condemn white ethnocentrism for its disastrous undervaluing of Maori language and culture, but most Maori, while maintaining and advancing their own culture and identity, want greater not less access to the wealth and power of the immigrant, international culture and, as citizens of the state founded by the treaty in 1840, are entitled to it. If condemnation of the mainstream institutions as “institutional racism” has the effect of deterring Maori from the pursuit of their fair share of state and economic power, the result would be unfortunate, all the more so since the concept is typically advanced by successful white bourgeoisie like Sutherland, already comfortably ensconced in the mainstream culture. The Maori leaders of the late 1980s, using the institutions of the state against vested white majority interests and against the state itself, have shown better what can be achieved.

Nevertheless, the attack on the marginalization of the Maori wrought by colonization has only just begun to regain impetus (“regain” because leaders like Sir Apirana Ngata made inroads on it in an earlier generation), and even were it to continue to gain ground Dr Walker still fairly represents the other dimension of Maori aspirations—reminding white New Zealand that there is another perception of reality in the land, asserting the equal standing with English of the Maori language and the legitimacy of the Maori culture as evolved and defined by Maori, and demanding a significant degree of Maori self-determination (rangatiratanga or local sovereignty under the national sovereignty conceded to the Crown in 1840). In this regard Dr Walker and Mana Motuhake continue to play a crucial role in the wholeness of New Zealand life. Moreover, if their efforts can ameliorate the disastrous loss of family structure and identity due to urbanization and can show how the anger and alienation of the urban young can be relieved, they will have provided remarkable guidance to a confused and largely impotent majority culture as well.

One final comment. Dr Walker remarks (11) that when his forebears found the islands now called New Zealand they called the North Island Te Ika a Maui (the Fish of Maui); the South Island, Te Wai Pounamu (the River of Jade, or greenstone); and Stewart Island, Rakiura. Why then are we being urged to call them all Aotearoa, which I believe only began to gain currency in the mid-nineteenth century?

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This book peels like an onion. Its skin consists of an appeal for a reconsideration of outmoded cultural diffusionists, specifically W. H. R. Rivers, whose work was perhaps too quickly muted and superseded by social functional-
ism. Its outer layers constitute a
detailed reanalysis of Rivers' premise
that a wave of betel-chewing Melane-
sian migrants overran, or at least
markedly influenced, an earlier popu-
lation of kava-drinking Islanders.
Brunton's argument, which builds on a
comparative linguistic and cultural
analysis of kava terms and consump-
tion practices throughout the Pacific,
also relies on a case study of the south-
ern Vanuatu island of Tanna, which is
increasingly recognized to be the Jeru-
usalem of kava use. Finally, the book's
inner core, once Rivers and kava are
peeled away, turns out to be about
authority, coordination, and order—or
rather the lack of them—in Melanesia.
Staking out a rather functionalist per-
spective himself, Brunton labels these
the "problems" of Tannese society.
Rivers and kava together serve to
frame Brunton's preoccupation with
Melanesian political disorder and reli-
gious instability: "the maintenance of
an acceptable degree of social harmony
and order has long presented the Tan-
nese with an intractable problem"
(142). The argument works as follows:
Rivers suggested that the march of the
betel people, reaching out to the Santa
Cruz Islands, accounted for the dis-
junct distribution of kava, which
occurs spottily on New Guinea in the
west and in most of southern Melane-
sia and Polynesia in the east, but not in
the Solomon Islands. Brunton accepts
that Solomon Islanders once drank
kava, but disputes that they abandoned
the drug because they adopted betel.
He argues instead that Melanesians,
whose institutions of authority and
social coordination are weak, are
prone to reject existing "cultural pack-
ages" in favor of new ones, in part to
address and ameliorate that social
instability itself. Particularly where
kava drinking had ritual or religious
significance, Islanders may have		tabooed and then abandoned use of the
drug in a fit of cultural reconstruction
—a sort of prehistoric Just Say No
campaign. Kava's abandonment thus
both illustrates and can be accounted
for by the instability of Melanesian
political and religious systems.

Each of these layers—Rivers, kava,
Tannese social instability—can be
admired on its own. Born as a thesis,
the book (unlike Melanesian society)
enjoys an ordered clarity of argumenta-
tion and style. Brunton’s comparative
analysis of the pan-Pacific names and
uses of kava and his summary ethnog-
raphy of Tanna are both admirable.
There are problems, however, with the
laminations of the onion: the means by
which the book addresses Melanesian
social instability by coating it with a
veneer of kava abandonment.

Most seriously, there is now persua-
sive evidence that kava was domesti-
cated in northern Vanuatu and not
somewhere in the Bismarck Archipel-
ago as Brunton surmises (81). Because
kava originated in Vanuatu, it was
never generally used in the Solomon
Islands and is not, therefore, "the
abandoned narcotic." Although some
Islanders have renounced kava use
during the past two hundred years, and
undoubtedly before this as well, Brun-
ton's presumption of wholesale aban-
donment of kava to explain today's
disjunct distribution of it is less plausi-
ble than assuming that the plant dif-
fused through sporadic and extraordi-
nary (but not impossible) direct
contacts between distant island societies.

