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Jocelyn Anderson

Abstract

James Cook’s expeditions to the Pacific were unprecedented in late eighteenth-century Britain, and in the years following the expeditions, extraordinary images of the region were presented to the public. The drawings and paintings made by the artists during the expeditions became the basis for dozens of artworks, which brought to life areas of the world that had previously been little known to Europeans. While these were available to a limited public, tens of thousands of British consumers encountered images of the Pacific through magazine illustrations that were subsequently based on those art works. Published in several leading British magazines in the 1770s and 1780s, these illustrations circulated widely and reached people across Britain and in the American colonies, integrating the Pacific into consumer culture in a way that no other product could. They constituted a rich discourse about the Pacific which was informed by the written accounts and ambitious post-voyage art works, but ultimately separated from them: they were a unique set of representations, the production of which was determined above all by the magazine industry. The magazines presented their readers with the most exotic and spectacular glimpses of the Pacific that they could possibly offer, and they achieved this primarily through a focus on indigenous peoples’ bodies and dress; accuracy, context, and nuance were often diminished as images were adapted and edited for magazine production. Ultimately, these engravings played a critical role in the construction of the idea of the Pacific, at a time when British colonial activity in that region was just beginning.

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Cite as

James Cook’s expeditions to the Pacific were unprecedented in late eighteenth-century Britain: they visited numerous islands in Polynesia (including Tahiti, Tonga, and Hawaii), New Zealand and Australia, and the north-west coast of North America, and in the years following the expeditions, extraordinary images of these sites were presented to the public. Artists were present on all three voyages, albeit in somewhat different capacities: on the first (1768–71), Cook was accompanied by the aristocrat-scientist Sir Joseph Banks, who brought with him two artists, Alexander Buchan and Sydney Parkinson (additional drawings were made by Banks’s secretary, Herman Diedrich Spöring); for the second and third (1772–75 and 1776–80), the Admiralty respectively appointed William Hodges and John
Webber as the official artists. The drawings and paintings made by the artists during the expeditions became the basis for dozens of art works, which brought to life areas of the world that had previously been little known to Europeans. The original field-sketches, as well as the oil paintings, fine engravings, and illustrations made after them were made available to a limited public through exhibitions and prestigious book and print shops. But a further, much larger audience of thousands of British consumers was able to encounter images of the Pacific through the many magazine illustrations that were subsequently based on these art works. In 1774, for instance, The Gentleman’s Magazine published an image of “the Head of a New Zealander, ornamented according to the Custom of the Country, and different from every other in the World” (Fig. 1). Markers of exotic difference dominate this image: layers of dark lines, dashes and dots represent a complex pattern of tattoos, and the man’s face is framed by an arc of ornaments, from the feathers in his hair to the hei-tiki pendant around his neck. Based on Parkinson’s work, this plate is one of dozens published in British magazines in the months and years following the voyages, a rich body of imagery which presented readers with a unique view of the Pacific. As the 250th anniversary of Cook’s first voyage approaches, an examination of the significance of the magazine illustrations related to his expeditions is timely. ¹

The Pacific magazine illustrations were part of a wider eighteenth-century discourse surrounding Empire. At the time of Cook’s voyages, the British Empire itself was rapidly changing, both as an idea and as a network of territories. Although the Empire as a concept was well established, its specific geographic definition was often ambiguous: by the middle of the eighteenth century, the term often encompassed Britain, Ireland, the West Indies, and the North American colonies, but it did not necessarily include British possessions in Africa or the East Indies. ² Similarly, expectations of what kind of political entity the Empire would become were also changing, particularly after the victories of the Seven Years’ War led to authoritarian British rule in some regions. ³ Cook’s voyages, then, were not part of an Empire, which had clear geographic and ideological identities; rather, they were part of a complex and nebulous web of highly unstable and rapidly shifting imperial activities.

The expeditions had a political goal: while the purported objective of Cook’s first voyage was to observe the Transit of Venus at Tahiti, among his secret instructions from the Admiralty was an order which stated: “You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain”; a full discussion of Cook’s efforts to claim territories for Britain is beyond the scope of this article, but it must be stressed that he did not have consent from indigenous people to take possession of land and his efforts to justify his actions suggest he was conscious of that failing. ⁴ Secret instructions aside, at the time of his
expeditions, people in Britain both within and outside the government were interested in the commercial and strategic possibilities of Pacific islands. Therefore, when people in Britain read about Cook’s voyages, it would not have been unreasonable for them to surmise that the expeditions potentially had imperial implications, even if the specific opportunities remained unclear in the voyages’ immediate aftermath.

Magazine illustrations produced in the wake of the Pacific voyages provide critical evidence of the extent of public awareness in Britain of the Pacific as a region and of British activities there. This is important because the question of public awareness and interest in the British Empire has been vehemently debated by historians. While some have argued that the Empire was “taken-for-granted as a natural aspect of Britain’s place in the world” though it was not necessarily “a subject of popular critical consciousness”, others have insisted on “examining the evidence for domestic imperialism empirically and sceptically, to see if it necessarily stands up.” Recent studies have demonstrated that while there is considerable evidence pointing to awareness of specific aspects of British activity overseas, the nature of this evidence is inconsistent and that, at times, far from unconsciously taking the Empire for granted, people were often very explicit in their views about it: in a discussion of the publicity surrounding military leaders, Nicholas Rogers has found that “although much has been made of the saturation of British news with imperial themes, the coverage was actually uneven”; in his book on East India Company nabobs, Tillman Nechtman concluded that the relationship between Britain and the Empire was not only not taken for granted, it was “a hotly contested public debate”.

Both studies support Kathleen Wilson’s argument that there was no universal “imperial experience”, but rather many discrete “ways of imagining it in specific historical periods”.

It was not unusual for magazines to play a key role in publishing information about imperial activities, thus helping people to better imagine them: between 1756 and 1760, for example, The Gentleman’s Magazine and The London Magazine printed numerous maps representing the “theaters of war in Europe” and contested territories in Africa, America, India, and the Caribbean. In this context, the diverse publicity of the Cook expeditions clearly merits investigation: although we cannot assume that the Pacific was in and of itself of enormous popular interest, the proliferation of representations of the Pacific demonstrates that it was at times of great interest, and magazine illustrations were among the most widely available images.
Figure 2.

