion. That the one-handed Thompson uses a pun to refer to Matthews as “another hand” he might need in order to prepare the departure meal of “roast beef and Yorkshire pudding” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 4) infers ironically that the latter equates to little more than an appendage. But Matthews is also portrayed as a miniature version of the working-class Thompson, with the implication not only that commonality exists within distinct classes of people, but also that there may be movement and that one day he may become a fully-fledged ship’s cook.

In the positioning and spacing of characters over the two pages, Bishop sets the individual against the collective, considers their differences and similarities, and suggests imbalance, whilst himself achieving an illustrative balance. Hence, the alternation of cartoon and realistic portrayals, distant and close-up views, sepia and colour, and horizontalized and verticalized spreads allows the reader to consider power structures, the possibility that they may be overcome, and options on a range of levels.

Static and mobile images: Imprisonment versus freedom

Thompson’s log entries for September 1st, 12th and October 25th, 1768, and the accompanying double-page illustration of the *Endeavour’s* period in the North Atlantic Ocean and crossing of the equator emphasise restriction and movement. For example, a close-up static image of the solitary Cook shows him standing erect, arms folded, gaze unflinching as he seeks to stamp out scurvy while avowing, “MY MEN WILL BE HEALTHY AND FIT!” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 7), implying he is locked within a class of his own. Porthole frames, like those on the first endpapers, similarly portray imprisonment and stasis, with crew members trapped within the *Endeavour*. And then there is the shark that has been hauled from its natural habitat, ironically by Banks the naturalist, to lay prostrate in death on the ship’s deck where it is dissected to provide the crew’s dinner (see Figure 2).

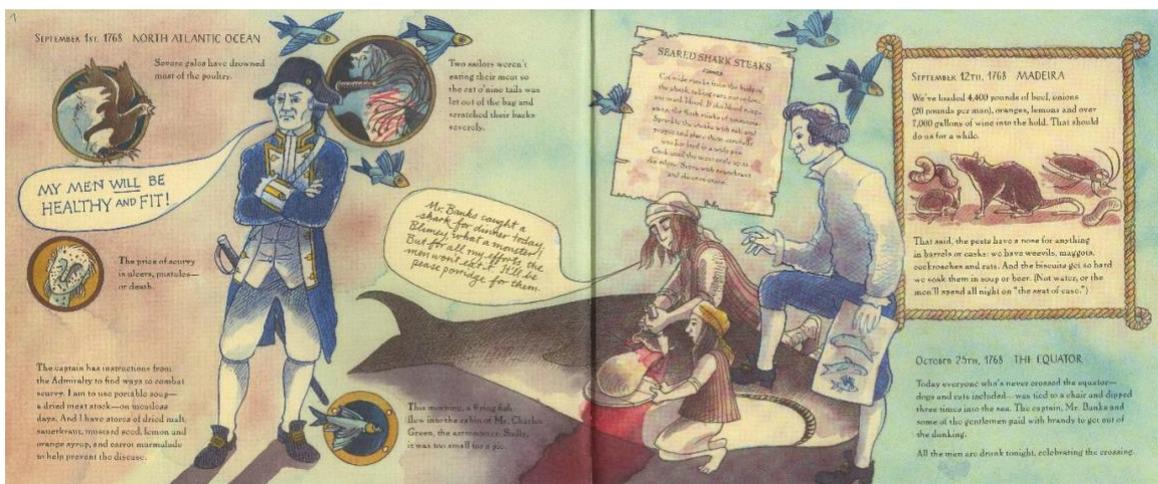


Figure 2. Static and mobile images. (Bishop, 2018a, pp. 7–8)

Aside from the static images, a variety of mobile images populates the two pages to suggest migration and cultural encounters. There are those who of their own volition attempt to break through

confining structures: the domestic animal (a hen) tries to escape from a porthole into the natural world, while the indigenous animal (a flying fish) tries to enter a porthole and leave the natural world. And there are those who are free to migrate from one level of nature to another: several fish leave their usual watery habitat to fly through the air and across both pages. Most significantly Banks, earlier depicted on a left-hand page, now crosses to the right and, in direct contrast to the austere Cook, smilingly aligns himself to Thompson and Matthews as they prepare their recipe for “seared shark steaks” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 8).

