

Book Reviews

Captain James Cook and His Times, edited by Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre; London: Croom Helm, 1979. Pp. viii, 278, *illus.* \$16.95.

Master Mariner. Capt. James Cook and the Peoples of the Pacific, by Daniel Conner and Lorraine Miller. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1978. Pp. xii, 1964, *illus.* \$16.95.

The Remarkable World of Frances Barkley: 1769-1845, by Beth Hill. Sidney: Gray's Publishing Limited, 1978. Pp. xvi, 232, *illus.* P.B.

Expeditions of exploration in modern times, including explorations into the historical careers of explorers such as these works represent, are necessarily exercises in public relations. From the days of Cook and Joseph Banks to those of the moon shots, priority in "discovery" — getting there before any other European by overcoming the most intractable obstacles, or identifying the essential details of an explorer's life from a first crack at "THE PAPERS" — has been almost the exclusive motive. But public and government will not give the cash for such ventures unless the naked ambition to be first is draped in the fig-leaf of learning: expeditions must have their weather men and botanists; scholars must have their commemorative conferences.

The conference on Captain Cook and His Times held at Simon Fraser University in April 1978 was certainly more elaborate and expensive and probably a good deal more interesting than Cook's stay at Nootka, the bicentenary of which it was designed to celebrate. Antipodeans at the conference seemed determined to continue parochial arguments left over from previous Cook bicentenaries, and only five of the papers concerned the Northwest. But discussion ranged widely and there was ample opportunity for assessing Cook, his accomplishments and his reputation. As an exercise in public relations it was a triumph; as a contribution to Cook studies it was a more qualified but still an undoubted success.

In Captain Cook and His Times, the editors have produced an attractive book containing some of the best of the original papers. In general the choice has restored some of the original focus since the best of the published papers are certainly those on northwest America. Glyndwn Williams' "Myth and Reality: James Cook and the Theoretical Geography of Northwest America" explains the rationale of Cook's search for the Northwest Passage as arising from failure by Russians and Spaniards to publish the findings of their navigators. For all his original misconceptions, however, as Dr. Williams points out, Cook determined the general outline shape of northwest America in a single season — the last and by no means the least of the great navigator's triumphs. Christon Archer in "The Spanish Reaction to Cook's Third Voyage" makes the same point concerning the influence of the Spaniards' non-publication of their findings on Cook's voyage, but he claims far too much for the Perez expeditions (1774 and 1775) in stating that they "accomplished much of what Cook would attain." Cook identified the main shape of northwest America and mapped the coast of Alaska; the Spanish sailed to 55° and 57°2', did not land on the first voyage at all, landed only at Bucareli Bay on the second and provided no significant geographic information, even for the Spanish archives. The post-Cook Spanish explorations were more enterprising, but Archer provides no real evidence for his statement that "the Spanish expeditions . . . can be said to have continued the very best tradition begun by Cook." Robin Fisher's "Cook and the Nootka" is a good, workmanlike production, reiterating the point made by earlier anthropologists that the initial relationship of the two cultures — European and native — was one of balance rather than of dominance of one party over the other. Fisher also gives a clear, informative analysis of the ethnographic observations in the journals of Cook's voyagers.

The lone representative of science, Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir James Watt's "Medical Aspects and Consequences of Cook's Voyages," is largely devoted to the now familiar theme that Cook's antiscorbutic dietary regimen for his crews was largely derived from the work of James Lind, and where it was original (in the use of malt wort in preference to citrus fruit) was a regression; though Cook's measures to ensure cleanliness, warmth and rest for his crews reduced their rate of utilization of Vitamin C. Sir James apparently breaks new ground in a remarkable long-distance diagnosis of round-worm infection as the reason for the breakdown of Cook's health and hence of his temper and the general discipline of the ships' companies, with fatal results in Hawaii.

Four papers concerning Cook's reputation and influence are of a much lesser quality. Rüdiger Joppien's "The Artistic Bequest of Captain Cook's Voyages — Popular Imagery in European Costume Books of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries" is a competent study of the influence of illustrations from various accounts of Cook's voyages on various somewhat obscure costume books. Dr. Joppien attributes the influence of the illustrations to Cook's success as an explorer; is it not more correct to attribute it to Cook's and Banks' success as publicists? Bernard Smith in "Cook's Posthumous Reputation" sets out to provide "an outline of some of the channels by which Cook's posthumous reputation was moulded and transmitted to later generations." He discovers his evidence in obscure writings of equally obscure provincial academicians. To bolster it he darts off to the more easily established derivations of classical heroic themes from the illustrations of Cook voyages (cf. Joppien), then to a muddled attempt to develop a theory of imperial destiny (Adam Smith and Hobson-Lenin with James Barry's painting "The Progress of Human Culture" thrown in for visual illustration). At this point only a careful reading can provide even the most tenuous connection with the original theme of the essay. Alan Frost's "New Geographical Perspectives and the Emergence of Romantic Imagination" not very originally attributes the romantic realism of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey to the reading of late eighteenth-century exploration accounts. The awkward tacking on of a few contemporary and conventional eulogies of Cook hardly establishes the theme contained in the title. Finally, in this group, Terence Armstrong in "Cook's Reputation in Russia" provides a short, simple account of the vicissitudes of Cook's reputation in Russia, from extravagant eulogy to nationalistic denigration under Cold War Soviet regimes, back to qualified admiration in recent times.