The visual productions associated with the Cook voyages represented places in the Pacific through a variety of media, each of which reached people in Britain in different ways. Every text and representation, be it a book, painting, print, collected object, performance, or illustration, must be understood as a product within a specific cultural space which operated under its own terms and conditions. The different ways in which these products and spaces were commercialized and packaged led to the creation of different audiences: in commenting on the consumption of culture in the eighteenth century, Ann Bermingham has stressed that “there was no single public for art [. . .] in fact, there were many publics.” Magazine audiences
represent a public in their own right, one quite different from the audience for art exhibitions: magazines had thousands of readers throughout Britain and sometimes in the American colonies, and many of the leading magazines were designed to be relatively inexpensive, so as to attract as many readers as possible, regardless of their social position or background. Luxury magazines were comparatively rare in the mid-eighteenth century. When it came to the Cook expeditions, magazine illustrations were more widely accessible than any other type of image. In 1773, for instance, shortly after George Stubbs exhibited *The Kongouro from New Holland*, 1770 at the Society of Artists (on which occasion a critic declared it a “rather extraordinary” subject), the painting was engraved for *The Gentleman’s Magazine* (Fig. 2). 13 Although its title suggests a socially elevated audience, Gillian Williamson’s recent monograph on *The Gentleman’s Magazine* argues that the empirical data about its readership indicates this was not the case at all: it was purchased by landed gentlemen, but also by professionals, tradesmen, farmers, journeymen, upper servants, and apprentices—what Williamson characterizes as “a broad spectrum of eighteenth-century literate society”—and its commercial success depended on this breadth; it also had female readers. 14 In 1773, it was likely printing around 6,000 copies per month, with several people reading each copy, and it circulated throughout Britain and the American colonies. 15 In Pennsylvania, the engraving was used as the source for a woodcut published in *Der Hoch-Deutsch Americanische Calender . . . 1775* (1774), a popular almanac which was targeted at a wide audience and sold 10,000 copies annually. 16 The kangaroo in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* introduced the Pacific to a large and varied audience, and it was only one of dozens of Pacific images which appeared in British magazines in the 1770s and 1780s.

**From Exhibitions to Publications: Presenting the Pacific Expeditions to the Public**

After Cook’s expeditions returned to Britain, the field sketches and objects collected during the voyages became the sources for an extraordinary range of art works, displays, and prints. For Londoners and visitors to the city, there were several potential ways to view art and objects associated with the expeditions. Stubbs’s *Kongouro* was not the only Pacific painting to be exhibited in the 1770s: following Cook’s second voyage, William Hodges showed several paintings at the Royal Academy, such as *A View of Matavai Bay in the Island of Otaheite* and *A View taken in the Bay of Otaheite Peha* (both 1776). 17 John Webber also exhibited Pacific paintings at the Royal Academy, and he showed his drawings to people who visited his house (many were sold after his death). 18 Beyond these artists’ works, various collections of Pacific artefacts were on display: after his return in 1771, Banks
displayed his collections in his home at 14 New Burlington Street; around 1773, Sir Ashton Lever opened his museum (also known as the Holophusicon) of natural history specimens, ethnographic artefacts, and other curiosities at Leicester House; and in 1775, the British Museum trustees established a South Sea Room. People visiting these sites, as Jennifer Newell has argued, seem to have been “primarily drawn in by the strangeness of the display”, and for many, the objects left powerful impressions. A more dramatic type of encounter was Philip James De Loutherbourg’s pantomime Omai, or, a Trip Round the World (1785), a performance in which the eponymous hero travels to Britain and returns by way of various places Cook had visited on his voyages: while the story itself was fictional, the pantomime was praised for “exact representations” of Pacific places and costumes. Loutherbourg had in fact done considerable research in preparing his designs: he knew Webber, who provided him with drawings and acted as a consultant and advisor; he was familiar with Hodges’s work; he had been to the Leverian Museum; and he had even acquired his own collection of Pacific artefacts. The pantomime received very positive reviews and ran for seventy shows. Nevertheless, ultimately the most popular and widely circulating representations of the Pacific were prints.

Dozens of prints were created for books about the expeditions—some authorized and some not. All three voyages were the subject of official accounts sponsored by the Admiralty: John Hawkesworth’s An account of the voyages undertaken by the order of His present Majesty for making discoveries in the southern hemisphere, and successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret and Captain Cook was published in 1773, Cook’s A voyage towards the South Pole and round the world: Performed in His Majesty’s ships the Resolution and Adventure, in the years 1772, 1773, 1774 and 1775 appeared in 1777, and A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean: Undertaken, by the Command of His Majesty, for making Discoveries in the Northern Hemisphere, begun by Cook and completed by James King, was published in 1784. These books sold well: for all three, the second editions followed within a year of the first; when the official account of the third voyage was published, the print run of 2,000 copies was said to have sold out within three days. In addition to these books, two were written by artists on the first and third voyages, and they also featured numerous illustrations: Sydney Parkinson’s A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas was published by his brother in 1773 (Parkinson had died on the voyage), and William Ellis published his An Authentic Narrative of a Voyage Performed by Captain Cook and Captain Clerke in 1783. While all these books would have been reasonably well known, by far the most widely circulating images were the magazine illustrations published following the first and third voyages.
Magazine illustrations represent a distinct stage of mediation. Bernard Smith has argued that the field studies made during the Pacific voyages constitute a primary act of draughtsmanship, the finished drawings London artists made for preparing publications a secondary stage, and the engravings made for publication a tertiary stage. The engravings Smith was concerned with were those made for the books; similarly, the Pacific illustrations engraved for magazines constitute a stage of mediation that is at least a tertiary stage removed from the original sketch, and, if magazine engravers were adapting from books, a quaternary stage. Examining how the generic conventions of eighteenth-century magazine illustrations affected the adaptation of Pacific imagery reveals their unique contribution to the British idea of the Pacific that developed at that time.

Although encountering these reinvented images would not necessarily have made people especially knowledgeable, their ubiquity makes them extremely important. The Cook expedition magazine illustrations extended the integration of the Pacific into consumer culture in a way that no other product could.

Cook’s first voyage to the Pacific received considerable publicity upon the return to Britain. The places the expedition had visited were largely unfamiliar to the British, and when the authorized account was published, not only was the subject matter exciting, it was also controversial: Hawkesworth, who had been charged with producing the official account based on the various captains’ journals, was accused of inaccuracies (the captains themselves felt they had been misrepresented) and of offending taste, morality, and religion, particularly through his attitude to the role Providence had played in the completion of the voyages and to the sexual encounters with indigenous peoples. Hawkesworth’s and Parkinson’s books were published within days of each other, in early June 1773, and shortly thereafter, several of the country’s leading magazines published images related to the expedition, inserting themselves into the public controversy over the accounts of Cook’s voyage and purporting to offer readers “truthful” images.

The title page of The Westminster Magazine for June 1773, for example, described the issue as “Embellished with 1. Head of Otegoowgoow, Son of a New Zealand Chief: – and, 2. Head of a New Zealand Chief; but curiously tataowed, or marked, according to their Manner. – 3. A War Canoe of New Zealand.” Although it is not always possible to tell whether magazine engravers were working from the drawings made for the books, from proofs of the book illustrations, or from the book illustrations themselves, in this instance, an advertisement for the magazine announced that the illustrations were “copied, by permission, from Mr. Sidney Parkinson’s Journal.” Given that these engravers had permission to copy, they may also have been given advance proofs to work from, but even so, they almost certainly had to produce their plates relatively quickly. In all
likelihood, this would have been viewed as a mutually beneficial arrangement: magazine publishers could have increased their sales by capitalizing on the hype surrounding the books, and the book publishers likely hoped to increase their own sales through magazine publicity.

