

Summation and Closing Remarks

by

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In a short time it is difficult to sum up last night and today's session. But it has been an enjoyable experience and I shall give it a try. Let me say briefly I think we owe a great debt to Jane Hurd and her staff, the Pacific planning group and PAAC for having the conference, particularly for having the courage to put it on.

I was in Vancouver last summer, and I heard about the Simon Fraser conference that is scheduled for later this month; and I came back to Hawaii and began to ask, "What is the University at Manoa doing to commemorate two hundred years of Captain Cook?" I talked to various groups around town and found out that, at least as far as the Manoa campus was concerned, we were doing very little. And, indeed, there seemed to be a great deal of enthusiasm, as I think Tim Macnaught pointed out, for shoving Cook under the rug and not paying any attention to him at all. And perhaps to serve him up next year for dinner, or something of that sort. And we weren't picketed today by outraged groups who are celebrating elements other than the Cook arrival in these islands.

So I feel we can at least say that over one hundred people were willing to give up part of a weekend to attend a conference for Captain Cook. Those who are going to the Simon Fraser conference can say that in Hawaii we had a conference which was well attended and take some pride in that.

What I would like to do in my concluding remarks is not try to sum up

a wide variety of papers which we have heard and talked about, but simply put out some of the elements dealing with Captain Cook that I think were important. I realize that some of the papers were not primarily concerned with Cook, but we do commemorate Cook today, and I'd like to speak to this. We have heard that a good deal of work remains to be done on the Cook period of discovery and on the Pacific Islands in the 18th and early 19th centuries. There are enormous resources still untapped for the study of the many various and fascinating Cook interests, which range across many disciplines.

In last evening's opening session Dr. Creutz very well described the assets of the Bishop Museum. We were also told that the Hawaii Foundation for History and the Humanities is interested in the pre-Cook period. A study of the Hawaiian culture pre-Cook is important not only as the Foundation's president, Kenny Brown, likes to say "to get the record straight" as to what Hawaiian culture was like prior to the arrival of Cook, but also to put the arrival in perspective so that we can get perhaps some sort of balanced judgment on Cook and the impact of the West. Today we also had a presentation on research that can be done in London and in Holland and, of course, many other places on the Continent.

I was impressed by the number of Cook's contributions. This morning Dr. Lamoureux pointed out Cook's influence on European botanical knowledge. Dr. Yang pointed to the impact of Cook on nutrition and in particular the eradication of scurvy.

The story, however, was not all positive. Dr. Pirie examined the introduction of disease that was an important part of the story. There are other contributions which are not perhaps so easily categorized in terms of positive or negative contributions. For example, the ones that Dr. Sanborn was talking about this afternoon. The idea of creating unity

out of diversity -- of people in a sense helping the Hawaiians to begin to think of themselves as a collective group -- has significance down to the present.

Increasingly today we have to deal with crosscultural relations and the interaction of people in various parts of the Pacific. So that one thing that perhaps, we can learn from Cook is that we have to recognize and learn to tolerate diversity, to establish a sense of willingness to share identity with other people, to establish a sense of region which Dr. Severance has pointed out, but at the same time to recognize that different parts of the region are independent and have their own concerns. These concerns have to be respected in terms of the larger problem of modernization in the 20th century.

What is not clear to me from the conference or from the literature on Cook, is Cook, the individual. What is he really like? Apparently we know little about him. In an excellent, very informative and a very witty presentation this morning John Charles tried to recapture for us the mood of the times when Cook lived in the Yorkshire area of England. That was one way Cook came a little bit more alive for us today rather than through the detailed but not very personal entries in his journals. And Charles also brought up the important point that work needs to be done in relating Cook to the tremendous and tumultuous time in English history in which he lived. Further, Dr. Macnaught, in his remarks, pointed out that we need to look at Cook as an individual of humane qualities. Cook was concerned with maintaining the fragile balance he encountered in his Pacific travels, and operating within limited parameters, he was a fair and tolerant man. We need to look again at the journals and at:

the times not only to see Captain James Cook, as a great navigator and explorer in the Pacific, but also as a human being who was engaged in this momentous activity.

I should like to end, therefore, on a positive note. This conference two hundred years later is to commemorate the very significant and important work of James Cook. I believe that the papers have lived up to the standard Cook set in the 18th century which is still important to us today. So I thank those who organized the conference and the panelists who participated. And I particularly want to thank all of you who have been so patient for a day and a half now. I hope that we all have learned something that will remain with us in the future. Thank you for coming, and good day.