

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOME REAL SCIENCE!!

Thoughtful readers will be delighted, I am sure, to know that after many months of arduous preparation, I am about to submit to the Marsden Fund my application for \$720,000 for a study entitled “The Social, Environmental and Sexual Impact of the Unicorn in the Southern Hemisphere.” This will be, I am sure, ground breaking research in a wholly new field and I am confident that its impact will be dramatic. Moreover, I am excited to announce that I have the full backing of Father Christmas who is considering unicorns as successors to his ageing team of reindeer.

There will inevitably be those dismal characters, as in any field of human endeavour, who suggest that that is a considerable sum and who ask why I consider it appropriate. My answer is of course, that grants from the Marsden are subject to the highest scrutiny and applications subjected to intense competition from those so-called scientists who, reactionary though it may be, continue to follow the decadent, racist, colonialist practices of so-called “Western” science.

If therefore I, being pale, male and stale, receive a grant of just one half of that for which I have nominally applied – and which I am confident will be awarded to me – then that, just \$360,000 I reflect, is exactly the same amount as was awarded recently to a bright young part-Maori lady for a similar study of taniwhas.

I shall of course, be observing the well-established practices of matauranga maori in this exciting study, though stark realism compels me to admit that I shall be utilising some, inevitably offensive, European cultural practices such as reading and writing, photography and, reluctant though I am to admit it, using a computer to record, retrieve and analyse what I am sure will, in due course, amount to a massive amount of exciting information to Father Christmas, scientists and members of the lay community alike.

Equally again, there will be dismal and negative characters who point out that no such data exists at this time. The answer, almost to trivial to mention, is that hitherto, nobody, simply nobody of whom I am aware has thought to observe and record any. That is of course a glaring vacuum in scientific knowledge which is a major goal of my project to remedy. And then I note that such people overlook the significant amount of folklore passed down by word of mouth for many generations and scrupulously recorded by the celebrated Waitangi Tribunal. This will surely be a rich source of supplementary information of the highest quality.

I am particularly interested in the role of the unicorn’s horn in sexual foreplay and indeed in subsequent activities. Is this role any different when these procedures are being undertaken between a pair of unicorns of the same sex or between a pair of two different sexes or when more than two participate? I mention that one of the objectives of this research is to establish beyond reasonable doubt just how many sexes exist amongst unicorns and whether this varies between sub-species. Compatibility will of course be of prime importance to Father Christmas should he proceed to select a team.

All in all, I am sure that there will be widespread interest in progress reports on this ground-breaking project, particularly amongst the great, rich panjandrums of our part-maori tribes who will in all fairness be able to recognize on national news media in ‘te reo’ (today’s dialect of their own language) which is of course particularly well-suited to scientific discourse, just what an important contribution prehistoric maori practices have to play in our dear little country of “aotearoa” (small ‘a’ for a small country) today!

Bruce Moon (Irish, Scots, Cornish, English, Jèrriais, Guernesias, and since 1868, New Zealanders)

Nelson

Christmas Day 2022

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Postscript: I can well imagine the acute interest this prestigious project will arouse amongst the Vice-Chancellors of all New Zealand universities and almost inevitably, how there will be intense competition amongst them to offer facilities, accommodation and auxiliary services to assist in its accomplishment. There will be little else in any of them today in any way comparable. B