

popular interest had shifted to the native peoples of the Pacific, to the nascent science of ethnography.

All these sciences were descriptive sciences and depended greatly upon the production of visual records. Historians, dazzled by the abilities of men like Cook and Banks have not done full justice to the abilities of their supporting artists. Yet it was their work, in engraved reproduction, that fashioned the images of the Pacific that etched themselves deeply into the European mind. Words are often forgotten but the images remain.

Yet none of the three professionals, Parkinson, Hodges, and Webber, who travelled with Cook were trained for the enormous task that confronted them. To have found and enlisted the versatility that the portrayal of the Pacific and its peoples required would have been impossible. Eighteenth-century art students were trained to fulfil special requirements; to draw plants and animals for natural historians, to draw maps and charts and topographic views, for the army and the navy, or higher up the social ladder, to paint landscapes and portraits or even history paintings of memorable deeds from scripture or the classics for Royal Academy audiences. But no one was trained to do all these things.

So the demands the voyages placed on their artists was quite unprecedented. It's surprising they coped as well as they did. The young Sydney Parkinson was probably as good a botanical draughtsman as anyone practising in England at that time. But with the death of the unfortunate Alexander Buchan he had to cope with figure drawings as well; something that he had obviously no training in. Hodges, on the second voyage, had been trained superbly by Richard Wilson as a landscape painter, but on the voyage he had to train himself to produce portraits.

Hodges has not been given his due. He is one of the finest of all the English eighteenth-century landscape painters. A greater, more varied painter than his master Richard Wilson, only Thomas Gainsborough, among his contemporaries, excels him. The quality of his work unfortunately has been largely ignored because of the abiding ethnocentricity of European taste that draws a firm distinction between the aesthetic and the exotic. So much of Hodges's life was spent outside of Europe, first in the Pacific, then in India, that the exotic character of his work has largely precluded an approach in terms of aesthetic assessment—at least among Europeans. Exotic content inhibits aesthetic judgement. Yet in the work of Hodges and Gainsborough English landscape first released itself from its provincial domination by those classical Italianate models in which British artists were trained, and it is in the work of Hodges and the work of Joseph Wright of Derby that eighteenth-century landscape painting begins to confront the central interest of nineteenth-century landscape—the portrayal of light.