The London Magazine, The Gentleman’s Magazine’s chief rival, published plates throughout the summer of 1773: Four different Representations of the Natives of Otaheite appeared in June, A fine Representation of a New Zealand Warrior, and two Natives of New Holland advancing to Combat in July (Fig. 3), and The Representation of a singular View in New Zealand, with a War Canoe under a natural-arched Rock in August (Fig. 4); like the images in The Westminster Magazine, all three of these plates appear to be primarily based on plates in Parkinson’s Journal. Illustrations related to Tahiti were selected for The Lady’s Magazine, which published The Dress of the Inhabitants of Otaheite and The Method of Burying in the Island of Otaheite (respectively based on images in Parkinson’s Journal and Hawkesworth’s Account), and The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure, which published Captain Wallis paying a Visit to the Queen of Otaheite and A Dramatic Entertainment (Fig. 5) (both based on images which appear in Hawkesworth’s Account).

Figure 3.
Unknown creator, A fine Representation of a New Zealand Warrior, and two Natives of New Holland advancing to Combat, from The London Magazine, 42, July 1773, facing p. 32, engraving, 12.3 x 20.6cm. Collection The British Library (P.P.5437). Digital image courtesy of The British Library Board.
With the exception of *The Gentleman’s Magazine’s* image of a kangaroo, all of these illustrations represented indigenous people or artefacts from their culture. In several images, their dress and body ornaments dominate the depiction; for example, in *The London Magazine’s* image of a New Zealand
warrior, the pattern of his tattoos seems to flatten his face, and his clothing and the weapon he carries across his chest (most likely a patoo-patoo, a type of bludgeon) appear to overpower his body, to the point that the muscles of his torso are reduced to straight lines. The effect that the publishers presumably sought was to present their readers with the most exotic and spectacular glimpses of the Pacific that they could possibly offer, and they achieved this through a focus on indigenous peoples’ bodies and dress.

When Cook’s account of the second voyage was published, magazine coverage of the expedition was more moderate. In a major study of Cook’s voyages, Nicholas Thomas has argued that much of the press interest in the first voyage was due to Banks’s celebrity, and that no one on the second voyage, not even Cook himself, had comparable fame; press coverage of the voyagers’ return was limited. The leading magazines hardly published any images related to the second voyage. There was nothing inherent in Hodges’s illustrations which made them unsuitable: his portraits of men and women of Tanna, New Caledonia, and New Zealand are similar in scale and composition to Webber’s portraits from the third voyage, which would prove extremely popular with magazine publishers, and the relative simplicity of some of his views would have been easier to engrave than many of Webber’s scenes. The Hodges illustrations were also admired: the Monthly Review, for example, acknowledged “with pleasure the very great merit of Mr. Hodges’s various designs” and noted that Mr Forster, one of the scientists on the voyage, had testified “to the truth of a considerable part of his portraits, landscapes, and other drawings”. Despite this praise, it was only following Cook’s third voyage that magazines again began to publish numerous Pacific images: when the books about his final voyage were published, Cook was widely admired as a national hero and, having been killed by Hawaiians in 1779, as something of a martyr; this intense public interest may have inspired magazine publishers to try and capitalize on his celebrity.

Series of images appeared in several magazines in the 1780s: The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure published Pacific illustrations every month from June 1784 until June 1785; between 1785 and 1787, The New London Magazine published twelve illustrations; The Lady’s Magazine published twenty illustrations between 1784 and 1787. In total, over sixty Pacific illustrations appeared in British magazines between 1784 and 1787. As in 1773, images depicting indigenous people or their communities were by far the most common subjects: The New London Magazine alone, for instance, published Natives of Oonalashka and their Habitations, portraits of a man and woman from Oonalashka, an image of a New Zealand Warrior (a figure adapted from the illustration published in The London Magazine in 1773), The Inside of a House in Nootka Sound (Fig. 6), A Boxing-Match, in Hapaee, The Inside of a Hippah, in New Zealand, and a depiction of a
mourning ritual in Tahiti. Many illustrations were portraits: the series published by *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* included depictions of people from Mangeea, the Friendly Islands, Nootka Sound, Prince William Sound, Oonalashka, the Sandwich Islands, and Kamtschatka. Illustrations described as views often featured indigenous buildings: the series in *The Lady’s Magazine* included *A View of a Hut, and Plantation at Amsterdam, or Tonga-taboo*, *A Hut on the West Coast of America, Lat. 65° 30’ N*, *A View of the Huts and a Boat House, at O’whyee*, *A View of the Market Place at Amsterdam, or Tonga-taboo* (Fig. 7) and *A View at Bolcheretzkoi in Kamtschatka*. Some subjects appeared in more than one magazine: both *The European Magazine* and *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* published images of a man and woman of Oonalashka, and a portrait of a woman from the Sandwich Islands was published in *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure, The Lady’s Magazine* (Fig. 8), and *Town and Country Magazine*. Magazine publishers evidently expected images of indigenous people from the Pacific to attract attention, and there is evidence to suggest that the illustrations were popular: in July 1784, the editors of *The Lady’s Magazine* declared that they had received “great encouragement” and “numerous thanks […] on account of the late elegant Plate, and the *Extract from Captain Cook’s last voyage*”. The adaptation and repackaging of the images of Cook’s third voyage was clearly successful: all these magazines offered their readers glimpses of exotic spectacles.
Figure 6.

Figure 7.
James Heath after William Ellis, A View of the Market Place at Amsterdam, or Tonga-taboo, from The Lady's Magazine, 16, 1785, engraving, 9.4 x 15.1 cm. Collection the British Museum (1875,0213.245). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum.
The Audience for the Pacific Magazine Illustrations

Magazine illustrations had the potential to be influential because the circulation of monthly magazines was tremendous: thousands of issues were printed every month, their distribution and price making them relatively easy to acquire. Surviving statistics indicate growth in circulation in the second half of the eighteenth century: in 1746, *The Gentleman’s Magazine* was printing 3,000 copies per month; in 1769, *The London Magazine* was printing 4,000; and in 1797, *The Gentleman’s Magazine* was printing 4,550, *The European Magazine*, 3,250, and *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, 1,750. Most of these magazines were reasonably popular outside London: *The Gentleman’s Magazine* and *The London Magazine* circulated extensively in the provinces; *The European Magazine* claimed it had “readers and admirers in every quarter of the globe”. Not only were they widely available, magazines were also significantly less expensive than many books, or even access to libraries. Most of the magazines examined in this study, including *The London Magazine*, *The Westminster Magazine*, *The Lady’s Magazine*, and *Town and Country Magazine*, sold for 6p. per issue. In contrast, in the middle of the eighteenth century, membership at circulating libraries ranged from 10s. 6p. to two guineas, and Hawkesworth’s *Voyages* and the *Voyage* describing Cook’s third journey cost 3l. 3s. and 4l. 14s. 6p. respectively. For the eighteenth-century consumer, part of the rationale
behind magazines was that they provided readers with abridged accounts of books, sparing them the need to purchase the books themselves; many people read fiction through magazines rather than novels. 48

