

O. H. K. Spate, *The Pacific since Magellan. Vol. 3, Paradise Found and Lost*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988. Pp. xxii, 410, plates, maps. US\$59.50 cloth.

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Paradise Found and Lost completes Oskar Spate's monumental work on *The Pacific since Magellan*. As his preface ruefully acknowledges, the series title is something of a misnomer since the present volume effectively ends with the Nootka Sound crisis of the 1790s, although occa-

sional economic trails are followed through to the 1820s. Most readers will reluctantly accept his decision--"Thus far, and alas, no farther"--acknowledging the great span of the achievement and the difficulties of continuing such a work into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The book has all the qualities of the first two volumes. Spate's grasp of the relevant literature is formidable and yet he is able to narrate his story without letting the massive scholarly underpinnings become intrusive. Although the style is somewhat muted in the third volume, the writing is still fluent, lively, and peppered with the author's characteristically impish anecdotes and asides. While academic historians will find rich pickings in the work, the general reader should find it absorbing and congenial.

As the title implies, the overriding concern of *Paradise Found and Lost* is eighteenth-century European and American perceptions of the Pacific and its peoples. At one level these perceptions shaped imperial aspirations in the region and the economic possibilities that its vastness suggested. At another they reflected the European imagination and the manner in which appreciation of Pacific peoples was shaped by the prevailing moods and fashions of the philosophers and literati of Paris or London. Spate describes the two poles of this thought: the idealization of the Pacific embodied in the concept of the "Good Savage" and the more hardened approach of those who regarded Pacific peoples as treacherous, barbarous, and superstitious. Bougainville, Commerson, Joseph Banks, and Hawkesworth gave the first currency; while Surville, La Pérouse, and numerous whalers, traders, and missionaries were exponents of the latter. These opposing views reflected their proponents' opinions of their own society. George and Johann Forster, struggling to come to terms with the contradictions in Pacific and their own cultures, fell somewhere in between.

The book begins with a description of Pacific peoples, the peopling of Polynesia and Melanesia, and a guide to their cultural and political systems. That such an account had to wait until the third volume in the series reinforces Spate's admission that his essential concern has been geopolitical history from a European perspective. Pacific peoples only come into their own in the eighteenth century when they enter the European imagination or become subject to colonization. Many will see this part of the work as an unsatisfactory afterthought in the context of the three volumes, but given the particular concerns of *The Pacific since Magellan* its inclusion here makes sense.

The next section deals in a matter-of-fact way with the voyages of exploration, from Byron and Bougainville through to Vancouver,

Malaspina, and Baudin. Spate has little that is new to say about these expeditions, although the account is lucid and accurate. This is, of course, well-traversed ground and he clearly acknowledges the tremendous output of literature in the last thirty years. Characteristically, Cook's voyages, in all their aspects, form the centerpiece of the work and perhaps this is one reason why it fails to evoke the previous volumes' sense of freshness--at least for readers in English.

Finally, the book sets out to evaluate the scientific, cultural, economic, and political legacy of the second great age of exploration. It investigates the significance of the voyages for the fight against scurvy, the botanical and zoological achievements of Banks and the Forsters, how the Euro-Americans and Pacific peoples treated each other after initial contact, the noble and ignoble savage, and practical attempts to exploit the discoveries in the 1780s and 1790s. In many ways this is the least satisfactory part of *Paradise Found and Lost*. It lacks any central thread and has the character of a set of almost discrete essays. The temptation, apparent throughout the book, to have a final word on every historiographical debate relevant to the Pacific in the eighteenth century here distracts the reader and weakens the analysis. After an account of the British and Spanish posturings over Nootka Sound in the 1790s, the book ends abruptly without the unifying force of a conclusion.

Part of the difficulty is the resolute refusal of the Pacific to take on strong, unifying characteristics, other than those provided by the waves that lap its shores. It was for a time a repository of unifying European myths--the great Southern Continent, the noble savage, the passage to China--but in Spate's geopolitical sense it remained a stipple of islands with a precarious trading rim. Many of its trades were short-lived and peopled by erratic adventurers. In the eighteenth century no stable patterns of commerce emerged and government interest was quixotic to say the least. In ethnographic terms there was a unity, of course, but the peopling of the Pacific is not Spate's main concern.

Nevertheless, this is a great publishing achievement and a significant piece of literature. Although the work will draw some criticism for its particular focus, it has a span and grasp previously absent from the history of European involvement in the Pacific.