Invariably, then, static and mobile images comment on the degree to which the imported and indigenous cultures, and their flora and fauna remain imprisoned within stultifying vertical and horizontal power structures, or transcend them. Indeed, Bishop’s resistance to depicting Cook and Banks one-sidedly as villains or heroes, but as mixed, is evidence of his attempt to provide the reader with realistic characters who are products of their historical contexts.

From innocence to experience: Vertical crossovers

Crossovers between and within nature and society are reflected in changes of attitude during the *Endeavour*’s stopover in Rio de Janeiro, when Banks contributes to feeding the crew by shooting several albatross, as Thompson’s log records on November 12th 1768. It is an act that Thompson notes, “got me thinking” (p. 9), thus echoing Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Written in 1797–98 in response to Cook’s second voyage of exploration in 1772–75 (Strongman, n.d., para. 1), Coleridge’s (1978) poem describes “the mariner’s thoughtless killing of an albatross as an omen of ensuing misfortunes, for which he is held accountable by other crew members. Heraldizing the end of innocence and beginning of wisdom, it also anticipates his more thoughtful social consciousness” (Leonard, 1991, pp. 247–261).

Certainly, following the killing of the albatross in *Cook’s Cook*, the crew on board the *Endeavour* experience bad luck, trauma and illness with Bishop depicting a subjective Brazilian landscape reflecting these. For example, Charles Clerke’s fear that there could be giants in Patagonia is apparent in the shape of a giant hairy foot that occupies most of the two-page illustration. It is a scene in which the racist views of the *Endeavour*’s crew, especially those of Thompson, are projected onto an indigenous sepia landscape. That the illustration also depicts three Brazilians sheltering in their cave on the upper left as entirely separate to three of Cook’s crew surveying the landscape on the lower right, emphasises the gap in intercultural awareness.

As Thompson records in his log on January 16th, 1769, further bad luck ensues. Artist Buchanan experiences an “epileptic fit” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 10), Banks’ two Jamaican servants freeze to death in a snowstorm during a trip into the interior and, on January 25th, 1769, as the *Endeavour* sails around Cape Horn and across the Pacific Ocean, the weather deteriorates, sickness is rife and foodstuffs are severely depleted. Bishop emphasises the underlying cause of some of these misfortunes as being due to ethnicity and the class system—it is the Jamaican servants who die and the working class crew who is sick. Again, however, the reader is presented with an ironic reversal. Having initially ordered that sauerkraut be served to the whole ship, only to have the crew reject it as “stinky German cabbage” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 11), Cook then decrees it be served to “officers and gentlemen only” (Bishop, 2018a, p. 12), and then in defiance of Cook, the crew finally eats it.

In presenting Cook and his crew operating in antithesis, Bishop relates social interchanges to processes of ingestion, and crossovers between nature, humanity, class and culture during which, nevertheless, misappropriations occur. He thus requires the reader to make connections between these, and to consider what is morally right or wrong. Most interestingly, verbally and illustratively, Bishop himself resists moralising, and *shows* rather than *tells*.

Māori and Pākehā: Fusion and confusion

The arrival of the *Endeavour* in New Zealand on October 6th, 1769 is illustrated in a layout resembling the earlier horizontalized and verticalized diagram of the *Endeavour's* interior. While the double-page spread is still the predominant form of illustration, a horizontal rope-like image now divides the pages into vertical sections. The reader is thus encouraged to read right across the two pages three times and, in doing so, to consider the breadth and depth of the stratified social system, and New Zealand's coastline as encountered by Thompson and Cook.

Most noticeably on these pages, the circumnavigation of New Zealand's North and South Islands is marked by Thompson's attempts to name features of the landscape, each of which is counterpointed by Cook's metaphorical naming of them according to his personal and political agenda. For example, although Thompson is the first to sight a headland, he is beaten to voicing its discovery by the surgeon's boy, Nicholas Young, who is higher up in the ship's rigging, with Cook claiming it as "Young Nick's Head", perhaps in recognition of the fact that "to work aloft was to be among the elite of eighteenth-century working class [sailors]" (Lambert, 2011, para. 12).

