

Hough, Richard. *Captain James Cook*. Hodder & Stoughton. London 1995

Extract from pages 314-315

Cook's attention was drawn to three massive volumes, recently arrived from London. It was *An Account of the Voyages undertaken ... for making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere*. It had recently been published and written by the clever journalist John Hawkesworth. The work had been sponsored by Hawkesworth's friend Banks, and Mr Charles Burney, and supported by Sandwich.

Hawkesworth had been given the journals of Byron, Wallis, Cartert and Cook, to adapt as he wished and retell in the first person throughout. The first massive volume was concerned with the first three navigators, the second and third volumes with the *Endeavour's* voyage. Cook was not in the least mollified by this imbalance when he began to read the title page, which said: 'Drawn up from the Journals which were kept by the several Commanders and from the Papers of JOSEPH BANKS ESQ by JOHN HAWKESWORTH L.L.D.' The dedication was to THE KING.

The long introduction was marked by its sycophantic praise of Banks. The journal of Captain Cook, it seemed, was received from the Admiralty, and Captain Cook 'was so obliging as to put into my hands, with permission to take out of it whatever I thought would improve or embellish the Narrative...This was an offer I gladly and thankfully accepted.'

Not only that, but Hawkesworth claimed to have read his manuscript to Cook at the Admiralty, and that he, Cook, had taken it away and had suggested some emendations, which had been made in the final text. In fact, the text was full of nautical howlers, and full, too, of Joseph Banks either directly acknowledged, or worse, and more frequently, unacknowledged. The numerous engravings were also credited to Banks, to whom 'the Public is indebted for the designs of the engravings, which illustrate and adorn the account of this voyage.' Poor Sydney Parkinson and Alexander Buchan did not receive even a mention, but then they were both dead.

Cook was mortified and furious. Who had given this journalist permission to misuse his journal? Surely not Stephens? Sandwich? He was more likely to be the culprit. He would find out when he arrived home.¹

Extract from page 320

As for Dr Hawkesworth, Cook had worried intermittently all the way from the Cape how he was going to deal with this charlatan. It was with some relief, therefore, that he learned soon after his return that Hawkesworth had died, when the *Resolution* had been moored in Ship Cove, on 17 November 1773. After being paid the enormous sum of £6,000 for his 'work', from the time of its publication in June 1773 it had been subjected to almost uniformly hostile reviews, of which the *Annual Register's* notice was mild by comparison, and public denigration. This was too much for Hawkesworth. He had hoped to be taken seriously, to acquire some pride and rid himself of his reputation as a mere hack. His health went into a serious and swift decline.²

¹ At home he also saw the long review in *The Annual Register* for 1773. The reviewer could not understand why Hawkesworth had used the subterfuge of the first person. He was critical of other aspects of the three volumes, especially Hawkesworth's claim that in total these voyagers made far greater discoveries 'than those of all the navigators in the world collectively'. 'The real merit of these voyages', as the reviewer continued, 'was too solid to make it at all necessary to transgress the bounds of truth.' The bounds of truth were not much interest to Dr John Hawkesworth.

² James Boswell, the famous diarist, remarked indignantly to Cook of the late Hawkesworth: 'Why, Sir, Hawkesworth has used your narrative as a London tavern-keeper does wine. He has brewed it.'