



OPINION PIECE

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While I understand the current calls to pull down statues and monuments that depict the ugly side of our past, we have to be careful that we don't disdain a history that also holds the hidden pieces of our redemption, along with the unique beauty of two cultures that would eventually assist each other in a shared future.

The English Explorer Captain Cook certainly had his failings and shortcomings just as much as the notorious Warrior Chief Te Rauparaha also had. Yet both had a significant contribution to our history and also to our destiny. While Cook was culpable to murder and theft, so too was Te Rauparaha on his murderous rampage down the North and South Island of Aotearoa. Stories abound of both...folklore of accomplishments and brutality. At that time in our history, the English were one of the biggest colonial abusers on the planet, along with the French, the quest to conquer unknown lands and peoples was an insatiable desire for power as well as exploring the unknown worlds on a vast planet.

The irony of this history that would shape our destiny, for good and for bad, cannot be changed, but it can give us the power of choice to extract the positive and proud parts and to forgive and forget the hurtful and painful parts. For instance, the English, amongst the many painful things they caused, brought us many good things. Amongst which one stands out as priceless, identified as 'redemption' and 'lift' which in this case was Christ and Christianity.

It was Christianity that our tūpuna (ancestors) embraced with startlingly acceptance, at one point converting 93% of Māoridom across Aotearoa, including many rangatira (chiefs) as well. While there is much angst in Māori toward the missionaries who brought The Faith (even to this day), it was to be the redemption, the saving of Māori from our own brutality and the creating of a shared partnership between two noble races into one – Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Tribal warfare and cannibalism were at the time taking place amongst the many tribes, with stories of brutality, utu and rape, alongside the land acquisitions from one tribe to the conquering tribe.

Redemption (the power that saves us from our sins and acts of evil) and 'The Lift' (the power of that redemption to raise us to better levels of living) began to take place for Māori. In short, that ugly history actually had our destiny in it. Amongst the evil of both cultures, there was good, positives and progress.

I'm forever indebted to my ancestors, both Māori and Pākehā who have contributed positively out of the negativity to enrich my life and that of my mokopuna (children and grandchildren) richly.



The wrongs of our past are forgivable. Only through forgiveness will we finally find release from the pain of our past. There are stories of abuse in both cultures, what one did as evil to another, while one also blessed the other. Without Māori we would be the lessor without a rich culture, a talented proud race of warriors, gifted and blessed. And also, the English who brought their culture of ideas and invention, bringing civilisation and Christianity that is now the bedrock of modern-day society.

Be careful when anger to our past blinds us to the blessing that came through it. That was then...this is now! What was...and what is! We cannot build tomorrow if we are continually stuck in yesterday. Redemption and Lift is the transformational power that empowers us to live better, beyond the setbacks of our mistakes so we can pass on to our children the best parts of our history without hiding the pain of our past. Maybe there is justification in pulling down statues and monuments that remind us of an abusive past, but it still can't change history. However, we can change our future to create a better history for our children and grandchildren.

**History is always best as a signpost but can be dangerous if it ends up being a hitching post.
Don't kill your future because of your past!**

Mā te wā