Cook's naming of, for example, Poverty Bay also ignores Māoritanga in the forms of the palisade of the pa and, alongside, the eyes of the Māori god, Tūmataunga, with both hinting at future war. Indeed, Cook actually noted in his log, "At 6 a.m. we weighed and stood out of the bay, which I have named 'Poverty Bay' because it afforded us no one thing we wanted" (Cook as cited in Mackay, 1949, p. 40), a statement contradicted by Banks who commented, "There was a good deal of plenty" (Banks, as cited in Mackay, 1949, p. 38).

Bishop balances Cook's misnaming of landmarks by having Thompson name his recipes more pragmatically, for example, "Goose Pie" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 17) after the gannets that are caught and, earlier, "Seared Shark Steaks" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 8) after the shark ensnared by Banks. At the same time, the potential for movement between locale, fauna and class is suggested. Having shot the sixty gannets, Banks turns them over to Thompson who comments, "If we eat this lot we'll turn into gannets", while "Poor Knights", Cook's "choicest pudding", becomes the name he gives to a cluster of islands off the east coast of Northland (Bishop, 2018a, pp. 17–18).

The emphasis on Cook's naming of specific parts of New Zealand already named by Māori ironically contrasts to Bishop's earlier labelling of specific characters with their real names which recognises them as real people within Banks' group of experimental gentlemen. Most significantly, during the naming processes on these pages, Māori characters are absent. Accordingly, the reader is invited to critique Cook's, Thompson's and Bishop's own naming processes, and their moral purposes, and to decide whether or not they are acceptable.

Positioned between the two sets of horizontally and vertically organised double-page illustrations depicting the circumnavigation of the North and South Islands, the episode on January 15th 1770 in Queen Charlotte's Sound, returns to the previous format of the less stratified double-page spread. Here, Pākehā and Māori meet in friendship, but conflicting messages continue to exist. For example, placed on the inner sides of the left and right pages respectively, Thompson and a Māori character face each other across the book's central hinge, with Thompson offering Māori his pot of pease porridge, and Māori offering Thompson kiore. The encounter seems pleasant, but Bishop's use of near homophones ("pease" for "peace", and "kiore" for "kia ora", te reo Māori for "have life, be healthy") undercuts the scene with irony, to suggest misunderstanding. Moreover, neither realises that he is offering the other food from the other's own indigenous background. Hence, "kiore" refers to New Zealand's native rat (a delicacy eaten by early Māori), but the rat proffered is actually a migrant rat from the *Endeavour*, and Thompson's pease porridge recipe includes "celery grass" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 19), which is actually a plant native to New Zealand eaten by Māori. The miscommunication between Thompson and Māori is echoed on the upper left corner of the illustration, which depicts Motuara Island. Here Bishop faithfully

reproduces history by having Cook stand on the island's summit to take possession of it and adjacent lands in the name of King George III, while his failure to communicate adequately with Māori is suggested in the placement opposite but apart from him of a Māori chief (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Māori and Pākehā: Fusion and confusion. (Bishop, 2018a, pp. 19–20)

The whole illustration suggests a fusion of the two ethnicities and their messages, but also an underlying confusion and, simultaneously, Bishop's concern with constructing a balanced picture. Where in the upper background, positioned on the summit, and portrayed in cinematic/cartoon format, Cook is armed with a sword and the chief is armed with a *patu* (or club), in the lower foreground, positioned on the foreshore, and portrayed realistically and in close-up, Thompson is armed with his pot of pease porridge, and the Māori character is armed with a rat. Where Cook states the place name of "Queen Charlotte's Sound" and the chief facing him states the place name of "Totara-nui", Thompson names the contents of his pot "Pease Porridge" and the Māori character facing him names his rat "Kiore". And where Cook and the chief are separated by a space occupied by the British flag, Thompson and Māori are separated by a space occupied by a page from Thompson's recipe book. In particular, the entire section devoted to New Zealand requires the reader to employ the skills of close reading and critical literacy, and to come to terms with conflicting cultures and beliefs, and ways in which misunderstandings may occur.

Circularity and balance: The *Endeavour's* voyage and Bishop's book

Thompson's documentation of the *Endeavour's* arrival on April 19th, 1770 in New Holland (Bishop, 2018a, pp. 23–24) includes instances of misnaming and misunderstanding similar to those occurring in New Zealand and Brazil. Placed equidistant from the book's structural centre in Tahiti with its colourful illustration of utopian encounters, the period in Australia and the period in Brazil operate in ironic balance, with each portraying three indigenous peoples in sepia and cinematic/cartoon format as anonymous, diminutive and distant to Cook. As seen through Thompson's perspective, they are minions in relation to the colonising masters, and "not very friendly" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 23). Notably, in the double page illustration accompanying his log entries for June 11th, 1770 and August 16th, 1770 (Bishop, 2018a, pp. 25–26) in the Great Barrier Reef, New Holland, indigenous peoples are absent.