Access was a key factor in editorial decisions: in 1784, the editors of The Lady’s Magazine claimed that part of their purpose in publishing extracts from and illustrations associated with Cook’s third voyage was that the price of the official book was “so much increased, as to be too dear for the purchase of every one”. 49 Lists of subscribers confirm that low prices did attract a broad range of consumers, from aristocrats to apprentices and shop assistants. 50 Perhaps most importantly, not only could many people afford magazines, a single copy would often have had many readers: like newspapers, magazines were routinely shared, both in public spaces, such as coffee houses, and in private spaces within the home. 51 In view of this, we can reasonably assume that any Pacific illustration published in a leading magazine would have been seen by tens of thousands of people. 52

Because diversity among magazine readers was significant, it is difficult to make any conclusions about the readers looking at Pacific magazine illustrations, the vast majority of which appeared in what might be identified as generalist publications. Truly niche publications targeted specific professions or interests, and among general interest magazines, there were many similarities in content; publications like The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure and The London Magazine had adopted The Gentleman’s Magazine’s emphasis on miscellaneous, wide-ranging content for a broad readership. 53 The sole exception to this murkiness is The Lady’s Magazine: although there were men who subscribed to and wrote for The Lady’s Magazine, it had made a point of reaching out to a female audience and adapting its tone accordingly; in introducing the account of Cook’s third voyage as a serial feature, its editors promised to provide “an abridgement of it, adapted entirely to Female taste, and Female curiosity” (they omitted considerable navigational detail, information on the weather, and descriptions of coastlines encountered while sailing). 54 The Lady’s Magazine routinely published its Pacific illustrations alongside sewing patterns and music sheets; the June 1784 issue, for instance, offered readers “An elegant new Pattern for a Handkerchief, or Apron” and “A Song set to Music by Mr. Handel” in addition to the plate depicting the man and woman of the Sandwich Islands (Fig. 8). 55 In this publication, the Pacific illustrations were thrust into a feminine, domestic space, but this was not necessarily problematic. While the pursuit of scientific knowledge was the most famous goal of the Pacific voyages, Cook himself was celebrated not only as a great
explorer, but also as virtuous, humble and humane, a loyal husband, and a man of sensibility, and these qualities presumably made him, and by extension, his voyages, a suitable subject to present to a female audience. 56

Not only was there a wide range of people who read magazines, there was a wide range of approaches to reading magazines, and in light of this diversity, we cannot assume that readers would have necessarily connected magazine illustrations of the Pacific to any wider discourse about the voyages. For those readers who purchased magazines as part of a personal ambition to be considered a “polite” person of refined sociability and good taste, it is possible that in addition to encountering the Pacific in magazines, they had read the official accounts of the voyages. 57 But many readers read magazines casually: Francis Place, for example, describing the reading he had done while he was an apprentice in London, noted he had read “many Magazines” (as well as other texts) but considered his reading to be “devoid of method, and very desultory”. 58 The books on the expeditions and paintings created by the voyage artists could provide a very different context for the magazine illustrations; for instance, on encountering The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure’s illustration of Tahitian women (Fig. 9 Woman of Otaheite, dancing and Woman of Otaheite, bringing a Present, 1784), a reader familiar with Georg(e) Forster’s account of Cook’s second expedition, A Voyage Round the World (1777), might have connected the sensual appearance of the women in the magazine to Forster’s contention that dances which would be indecent in Europe were “perfectly innocent” in Tahiti because the people there did not have the same customs as “civilized Europe”. 59 To make this connection would require well-informed reading, however; in all likelihood, many magazine readers simply connected the plate to the article it accompanied, which described the women as “royal sisters” in “picturesque and elegant” dress. 60 The Pacific magazine illustrations represent a discourse about the Pacific which was informed by the written accounts and ambitious post-voyage art works, but ultimately separated from them, and the magazine illustrations could not carry all of the same connotations. They are a unique set of representations, the production of which was determined above all by the magazine industry.
The Publisher’s Investment: Promoting and Commissioning Magazine Illustrations

Between them, eight leading magazines printed over seventy plates representing the Pacific. This number of illustrations is an extraordinary total for a single subject, as is the number of magazines they appeared in, but in general, magazine illustration was well established by the late eighteenth century and it was a critical element of the appeal of the product. The variety of content in magazines had led to a correspondingly wide range of illustrations, including maps, diagrams, portraits, illustrations of plants and animals, historical pictures, and views. Plates were an important part of marketing magazines: when it launched in 1785, the editors of The New London Magazine claimed that “the very Elegant Copper-Plates with which this Work will be enriched, will be worth of themselves alone more than four Times the Price of the Magazine” (it too cost 6p.). New issues were routinely advertised in newspapers, and these also promoted illustrations. In 1773, the heading for an advertisement for The Westminster Magazine appeared as follows:

OTAHITEEANS and NEW ZEALANDERS! NEW DISCOVERIES in the SOUTH SEAS! Next Thursday will be published, Price 6d. (Embellished with two heads of New-Zealand Chiefs, cu- riously tataowed according to their manner; and a war canoe of New-
Advertisements like this one indicate that it was important to offer novel illustrations to consumers, and that the exoticism of the Pacific was expected to attract attention. In all likelihood, this was one of the chief reasons publishers chose to adapt the Pacific images: unlike the men who were behind the official books, who were determined to promote the voyages, these publishers were primarily in the business of selling and profiting from magazines.

The Pacific magazine illustrations were usually based on book illustrations, but relatively little information survives about who was creating the plates for the magazines or what specific images they had access to. Many magazine plates are unsigned, and in general, their production varied tremendously. Some were created by artists closely affiliated with the Royal Academy; for example, the artist Thomas Stothard, who contributed at least fifteen engravings to Town and Country Magazine between 1780 and 1785 and at least ninety to The Lady’s Magazine between 1780 and 1797, became an A.R.A. in 1792 and a full Academician in 1794. Others had less impressive careers, and David Alexander has argued that many plates were unsigned because “some were so poorly done that no self-respecting engraver would have acknowledged them”. With the Pacific plates, there are only occasional examples of references to artists: in 1784, for instance, The Westminster Magazine published twelve Pacific images after illustrations by William Ellis, one of which was described as “a striking Representation of that inclement Part of the World, engraved from a Drawing taken on the Spot”. The credit here is somewhat ambiguous and while it is entirely possible that the magazine illustrator had access to Ellis’s drawing, this may have been merely a promotional claim. In contrast, for its first Pacific illustration, The New London Magazine pointedly informed readers that the image came from the official account, declaring the plate showed “A Representation of the Natives of OONALASHKA and their HABITATIONS, accurately engraved by Eastgate, from the Folio Edition of Cook’s Voyages, performed by Royal Authority”.