The three papers on Cook's competitors for fame are really studies of rival publicists: Banks, Dalrymple and George Forster. David Mackay's "A Presiding Genius of Exploration: Banks, Cook and Europe" discusses Banks' dominating influence as the presiding entrepreneur of empirical (not "applied") science, demonstrating that in Banks' activity began that tradition of vague, thin, empirical scientific justification for exploration and empire building that was carried on through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries by such "scientific" entrepreneurs as Sir Joseph Hooker and Sir Clements Markham. Dr. Mackay's judgments are generally unexceptionable, though it is surely absurd to suggest, as he does, that the Home Office, Board of Trade and Treasury

in the Younger Pitt's ministry were "helplessly [*sic*] out of their depth" in the 1780s and had to call on Banks and other "experts" to tell them what to do about colonial expansion. That they were willing to consult experts suggests a grasp of the problems; that Banks was inadequate was not their fault.

Dr. Howard T. Fry's "Alexander Dalrymple and Captain Cook. The Creative Interplay of Two Careers" is a very much edited version of the conference original which itself derived from Dr. Fry's book on Dalrymple. The result is that, though the main body of the paper is interesting and well argued, it begins *in medias res* and leaves the reader to put quite a few things together on his own — for example, no explanation is offered of how so much official encouragement came to be given to Dalrymple, an enthusiast who was not a trained seaman. Dalrymple must have been as effective a publicist as Banks since he was able for more than two decades to persuade successive governments to consider his schemes. On the strength of the evidence of this promotion Dr. Fry's conclusion that Dalrymple's work was "of the greatest significance for the planning, execution and outcome of the voyages of Captain Cook" appears justified at first sight. But the Admiralty rightly insisted on giving command of the expeditions to someone who could get the ships safely out and home, and Cook widened and deepened the investigations until they were his voyages, not simply executions of Dalrymple's instructions.

The sad record of a frustrated publicist, George Forster, is made a good deal sadder by the muddled, badly written and ill-natured paper of Michael Hoare: "Two Centuries' Perceptions of James Cook: George Forster to Beaglehole." The provenance of this paper appears to be that the Forsters were nasty about Cook after Cook had made it rough for them on the second voyage; J. C. Beaglehole in his studies of Cook made Cook a hero, denigrated the Forsters and all but ignored their writings; Hoare wrote about the Forsters and feels honour-bound to be nasty about Beaglehole in this essay. It is hard to see why it was included in the collection.

Finally it should be noted that the analytic introduction by the editors is admirably concise and helpful and the illustrations are handsomely reproduced, giving a fine professional finish to a useful and informative volume.

The other two beneficiaries of the 1978 Cook enthusiasm are more directly concerned with the Northwest. *Master Mariner. Capt. James Cook and the Peoples of the Pacific* by Daniel Conner and Lorraine Miller is a very superior coffee-table book, beautifully illustrated, which

focuses on Cook's third voyage. Culled largely from Beaglehole's authoritative *Life of Captain James Cook* and Cook's *Journals*, it does not pretend to originality, yet provides good clear anthropological analyses of the contact between Cook's crews and the various peoples of the Pacific in a straightforward account for the general reader.

The Remarkable World of Frances Barkley is based on the reminiscences of Frances Hornby Trevor Barkley, wife of Captain Charles William Barkley, discoverer of Barkley Sound. Essentially it concerns two trading voyages which she made as a young bride with her husband to northwest America in 1786-88 and to Kamchatka, Alaska and Hawaii in 1791-93. At first sight the intrinsic interest of the material gives promise of a fascinating account. Mrs. Barkley had a gift for accurate and vivid description; strong prejudices; and a vigorous, if uneducated, style. She provides detailed pictures of some aspects of life among the natives of Kamchatka and the Tlingit of Alaska. But unfortunately the sources are fragmentary and uneven and the author/editor, Ms. Hill, in endeavouring to fill out the narrative, does not master them adequately. Nor is her grasp of the historical setting at all certain. The result is an interesting but undigested and disjointed account, containing far too little about northwest America and far too much of the less-than-fascinating minutiae concerning the Barkley family.

University of British Columbia

J. NORRIS

The Forces Which Shaped Them: A History of the Education of Minority Group Children in British Columbia, by Mary Ashworth. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979. Pp. iv, 238, *illus.* \$14.95 cloth, \$6.50 paper.

This is a timely book. It comes in the midst of a growing interest in the multicultural reality of Canadian society and an awareness that that reality is not always reflected in the public schools of the country. It comes in the face of a pressing concern among British Columbia educators about the high percentage of school children in this province for whom English is not their first language (some 40 per cent in the elementary schools of Vancouver, for example). It comes at a time when Canadian social historians are turning their attention to ethnic history with