Indeed, the bad luck that has been precipitated by the albatross's killing comes to the fore as the *Endeavour* anchors on October 11th, 1770 in Batavia, Java with its "disease-carrying mosquitos" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 27). On November 15th, 1770 and, as the *Endeavour* sojourns on Princes Island in the Indian Ocean on January 27th and 29th, 1771, Thompson notes those who have died, including

William Monkhouse (the surgeon), John Reynolds (one of Banks' men), Tupaia and Taiata (the Pacific navigators), Sydney Parkinson (the artist), and Charles Green (the astronomer). His naming of them parallels Bishop's earlier naming of Banks and his gentlemen, therefore allowing the reader further to critique this process. Thus, as the *Endeavour* circles around the globe and then homeward bound to England, Bishop's book circles around and proceeds towards an ending that recalls its beginning.

That Thompson devotes only five lines to his own suffering and death from malaria is evidence of his increased altruism, while the understatement describing his soul's ascent is heart wrenching. "Finally, I let go. As my corpse was slid into the sea, my soul soared up and, with a mournful cry, slipped into the body of a seagull" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 28). The belief of Cook's crew in the migration of human souls into seagulls' bodies is described by Bishop in "Tidbits": "Thirty-eight men died on the three-year voyage of the *Endeavour* and were believed by the crew to have turned into seabirds" (final endpaper).

At the same time, the merging of human life with bird life has been anticipated by images of foodstuff and its ingestion—Thompson's various recipes, Goose Stew, for example, and his earlier premonition that he and the crew would "turn into gannets" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 17). Indeed, the blue and grey seagulls, and their soaring flight across the double-page spread, comprise an ironic reversal of the earlier sepia illustration of the crew's stultified shipboard life.

But rather than forever escaping the *Endeavour's* class system, the seagulls return to it. As Thompson notes on March 13th, 1771 in Cape Town, South Africa, "We who have departed follow the ship to see the men home, watching their progress from the rigging" (Bishop, 2018a, p. 29). At the same time, Bishop undercuts the seagulls' loyalty with irony to depict the gulls roosting in the rigging's vertical and horizontal layers from which they look down on Cook and his gentlemen as a metaphor for a reversed class hierarchy. Looming large, and separate to the others on the illustration's far left, and squawking instructions to Matthews, Thompson is as domineering as he was earlier, thus helping to bring the book full circle.

The period spent in Cape Town further contributes to the circular progression of the *Endeavour's* voyage and the narrative structure with the illustration of the lunar eclipse of the sun on May 15th, 1771 in the final pages completely balancing the centrally placed illustration of the transit of Venus across the sun. The scene adds to the irony with Bishop constructing a book that is integrated and balanced on the one hand but, on the other, emphasising what Bradford (2003) refers to as an "unhomely moment" (p. 106)—an ironic truth that is ambivalent, hybridised and conflicted, and that avoids a trite happy ending. Rather than dogmatically indoctrinating the reader into a single biased agenda, Bishop thus provides the reader with a complex mixture of possibilities and a challenge in terms of resolving them.

On the final double-page spread, dated July 14th, 1771 in Mile End, London, England, the book migrates further towards wholeness. Here the depiction of a more amiable Cook, having completed the homeward journey, and smilingly greeting his wife on the left, is offset by the depiction of Thompson as seagull, albeit with a clipped off wing tip representing his missing hand, standing alone on the right where he renames his recipe as "Thompson's Porridge". The realistic double spread also ironically reverses and balances the first cinematic/cartoon double spread depicting Cook farewelling his wife and Thompson stirring porridge.

Similarly, the final endpapers reverse and ironically balance the initial endpapers. Where the initial endpapers portray the horizontal and vertical class structures and uniform collective groupings of the *Endeavour* largely in sepia, the final endpapers portray the transcendence of horizontal and vertical class structures by the uniform collective flock of seagulls in shades of bluish grey. In each set of endpapers, Thompson is indistinguishable. Indeed, in the latter set it is only below the seagulls on the world map that intersperses place names with the names of his recipes that he may be recalled, albeit favourably in that, after all, he made his mark.