Although Brunton cites his collaboration with agronomist Vincent Lebot, he ignores Lebot's recent analyses of kava morphology, genetics, and chemistry, all of which point to northern Vanuatu as the site of kava's origins. Briefly, kava (*Piper methysticum*) is the cultivated form of *Piper wichmannii*, which grows wild at middle elevations across northern Melanesia. Of the 118 morphological types of kava that Lebot has identified throughout the Pacific, 82 exist in Vanuatu. Vanuatu growers also cultivate two of the three existing *P. methysticum* zymotypes (a measure of genetic relationship), and the full range of *P. methysticum's* chemotype groups—all five different blends of the major kavalactones (the plant's psychoactive components).

Domesticated some twenty-five hundred to thirty-five hundred years ago, kava was carried from northern Vanuatu to Fiji, nuclear Polynesia, and beyond, and also to Kosrae and Pohnpei, to Lou and Baluan in the Admiralties, to the Madang area on the north coast of New Guinea, and around the eastern point of New Guinea to scattered locales along the island's southern coast. Brunton himself suggests all these transmission routes (76–78, 81). Accepting kava's origins in Vanuatu, one still might argue that the plant reached New Guinea via the Solomon Islands to be subsequently abandoned after it passed through. The implausibility of mass abandonment, however, is particularly accentuated when kava moves in this "backward" direction. It is a dubious proposition that Solomon Islanders, speaking more than eighty different languages, and living on six sizeable islands that extend over sixteen hundred kilometers of ocean, all decided to forswear kava consumption.

Moving now to the core of the book, the tension that Brunton identifies between longings for order and stubborn instability within Tannese society is curiously paralleled in his ethnographic analysis. Although in places Brunton accepts the existence of plurality, variability, and disagreement within Tannese social and cultural practice, in other places he seems overly concerned to sanitize these discrepancies in order to come up with a single and presumably "correct" ethnographic description, for example, of "the Tannese kava ritual" (105). This over-systematization of Tannese society obscures the competing "cultural packages," lack of political authority and social coordination, and general instability that Brunton locates on the island.

Finally, there is a tension between kava's prized psychoactive effects and conjectures about the drug's abandonment. Brunton notes that kava, as a "drug of tranquility" (106), is effective medicine for people beset with quarrelsome and fissiparous social relations. If kava is a chemical antidote to social disorder, its abandonment becomes even more problematic. Correspondingly, if Tanna epitomizes unstable Melanesian society, then how did kava use here survive so long?

In the end, as an avenue into the book's core concerns with Melanesian cultural disorder and instability, Brunton's detour through Rivers' diffusionist history of the kava-people, and
his restatement of this history as narcotic abandonment, leads astray. Cutting through this part of the onion brings tears to the eye. However, the endpoints of this journey—a comparative analysis of kava consumption at the top, and an ethnography of Tannese social and religious volatility at the center—are both welcome and useful. *Fwiti tamafa!* as the Tannese say after a dose of kava.

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The anthropology of health is a fast-growing area of interdisciplinary interest that is enhanced by Cohen's book, which proposes an alternative to the accepted view that health has improved over time. This view, held by those who celebrate the progress of civilization (2), is countered by Cohen's argument that as populations have increased over time, the risk and the occurrence of disease have also magnified.

The author offers a reconstruction of health patterns of the past using three lines of inquiry. First, he surveys observations and analyses of illness in populations in past times in order to extrapolate epidemiological rules about the effects of illness on populations. Second, he uses field studies of health in contemporary groups such as hunter-gatherers. Third, he draws on analyses of archaeological skeletal material and paleopathology. Together these analyses suggest that health patterns have changed, often for the worse, and that so-called progress has been at the expense of health.

The increase in size of populations is the centrifugal force leading to increased health risks; as more people are drawn together in enclosed spaces, the risk of disease spreading has greatly increased. Similarly he argues that "behavior" such as body contact, body coverings, and trading foodstuffs affects the incidence of particular disease types. But the frequency of these types varies markedly from group to group. He devotes a whole chapter to various studies of the health problems of the San of South Africa as reported in the 1960s and 1970s. These show that the San are relatively well nourished, have varied rates of infection, and have a life expectancy at birth ranging from twenty to fifty years; reproductive rates are below modern Third World averages.

The overall approach draws heavily on the medical model at the expense of the social model. Cohen provides a valuable synthesis of three types of disease—infectious, nutritional, and degenerative—that have had varying effects on populations worldwide. Interest in disease patterns over time has been woefully lacking, so this exercise in reconstructing the health patterns of earlier times is both timely and valuable.

But that reconstruction requires that health be seen not as a material attribute that a person or group has or has not, but as part of a group's broader social organization in that it