No matter who the engraver was, these images were a major investment for their publishers: every illustration required its own plate, and the magazine sometimes needed several identical plates in order to print a sufficient number of impressions. The expense and time it took for this type of
production may explain why series of images representing the Pacific sometimes ended up out of sync with their accompanying texts; for example, the description of the people at Nootka Sound was published in the February 1786 issue of *The New London Magazine*, but the accompanying plate only appeared in March. When considered as significant investments, the Pacific magazine illustrations are another indication of the popularity of selling the exotic, a financial opportunity not unlike that exploited by the Loutherbourg pantomime. The physical qualities of magazines, however, shaped the nature of the images that they offered readers.

The Expectations of Illustrations and the Creation of Magazine Plates

The aesthetic requirements of illustrations were significantly different from what was required in an exhibition painting. In creating post-voyage works, both Hodges and Webber were aware of distinct expectations for Royal Academy paintings, which were admired for their overall effect and display of artistic talent, and official illustrations, which were admired for accuracy and their presentation of information. Magazine editors had requirements as well, such as a small size, and it was very unusual for the same composition to appear in an exhibition, an official account, and a magazine. Webber’s depiction of sailors shooting “sea horses” (now known as walruses) is a rare example of a scene which was painted and exhibited in London (Fig. 10), engraved for Cook’s *Voyage* (Fig. 11), and published in magazines (it was published by *The Lady’s Magazine* (Fig. 12) in August 1786 and *The New London Magazine* in October 1786). When Webber submitted the painting to the Royal Academy in 1784, the critical response was mixed: a writer for the *Morning Chronicle* declared it “what we must profess ourselves unable to understand—either the subject or the manner of treating it”; the *Morning Post* described it as “a most extraordinary scene, and probably well expressed”, but claimed there was “nothing very painter-like in the execution”; and the *Morning Herald* stated “This representation may be in nature, but we must leave to the admiration of the *Iceland Connoisseur*, what is an unpleasing picture in Great Britain.” Although the picture failed to satisfy the artistic standards of these critics, all hint that the composition might be acceptable as an illustration of an encounter with nature, if more information was provided to the viewer, and it was included in the official *Voyage*. Publishers’ subsequent decisions to invest in engraving the “sea horses” for magazines suggests that as an illustration, the subject was more successful.
**Figure 10.**

**Figure 11.**
John Heath and Edmund Scott after John Webber, Sea Horses, 1784, engraving, 27.2 x 41.3 cm. Collection the British Museum (1957,0705.46). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum.
The illustrations in the official books were subject to critical attention as well, and reviewers were attentive to the perceived compromises which occurred when drawings were turned into engravings. Among the illustrations in Hawkesworth’s *Voyages*, for example, was an illustration of women in Tahiti dancing (Fig. 13). The illustration was engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi from a drawing which had been created by Giovanni Battista Cipriani, who drew the scene by referring to a number of Parkinson’s sketches of figures (the setting is believed to be based on a separate Parkinson drawing, now lost). In general, it was not unusual for the artists and engravers creating the illustrations to make significant changes from what Spöring, Buchan, and Parkinson had recorded in their sketches. This Cipriani-Bartolozzi illustration, however, drew a sharp rebuke from one reviewer, who declared:

> Though we were never at Otaheite, or present at a dramatic entertainment in the island of Ulietea, yet we may venture confidently to affirm, that Tupia [Tupaia, a Polynesian priest who joined Cook’s expedition in Tahiti], were he alive, would disown the good company got together in plate No. 7, for his neighbours. Instead of the *Costume* of the South Sea islanders, the spectator is presented with figures which, in the air of the heads, forms, attitudes, &c. continually remind him of the antique, and of the productions of the Roman, Florentine, and other great schools.
Despite this highly public criticism, the image was adapted for *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, which published it in September 1773 (advertised as a “neatly engraved” copper plate which represented “a dance and dramatic entertainment, performed in the island of Bolabola, in the South Seas”) (Fig. 5). In preparing that illustration, further changes were made. A compromise in size was inevitable: the image in Hawkesworth’s *Voyages* measured 33.2 x 44 cm, whereas the related image in *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* measured 10.5 x 19.2 cm. Perhaps because the image could not easily be scaled down, the magazine illustrator chose to crop and rearrange it—a decision which had a powerful effect on the composition. For the magazine, eight figures were left out, much of the structure of the house and the surrounding landscape was cropped, and the remaining composition was flipped. The resulting image is quite different: the topless dancer is now at the centre of the image such that the scene appears to pivot around her; the shift in her position, combined with the removal of the female spectators and the seated musician, and the close cropping of the mat which functions as a stage for the dancers, makes this image a much more intimate and titillating encounter than that offered by the book itself. Although the illustrator may have simply been looking for a practical solution to the problem of the large composition, the loss of context and nuance in the image sensationalizes it and undermines the complexity of the culture depicted. What the image does not do, however, is correct or improve on any of the issues the criticism of the Cipriani-Bartolozzi image had identified. The magazine publisher presumably felt that the contexts were sufficiently different that he need not worry about criticism from an engraving connoisseur: this was an inexpensive illustration by an anonymous artist, presented as a fascinating sight rather than an object which merited analysis as a fine art work.
Similar contrasts and compromises occurred when Webber’s illustrations of the third voyage were published and adapted for magazines. In preparing the official account, the quality of the illustrations had been a priority: special paper was acquired from Paris, and twenty-five engravers were employed, some of whom were very well known and expensive; for a depiction of “a Human Sacrifice in Otaheite”, William Woollett was paid 157l. 10s.76 A note in the book itself highlighted these efforts: at the head of the list of plates, the editor advised

> As many of the Purchasers of this Work may choose to preserve the larger-sized Plates in a separate volume in folio, these have been here marked with Asterisks; and Booksellers are cautioned not to have them bound up, with the rest of the Plates, in the places of these volumes pointed out by the respective References, unless they receive particular directions for that purpose.77

Once again, the plates attracted reviewers’ attention: the *Critical Review* declared “Twenty-seven engravers were employed about these splendid plates; who, in general, have fulfilled every expectation that might be formed from English artists, now, undoubtedly, the first in the world”; in contrast, the

