

sickness did not curb his aggression when his authority was threatened.

It is not my intention here to address the whole question of Cook's changed behaviour on the third voyage. I do not feel adequately equipped as an historian to attempt it. But I would suggest that those historians who feel they are might address themselves, without wishing to minimise the significance of Sir James Watt's findings (since historical causation is notoriously multiple rather than singular) to wider, more general, more countervailing forces acting upon Cook's behaviour and personality during the later months of his life. What I am getting at might be summarised in such phrases as 'the loss of hope', 'an increased cynicism', 'familiarity breeds contempt', 'power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. By comparison with his contemporaries there need be no doubt that Cook was a wise, extraordinarily gifted and humane commander. But his first duty was to the survival of his crew and the success of his expeditions. That meant, as he saw it, that his word must not be questioned even when it could not be properly understood. When words were not understood only brute action remained.

On setting out on his first voyage in the *Endeavour* Cook had been given written advice by Lord Morton, the President of the Royal Society. The Society, you will recall, had sponsored the voyage and Cook gave to Morton's 'Hints' a respect second only to his Admiralty instructions. They contained the most detailed set of instructions he ever received on how to treat the native peoples encountered. Morton's 'Hints' enshrined the high hopes of the philosophers of the Enlightenment for an eventual universal brotherhood of mankind under the leadership, it need hardly be said, of European man. Allow me to quote:

Have it still in view that shedding the blood of those people is a crime of the highest nature: — They are human creatures, the work of the same omnipotent Author, equally under his care with the most polished European; perhaps being less offensive, more entitled to his favour.

They are the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit.

No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent.

Conquest over such people can give no just title; because they could never be the Aggressors.

They may naturally and justly attempt to repel intruders, whom they may apprehend are come to disturb them in the quiet possession of their country, whether that apprehension be well or ill founded.

Therefore should they in a hostile manner oppose a landing, and kill some men in the attempt, even this would hardly justify firing among them, 'till every other gentle method had been tried.

There are many ways to convince them of the Superiority of Europeans . . .³⁰

That indeed was an Enlightenment vision of hope. But by 1777 Cook was an old Pacific hand who seems to have grown tired in the use of