Captain Cook: Voyager Between Two Worlds (review)

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Battista Alberti in *De re aedificatoria* (1485) sought to promote architecture as a liberal art and, by including a chapter on gardens, which had previously been included with agriculture as a mechanical art, contributed in part to the elevation of their status. Alberti suggested the plan of a garden should be in the manner of a building, using geometrical shapes for layout and the planting of trees. From the sixteenth century, manuals codified traditions of garden making and horticultural experience. The process of garden making evolved from habit and repetition into what we would term 'design'. The manuals postdate the establishment of garden praxis, while a theory of garden design emerges in text after the significant gardens have been designed. Overall garden making moved away from the practice of agriculture and acquired the image of the Roman *castrum*, the planning of cities.

Giannetto's book is part of the Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture series, edited by John Dixon Hunt which is 'dedicated to the study and promotion of a wide variety of approaches to landscape architecture, with special emphasis on connections between theory and practice'. The series received the Award of Honor in Communications from the American Society of Landscape Architecture in 2006. Luke Morgan's *Nature as Model: Salomon de Caus and Early Seventeenth-Century Landscape Design* (2007) is another work in the same series.

Medici Gardens: From Making to Design engages the reader's interest throughout with its thorough and multifaceted approach. It will be of interest to scholars in areas of garden and landscape history, literature and architecture. With its interdisciplinary approach it will no doubt bring new insights to readers in particular disciplines and those interested in connections between them. It is accompanied by a generous number of illustrations: photographs, maps, plans and paintings.

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Gascoigne, John, *Captain Cook: Voyager Between Two Worlds*, London & New York, Hambledon Continuum, 2007; hardback; pp. 304; R.R.P. $49.95; ISBN 9781847250025.

Encounters between cultures have become a fashionable topic and John Gascoigne has adapted his long-term interest in eighteenth-century voyages of scientific discovery to a consideration of the misunderstandings that arose

from face-to-face dealings between alien English crews and the native dwellers in the islands the ships visited. To do this, he has sought to interweave the comparatively well-known (and primarily written) English source material with later anthropological assessments of the non-literate inhabitants of the more remote Pacific Islands.

This is a valiant and interesting attempt to match the conflicting viewpoints of those about to be colonized and of those about to take over. Alas, as the material is so lopsided, the result is still largely a one-way exploration of British perceptions and objectives. Surprisingly, Gascoigne has little to say about the implications of these encounters for Enlightenment thought. He has limited himself to Britain, taking little notice of the European culture of which it formed a part.

Because James Cook had a complex early background, Gascoigne divides his study into a number of separate parts – agriculture, sea, trade, politics religion, sex and death – in each of which he considers Cook's experience and what can be ascertained of his encounters with the parallel field in Pacific societies including New Zealand.

Although endless details of Cook's life have been collected they do not provide an insight into what Cook himself made of life in a remote Yorkshire village, or his early time at sea. Instead, it is necessary to use extraneous information – in religion, for example, what little can be said of local Protestant observance and evidence of surviving superstitions – to supplement our ignorance of what Cook accepted about belief and ecclesiastical structures. If it were possible to say what Cook's reaction to these various aspects of life was so that his reaction to the unknown could be assessed, this would be a groundbreaking work. As it is, Gascoigne can only show what attitudes or expectations were probably common, or even, with regard to sex, what he claims 'Cook's men thought' (p. 176). This is thought provoking but also frustrating.

Summarising the changes that were taking place in British society during Cook's lifetime, both globally and in the specific areas with which Cook was familiar, is problematic. Gascoigne has decided to treat the period as one of up-coming critical change and to present Cook as a symbol of that change in a number of ways.

Foreshortening the long run up to the economic changes of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries produces a dramatic but somewhat misleading construction of Cook's early experiences. This is in part due to

the impossibility of avoiding minor errors, in part to the difficulty of setting very particular circumstances into a wider framework – in agriculture, for instance, enclosure was changing many people's lives in Yorkshire but Great Ayton had been enclosed 70 years before Cook's birth.