**Figure 13.**
Francesco Bartolozzi after Giovanni Battista Cipriani, Dance of Raiatea or Tahiti women, from *An account of the voyage in the Southern Hemisphere* by John Hawkesworth (London: 1773), 1773, engraving, 33.2 x 44 cm. Collection the British Museum (Oc2006,Prt.51). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum.
"English Review" claimed “Few or none of the plates will give very great pleasure to the eye of the connoisseur”, though it acknowledged that “our best artists have been employed” and a huge investment had been made. 78 Unlike those images, the magazine illustrations were never intended for folio volumes in a gentleman’s library or for a connoisseur’s attention, and the loss of detail and subtlety in scaling down the illustrations was evidently deemed acceptable. Some magazine illustrators had great difficulty in reproducing Webber’s views of ceremonies and places in the Pacific; for instance, The New London Magazine’s illustration of the View of the Inside of a House in Nootka Sound (Fig. 6) was described as Webber’s design engraved by Thornton, but it was hardly a successful adaptation. Once again, the image had to be significantly scaled down: the illustration in the official account measures 22.6 x 37.4 cm; the magazine illustration measures 9.4 x 15.9 cm. 79 Important details were lost in the compression, possibly because the magazine engraver(s) simply did not have the skill or the time to replicate details well on a smaller scale (they were most likely under pressure to prepare the plates quickly): the magazine illustrator has included the full composition and all twelve figures shown in the original image, but the figures’ faces have been reduced to the most rudimentary of markings, details of their garments are gone, and even their bodies lack definition; it is also somewhat difficult to recognize that the central group is preparing fish, the smell of which, the book stresses, filled houses in the community. 80 Absent the fine details of the house’s sculptures, the baskets, the ornament on their clothing, and the extent of their provisions, the house looks particularly primitive, and, by extension, the people do as well. The narrative had relied on some of these details; for example, in the official account, Cook made a point of mentioning the carved wooden figures, and declared that “Mr. Webber’s view of the inside of a Nootka house, in which these images are represented, will convey a more perfect idea of them than any description.” 81 It is possible that the crudeness in the magazine was not seen as problematic, as the official illustrations representing the first and third voyages had attracted criticism for their elegance; one reviewer had even suggested that: “the coarsest wooden cuts, exhibiting a faithful copy of Nature, as it appears in this part of the world, would have been more acceptable to every judicious Reader.” 82 Although production limitations are a more likely explanation than the ideology of the engraver or publisher, coarseness was certainly present in The New London Magazine.

The Dramatic Entertainment and Nootka House are two examples of a constant practical challenge for magazine illustrators: because magazines were small publications, scaling down, cropping, and compromising details was routine; however, some images were easier to adapt than others. William Ellis’s images, for instance, were from an unofficial account, and his book was smaller than the official one. Although they were not as prestigious
as the images from the official account, his illustrations were likely attractive to magazine publishers because they did not usually require resizing: his *A View of the Market Place at Amsterdam, or Tonga-taboo* is identical in size (9.4 x 15.1 cm) to an illustration published in *The Lady’s Magazine* in June 1785 (Fig. 7). Ellis’s images were also graphically suitable for magazines: with their lack of fine details and loose, sketchy lines, even a hack engraver would not have had much difficulty reproducing them. This type of image reuse was not common however, and most illustrations had to be rendered in a smaller size. The Pacific portraits were ideally suited to this, and their convenience for adaptation is most likely one of the main reasons that they were frequently chosen. Even the minor adaptations made, however, had a significant impact on how their indigenous subjects were represented.

When the Pacific portraits were adapted, relatively little of the image was lost, but they were often reframed. *The European Magazine’s A Man & Woman of Prince William’s Sound* (Fig. 14) exemplifies the advantages of portraits: although they were reproduced at a fraction of the size of Webber’s illustrations and two different people are shown on a single page, most of the details of the figures’ dress and ornaments have been included. There are slight differences—the delineation of individual hairs and furs is not quite as crisp, the lighting around the eyes is not quite as bright, and the shadows on the faces are not quite as subtle, such that overall, the faces are not quite as expressive—but ultimately, these are fairly good adaptations. The most striking difference is that in Webber’s illustration, the figures are set within plain rectangular frames, and they are separate plates; in the magazine, the faces have been placed in circular portals framed with drapery and a cartouche caption, as if to fit them into an elegant, fashionable frame which might just as easily have surrounded portraits of celebrated British individuals. This type of conspicuous reframing was not unique: *The European Magazine* used a similar design to frame its portraits of a man and woman of Oonalashka the following month; and *The Lady’s Magazine* used swags and foliage to frame *A Man and Woman of Sandwich Islands* in 1784 (Fig. 8). Although *The Lady’s Magazine* did not persist in using this frame for later issues, when it published illustrations of *A Woman of Kamtschatka, A Man of Sandwich Islands*, and *A Native of King Georges Sound* (all in 1785), the top of each picture was labelled “Engraved for the Ladies Magazine”, as if to emphasize that the image had been rebranded.
Reframing and rebranding is significant because the European frames implicitly drew attention to the contrast between European culture and indigenous cultures in the Pacific region. In his discussion of the pictorial strategies Theodor de Bry employed for creating engravings based on John White’s watercolours made during Sir Walter Raleigh’s expedition to Virginia in 1585 (first published in *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, 1590), Michael Gaudio has argued that when de Bry’s viewers looked at his representations of indigenous Americans, “they were declaring their difference from the savage by doing precisely that which the savage cannot do” and that “To possess the art of mechanical reproduction, to experience the world through this art, was thus to be aware of oneself as living in an advanced and ever-advancing state of civilization.”

The magazine illustrations of Pacific peoples do not highlight their status as engravings in the same way as de Bry’s, but the plates do remind viewers that they are looking at images specifically created for them, the modern British consumer. To that end, the contrast Gaudio identified is once again at play. The Pacific people Cook and Webber had encountered were effectively being placed on a virtual stage in the British print entertainment industry.

While magazine frames created harsh juxtapositions, the absence of any frame at all could be equally powerful. In order to place as much illustration as possible on a single plate, magazine illustrators routinely extracted images from their original settings and contexts and put them together. *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* featured several pairings of portraits of indigenous people, all of which presented the figures as cut-outs.
against a white ground, such that they are no longer distinct portraits of individuals but rather heads suspended in a shared space. In the official account, none of the portraits in question were presented as pendants, but the magazine illustrators forced the pairings, which did not even necessarily come from the same parts of the text: the portraits of Poulaho, the King of the Friendly Islands, and a woman from Eaoo, which were published turning slightly towards each other in July 1784, represent encounters which took place on 27 May 1777 and 12 July 1777 respectively. To bring images of individuals together in this way was to distance them from the narratives they were part of and, by extension, to tacitly encourage viewers to see the people depicted as representing cultural types.