Most interestingly, in the final endpapers, the birds fly from west to east across both pages, and effectively up and out of the book on the far right, while on the map below, Cook's voyage home is marked by arrows travelling from east to west across both pages and back to England where his initial

departure route leaves the book on the far left. The back cover, with its depiction of Cook gazing through his telescope into the distance and, aloft, a lone seagull who may or may not be Thompson, similarly leaves the way open for another voyage to occur. Rather than the confining circular porthole frames of the first endpapers, then, the circularly structured book provides a portal into the past that allows for movement, and a shift into the future beyond the book. Like the fluctuating patterns of cultural encounters and colonisation, the truths portrayed by Bishop undergo their own hybridised, ever-changing migratory processes, as the reader also must do.

Hence, just as Cook's voyage follows a circular progression, so too does the book with its chiasmic title. Indeed, much as the *Endeavour* housed its captain and crew in stratified social systems, the book houses its characters in a closely woven web of horizontal and vertical threads. And much as the crew members as seagulls escape the confinements of shipboard life, the book's migratory patterns, while forming a balanced whole, yet allow for an ambivalent truth open to interpretation. In finally emphasising the counter-movements of Cook, and his cook as a seagull, Bishop allows the reader the freedom to speculate as to whether they will travel full circle beyond the book's ending and meet once again as master and minion. Like the seagulls, then, the reader effectively has the opportunity to transcend the book.

Findings, conclusion and further research

In *Cook's Cook* it would be easy for Bishop to overcompensate for past historical injustices to indigenous and working-class peoples by essentialising them, or by promoting a nationalistic agenda that simplistically reverses what has gone before. But as this article demonstrates, Bishop's view is invariably balanced and mixed. This is evident in close-up and distant perspectives, circular structures that confine yet reveal and eternalise, horizontal and vertical structures showing stasis and movement, and use of sepia and colour, cinematic/cartoon and realistic illustrations, diverse dialects and languages, and characters who are working class or upper class, serious yet comic, and altruistic yet flawed. Additionally, Bishop's parallelism of personal, social, environmental, linguistic, geographical and cosmic dimensions and use of intertexts provide the reader with a vast context against which to view historical figures and events. The challenges to the reader are immense. He or she is required to read and think closely, critically, broadly and deeply, undertake background research, and construct interpretations informed by all of these.

Of course, *Cook's Cook* refracts the world. However, in providing multiple levels of meaning and options for interpretation, Bishop *shows* rather than *tells* and generously recognises the reader's autonomy, and thus as author occupying a role more akin to that of minion while allowing the reader to become master of meaning making.

The richness and complexity of *Cook's Cook* and the opportunities it offers for further reading and interpretation make it an ideal text for considering alternatives to hegemony related to colonisation, indigeneity and social class as depicted in children's texts such as picturebooks prior to the new history curriculum. At the same time, it must be remembered that all texts (including curricula) refract the world. That the new history curriculum may comprise a reaction to the earlier Eurocentric view of the past suggests that it too should be subjected to interrogation.

Sadly, it is all too often the case that, in New Zealand schools, literacy, children's literature and its analysis and learning areas, such as history, are taught separately rather than together. It is hoped that this discussion of *Cook's Cook* will encourage further research (perhaps by teachers or teacher educators) into alternative ways in which rich picturebooks can be used to teach critical literacy, close reading and New Zealand history together. Any one of Bishop's numerous award-winning historical books would lend itself to this commendable purpose.

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ⁱ The alienation effect was most famously used by Bertolt Brecht in order to prevent emotional involvement in a text, and to encourage a more critical attitude instead. It took a variety of forms, for example, unrealistic stage settings, and loud, discordant music at emotional moments.

ⁱⁱ “Chiasmus” is Greek for the letter X or for a crossover. Bishop’s title is chiasmic in that the structure of the second phrase (following the colon) mirrors but reverses the structure of the first phrase (before the colon).

ⁱⁱⁱ The epistolary technique involves the conveyance of a narrative’s point of view through letters, journal or diary entries, or similar.