The plotting of the narrative in this work depends on creating sharp contrasts between the two worlds, but one may ask how convincing is this? How far was Cook in fact conscious of irreconcilable differences either between Britain and the Pacific or even between his Britain and that which had gone before? Colliers, after all, had tramped up and down the coasts of Britain since the Middle Ages – London had been dependent on the coal they brought since 1500. Trinity House Newcastle, whose authority covered Whitby, had licensed Pilots since the sixteenth century and had been the body that provided the safety net for local shipping almost as long.

Trade is the driving force that Gascoigne sees as lying behind the missions of exploration Britain sent out in the mid-eighteenth century but was such exotic trade visible in Whitby? Cook would have mainly encountered only routine, local trade in fish, food and clothing. Gascoigne is too good a scholar to say merely about Cook's knowledge of the smuggling that was endemic on the East Coast that 'he must have known of it' and nothing on what was brought in and the way in which it was tied into more legitimate trade. There are too many gaps in what can safely be said about Cook's understanding of the wider financial structures underlying the growth of trade in the period to make it clear what trade he thought should result from his voyages. Gascoigne's account of trade and of the coinage ignores the many earlier centuries in which coins were already the small change of business and in which early forms of banking activities linked Northern counties, especially Yorkshire, to London and overseas markets. He downplays the role of trade in the Islands as peripheral but in many ways it would not have differed except in volume from local Yorkshire marketing.

Gascoigne presents the Pacific islanders' concept of the gift as wholly foreign to British ideas of trade as an exchange, arguing that this led on both sides to embarrassment, confusion and ultimately conflict. The idea of the gift-exchange, however, had existed in Europe for centuries and had formed a part of royal and noble politics, and Europeans had encountered sophisticated forms of the practice in other areas of Asia well before Cook. The implications of such encounters with the Islanders and the ways in which such things as gift-exchange were intertwined in their culture with other fundamental social

concepts need to be more carefully teased out if we are to comprehend the distance between the mental worlds of the two societies.

In contrasting Cook's attitude to mapping with that of the Islanders, for instance, Gascoigne emphasizes Cook's commitment to what is presented as scientific surveying and claims that he failed to appreciate how Tupaia envisaged space, distance and direction. Certainly, this would be the appropriate official account to send to the Admiralty, but coastal pilots in Britain, even down to the mid-nineteenth century, used knowledge, written down in printed or private rutters, that had much in common with Tupaia's mental maps. Did Cook in his time as an apprentice and in merchant ships never encounter this?

This is nevertheless an easy-to-read book that stimulates readers to consider matters they had perhaps previously taken for granted and to go away and look for their own answers. In assessing its success one should, I think, say: 'Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for?'

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Goldin, Simha, *The Ways of Jewish Martyrdom* (Cursor Mundi 2), trans. Yigal Levin, C. Michael Copeland, ed., Turnhout, Brepols, 2008; hardback; pp. xiv, 399; 7 b/w figures; R.R.P €70.00; ISBN 9782503525235.

This is a book that is not like other scholarly books, and it is more important than most. As you can see from the bibliographical title-line above, it is not only a translation from Hebrew, but also a text that required an editor. My suspicion is that the manuscript was two or three, or more, times longer than the text we now have.

It is a book that is not like other scholarly books because, rather than claim objectivity and disinterestedness, it begins with an account of personal experience during the Gulf War of 1991 when Israel was subjected to sustained Iranian missile attacks. It concludes with a discussion of how Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora still remember and talk about their experiences during the *Shoah* when Jews, Judaism and Jewishness were close to annihilation. It is from this perspective that the author looks at Jewish history but also at Christian martyrology and pagan Judeophobia. Simha Goldin feels Jewish history as a Jew.

In a way, most of the chapters are repetitious and confusing, while, at the same time, the argument is intriguing and searching. Goldin is trying to