Beyond portrait heads, it was also relatively straightforward to combine full-length figures; for example, *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* of August 1784 included a plate which showed two women, a *Woman of Otaheite, dancing* and a *Woman of Otaheite, bringing a Present* (Fig. 9), both of whom have been extracted from images in which they are shown performing rituals in landscape settings. Here again, the juxtaposition is forced, and in this instance, to place them in isolation is to remove them from their respective stages, taking away the dignity of their performances and drawing attention to the seductiveness of their bodies. For the editor of *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, the juxtaposition of two figures was not only practical, it was potentially interesting: explaining a plate which combined “A New Zealand Warrior in his proper Dress, compleatly Armed, according to their Manner” and “A Native of Otaheite in the Dress of his Country”, he noted the plate showed “Chiefs in two different islands, one in a high, the other in a low latitude, by which their different natures are strongly contrasted.” Although this too may have been an unintended consequence of an illustrator’s attempt to offer as many images as possible on a single page, the juxtaposition of figures was effectively eroding the significance of the images as originally presented in the book: what had been representations of encounters was now an illustration of a reflection on indigenous cultures.

Taken out of spatial context, the magazine figures effectively inhabit an imaginary Pacific, to a far greater degree than their counterparts in the books do. In a discussion of artists and colonial encounters, Julie Codell argued that: “The visual arts are capable of projecting atopic spaces [non-places or virtual places] invoked by physical landscape but not tied to the physical”; these spaces then constitute an imaginary geography. From a contemporary perspective, it would be naive to think that the images produced during and immediately after the Pacific voyages are objective and realist. In the eighteenth century, however, the rationale for taking artists on the voyages was that they would be able to produce images which could serve as sources of information, and it is now impossible to know how many
eighteenth-century viewers believed in the veracity of the images they were presented with (reviewers’ speculations about accuracy indicates that at least some people had doubts). Magazine illustrations were not rooted in the official accounts’ (seemingly) scientific approach: in them the tension between the real and the imaginary is intensified as figures were extracted and rearranged. Isolated from their cultures and the places they inhabited, the indigenous people represented in these images are set against blankness, almost as if they were specimens rather than individuals. Magazine audiences were effectively presented with images of indigenous peoples from the Pacific islands, from Australia and New Zealand, and from the Pacific coast of North America, in which the figures’ personhood and places were undermined, and instead the exotic clothing and body ornaments took centre stage.

Extreme versions of an imaginary visual Pacific were created when illustrators synthesized separate images into single compositions. As with reframing and extracting images, this was likely an unintended consequence of a persistent desire to offer as much illustration as possible. With a single composition, though, accuracy—which had been part of the intention of creating the official illustrations—was thoroughly sacrificed for a more interesting or sensational image. One dramatic example of this type was The Representation of a singular View in New Zealand, with a War Canoe under a natural-arched Rock published in The London Magazine in 1773 (Fig. 4). This plate is a combination of Parkinson’s A War Canoe, of New Zealand (Fig. 15), his View of an Arched Rock, on the Coast of New Zealand; with an Hippa, or Place of Retreat, on the Top of it (Fig. 16), and Stubbs’s kangaroo (an animal which the expedition had encountered in Australia), made almost comically disproportionate. The compression of these images into one illustration comes at the cost of detail: for instance, the carving on the war canoe has been attempted in the magazine, but it lacks the clarity of the Parkinson book illustration, in which the creature at the head of the canoe has more finely delineated eyes, tongue, hands, and feet. Compositional elements have also been omitted altogether: although the arched rock is similar in both Parkinson’s book and the magazine, in Parkinson’s view there is a British ship on the far right which the magazine illustrator has removed. It is as if the illustrator was not actually attempting to adapt any one image, but was rather creating a Pacific-themed collage, with limited attention to the unique meanings of the different elements at play.
Figure 15.
Richard Bernard Godfrey after Sydney Parkinson, A War Canoe, of New Zealand, 1773 from *A Journal of a voyage to the South seas in His Majesty's ship, the Endeavour* by Sydney Parkinson (London: printed for Stanfield Parkinson, 1773), engraving, 27.5 x 33.4 cm. Collection The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto (T152098). Digital image courtesy of The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.
A more unsettling example of synthesis is The Gentleman’s Magazine’s image of “the Head of a New Zealander, ornamented according to the Custom of the Country, and different from every other in the World” (Fig 1). Although at first glance this image looks like a portrait, it is in fact a combination of two different portraits in Parkinson’s Voyage: the man’s hair and dress and the tattooing around his eyes correspond with those depicted in Parkinson’s Head of a Chief of New Zealand, while the tattooing on his cheeks and nose is based on the tattoos depicted in Parkinson’s Head of Otegoongoon, Son of a New Zealand Chief, the face curiously tataow’d; Parkinson had encountered these men on separate occasions, over a month apart. The magazine illustration has its origins in drawings made during the expedition, but it does not represent anything the travellers saw, it is a London invention. No mention of this synthesis was acknowledged in the magazine’s text, which specifically claimed to represent “the head of one of their Chiefs, as it exhibits at once the manner in which the New-Zealanders both paint and ornament themselves.” In fact, it showed a man whose tattoos are unlike those of either of the men Parkinson drew.
The connotations of juxtaposition and extraction which are apparent in the magazine illustrations are compounded by their placement within the magazines. Visually, the juxtapositions on plates would have been made sharper in light of the images the magazines published alongside the Pacific illustrations. In September 1773, when *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* published *A Dramatic Entertainment* (Fig. 5), they also published illustrations of General Wolfe’s monument, described as “a Copper-plate, representing that grand and elegant Piece of Sculpture, beautifully engraved”, a plate illustrating designs for rolling carts and wagons which would be better suited to public highways and turnpike roads, and a plate featuring “an elegantly engraved Figure”, which was meant to be expressive of September. 94 For readers who were subscribers, the combined assortment of images in a volume was no less varied; for instance, in 1773, the year it published the illustration of the kangaroo (Fig. 2), *The Gentleman’s Magazine* published an extraordinary array of illustrations, including images of newly invented farming implements, a geometrical profile of the abbey church at Rheims, a plan of navigable canals, a perspective view of Cowley Castle, a diagram of a machine for experimenting on air, and eight illustrations of curiosities found in Herculaneum. 95 In contrast, the official Pacific illustrations had been created as complex sets of images which included maps, scenes of encounters, views, portraits and depictions of objects. For Nootka Sound, for instance, Webber had not only illustrated the inside of the house, he had created illustrations of a man, a woman, a view of the community gathered around their houses and boats, a medley plate of ritual objects, and a map of the area; the site could also be located on Cook’s chart. 96 The view of the Nootka House published in *The New London Magazine* (Fig. 6) was cut off from all of this, and, as with other images which were extracted and adapted, the complexity of the culture represented was unavoidably diminished.

After their initial publication, magazine illustrations remained vulnerable to further loss of context through reuse. This was not what was expected of readers: in the late eighteenth century, most monthly magazines were intended to be bound into annual volumes, and the final issue of the year often included “Directions to Binders”, to ensure that the non-paginated plates were bound in the appropriate places. 97 Given that people were invited to purchase single issues, however, and that individual issues were cheap, many images may have been torn out for other uses; in the nineteenth century, as extra-illustration and album-making became more popular, old periodicals were sometimes re-sold for their images. 98 In these cases, the Pacific illustrations would have drifted even further from their original intended role as illustrations of narratives, and critical information might be lost; for example, the image identified as a man of the Sandwich Islands on the plate in *The Lady’s Magazine* was identified in the
accompanying text as “taken from a portrait of Kaneena” (Fig. 8). Absent his name and any explanation of the events, the image has only the flimsiest of connections to the real Pacific, but it could still have offered a striking visual contribution to a British idea of the place.

Conclusion

Magazine illustrations are comparatively modest physical objects, but for tens of thousands of people in eighteenth-century Britain, these images would have been their first, and possibly only, visual encounter with the Pacific. These engravings thus played a critical role in the construction of the idea of the Pacific, at a time when British colonial activity in that region was just beginning. Distanced from the grand narratives Cook and his fellow travellers published in their books, these images only offered glimpses of what the expeditions had encountered, and their narrative was unique. It focused almost exclusively on indigenous Pacific peoples, depicting them in sensational scenes, with coarsely drawn features, or in portraits, in which exotic facial ornaments and clothing are prominent. It highlighted the contrasts between these cultures and modern British culture, and it distanced the people represented from their own environments. Accuracy, nuance, and context were abandoned in favour of what was easiest to jam onto a single page. Ultimately, magazine representations of the Pacific implicitly encouraged readers to see it as a place dominated by primitive people, an impression which likely made it all the easier to think of it as a place ripe for colonial activity.

Although they were not texts used to make imperial policies, Pacific magazine illustrations’ contributions to public perceptions of the Pacific are a crucial element of the history of British activities as they expanded their colonial ambitions for the region. Following Cook’s voyages, there was no single policy which shaped British activities in the Pacific. For the government, the American Revolution had led to the loss of penal colonies, and in 1786, the decision was made to establish a convict colony at Botany Bay (Sydney, Australia). Whalers and merchants were drawn to the trade possibilities in the Pacific—both the oil which could be obtained from sperm whales in the southern seas and the potential fur trade with indigenous people on the north-west coast of North America were very valuable—and evangelical Christians in Britain began missionary work in the region. People had clearly begun to see the vague, exotic Pacific as the site of imperial possibilities, and it was not long before many were drawn into activity there (voluntarily or otherwise). In a popular poem of 1790, John Freeth invited people to focus on the Pacific and the future, declaring “The loss of America what can repay?/New colonies seek for at Botany Bay.”
For any consumer seeking to imagine these colonies, the magazine illustrations of the Pacific expeditions were there to provide them with a vision of the British Empire’s newest opportunities.

Footnotes

1 Among the exhibitions planned to mark, reflect and critique these voyages are “The Voyages of James Cook” (British Library, 27 April–28 August 2018), “Oceania” (Royal Academy, 29 September–10 December 2018), and the opening of the “Endeavour Galleries” at Royal Museums Greenwich (date TBC).


6 The extent of Cook’s personal impact on the Pacific is controversial: while it is certainly true that his expeditions opened the door to colonization in the region, recent studies have argued that his immediate impact was limited, and that there is not enough evidence to make him personally “responsible for the exploitation and atrocities of the post-Napoleonic period” (McLynn, Captain Cook, 418). Thomas, Discoveries, 262–63.


14 Gillian Williamson, British Masculinity in the Gentleman’s Magazine, 1731 to 1815 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 41–43 and 68; for Williamson’s full discussion of readership, see 33–70.

15 Samuel Curwen reported a print run of over 6,000 per month in 1775 (Williamson, British Masculinity, 35).


in 1770, but these figures are sometimes attributed to strategic exaggeration by the publisher. James Raven, Publishing Business in Eighteenth-Century England (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 197.

There were weekly periodicals in the mid-eighteenth century, but these were less likely to include plates. Alvin Sullivan (ed.), British Literary Magazines: The Augustan Age and the Age of Johnson, 1698–1788 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), xvii. It should be noted that circulation numbers sometimes fluctuated unevenly, and that there are also contemporary accounts of much higher circulation figures, such as 11,000 per month for Town and Country Magazine in 1770, but these figures are sometimes attributed to strategic exaggeration by the publisher. (Williamson, British Masculinity, 19 and 35.)


This range is provided in an attempt to make a conservative estimate. To estimate how many people saw a magazine illustration requires estimating how many people, on average, had access to a single copy; John Brewer has noted that when estimating readers-per-copy for newspapers and pamphlets, authors’ and publishers’ estimates ranged from twenty to fifty. Brewer described fifty as “undoubtedly optimistic”, but even so, it is possible that some magazine images were viewed by over 100,000 people; see John Brewer, Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 148. In her discussion of The Gentleman’s Magazine, Gillian Williamson has argued that an estimate of at least 50,000 readers of each new issue is “entirely reasonable” (50,000 is a number put forth by the publisher in 1751) and noted that because magazines were often bound and preserved in libraries, readership would have increased as the years passed; see Williamson, British Masculinity, 36 and 37–38.


Kathleen Wilson, The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century (London: Routledge, 2003), 60–62. For more on topics which were deemed suitable for women’s magazines in the late eighteenth century, see Kathryn Shevelow, Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical (London: Routledge, 1989), 188–89.


“Captain Cook’s Voyage to the Northern Hemisphere, continued…,” *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* 75 (1784): 63.


For another discussion of the relative visual style of magazine illustrations, see Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester, and Barbara Martinez-Ruiz, *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2007), 112.


Cook and King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, I, xci.


Cook and King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, plate 42 (W. Sharp after J. Webber, *The Inside of a House in Nootka Sound*).

Cook and King, *A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, II, 316.


W. Ellis, *An Authentic Narrative of a Voyage Performed by Captain Cook and Captain Clerke*, 2 vols (London: G. Robinson, 1782), I, plate bound facing 72. The Lady’s Magazine 16 (1783): plate bound facing 283. Although the magazine image claims to have been engraved for the purpose, it should be noted that both works were published by G. Robinson.

For another discussion of the relative visual style of magazine illustrations, see Tim Barringer, Gillian Forrester, and Barbara Martinez-Ruiz, *Art and Emancipation in Jamaica: Isaac Mendes Belisario and His Worlds* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2007), 314.

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The Gentleman’s Magazine 43 (1773): plate facing 320, and “Directions to the Binder for placing the Plates” (end of index, n.p.).

Cook and King, A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, 1784, plates 42 (see above), 38 (W. Sharp after J. Webber, A Man of Nootka Sound), 39 (W. Sharp after J. Webber, A Woman of Nootka Sound), 40 (J. Record after J. Webber, Various Articles, at Nootka Sound), 41 (S. Smith after J. Webber, A View of the Habitations in Nootka Sound), 37 (M. Smith [writing only], Sketch of Nootka Sound), and 36 (T. Harmar [writing only], Chart of the NW Coast of America and NE Coast of Asia).


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