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Ryan Barker

*East Tennessee State University*

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For Natural Philosophy and Empire:

Banks, Cook, and the Construction of Science and Empire in the Late Eighteenth Century

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A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of History

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in History

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by

Ryan Barker

May 2019

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Dr. John Rankin, Chair

Dr. Brian Maxson

Dr. Stephen Fritz

Keywords: Exploration, Britain, Imperialism, James Cook, Joseph Banks

## ABSTRACT

For Natural Philosophy and Empire

Banks, Cook, and the Construction of Science and Empire in the Late Eighteenth Century

by

Ryan Barker

Using part of James Cook's first voyage of discovery in which he explored the Australian coast, and Joseph Banks's 1772 voyage to Iceland as case studies, this thesis argues that late eighteenth-century travelers used scientific voyages to present audiences at home with a new understanding and scientific language in which to interpret foreign places and peoples. As a result, scientific travelers were directly influential not only in the creation of new forms of knowledge and intellectual frameworks, but they helped direct the shape and formation of the Empire. The thesis explores the interplay between institutional influence and individual agency in both journeys. As a result, it will argue that the scientific voyages that were most influential in the imperial process were those directed and funded by the state.

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Rarely, if ever, does a person accomplish anything without the guidance, influence, and support of those around him. To that end, I have accumulated an astonishing debt of gratitude. First, I thank my program for taking no small risk in accepting and funding my studies; my thesis committee, Dr. John Rankin, Dr. Brian Maxson, and Dr. Stephen Fritz for their expertise, insight, and advice. I especially thank them for their willingness to serve as sounding boards for any questions or ideas I have had over the past two years. Dr. Rankin, I should mention, has been infinitely patient, looking over an untold number of drafts, some of which have been much more productive than others. Then I thank my cohort for building a community in which we have all laughed, shared ideas, and prospered. Finally, and most importantly, I thank my wife, Erika, without whose support, I might never have thought to attempt a project like this.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Historians have long identified scientific development and technological advancement as key components of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British imperialism. While scholars have largely focused on the latter half of the nineteenth century and the technological disparity between European and native populations, historians have also become critical of reading back and assuming such dominance defined relations in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Rooted in the eighteenth century, this study examines the role that science and scientific travel played in the empire building process. Scientific travel, what would be termed ‘exploration’ in the nineteenth century, served to provide the British government with a foundational understanding of how native populations would interact with Europeans and what social and political structures those native populations possessed.<sup>2</sup> Scientific voyages also informed the British state of what potential raw materials and natural resources they could extract from the areas visited.<sup>3</sup> The eighteenth-century voyages of discovery, therefore, maintained an inherent link to later European imperialism. This link to later imperialism exists because the act of discovery itself remained linked to an imperial mindset, for it provided Europeans an opportunity to name and thus exert control over the places to which they voyaged.<sup>4</sup>

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1. John Rankin, *Healing the African Body: British Medicine in West Africa 1800-1860* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2015), 1-9.

2. Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2013), 1-2.

3. See Philip Curtin, “The Black Experience of Colonialism and Imperialism,” in *Slavery, Colonialism, and Empire*, ed. Sidney W. Mintz (New York: Norton, 1974), 23.

This research uses two distinct, yet interrelated case studies, James Cook's first voyage of discovery and Joseph Banks's subsequent scientific voyage to Iceland, to effectively test the impact scientific travel had on late eighteenth-century British imperialism. Cook's 1768-1771 scientific voyage aboard the *Endeavour*—on which Banks served as a naturalist—best exhibits the influence and control formal institutions such as the British state and Royal Society exerted over scientific travel. It also provides an opportunity to examine tensions that arose when those institutions maintained conflicting expectations. As a self-financed expedition, Banks's 1772 exploration of Iceland provides a different perspective on scientific travel. Without the state's funding and influence, Banks's could mold his scientific voyage to Iceland to suit his interests. His later failure to encourage the British state to annex Iceland demonstrates the limitations of influence individuals like Banks and institutions like the Royal Society could exert over an increasingly professionalized British state.

For Cook, this analysis focuses entirely on the five months between April and August 1770 when the *Endeavour* sailed north along Australia's eastern coast. During this period, the crew, including Banks, collected plant samples, observed and interacted with native populations, and spent several weeks ashore after colliding with the Great Barrier Reef. The voyage culminated with Cook formally claiming the continent's eastern half for George III on August 22, 1770.<sup>5</sup> More important for this study, however, are how the weeks leading up to Cook's claim would inform the 1788 settlement of the New South Wales penal colony. Analyzing the

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4. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History*, 1987 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xii-xxv.

5. James Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences on Board his Majesty's Bark *Endeavour*," in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 386-389. At this time, the western half of Australia, New Holland, had already been claimed by the Dutch. Cook made note of this in his journal and later deleted a line giving credit to the Dutch claim over the territory.

Australian travel accounts of Cook and Banks through an empire-building lens provides a unique opportunity to consider how the British in this period viewed themselves in relation to others, particularly societies with no connection to the European continent. Rather than viewing travelers simply as uninvested information gatherers, this approach considers travelers as proto-ethnographers and anthropologists who crafted their published travel accounts into specific narratives that shaped the British government and public's understanding of distant regions and peoples.<sup>6</sup>

After returning to England from Cook's first voyage of discovery in 1771, Banks began preparations to sail on Cook's second voyage to the Pacific, slated for the next year. After a disagreement with the Admiralty over equipment and the voyage's focus, Banks withdrew from the proposed expedition, choosing instead to fund his expedition personally. Wanting to employ his hired help in a scientific endeavor, Banks chose Iceland because no botanist or zoologist had explored the island.<sup>7</sup> A Danish colony whose population could culturally identify as European, Iceland presented a new challenge, but one closer to home with a similar culture and economy as that of England.<sup>8</sup> Banks's Icelandic voyage provides the opportunity to examine scientific travel unfettered by external institutions, specifically without the Admiralty or Royal Society's influence. Becoming sufficiently impressed by his investigation, after his voyage, Banks led a concerted effort to convince the crown to annex the Island. Despite those attempts, the British Empire never incorporated Iceland into its territories. While Australia's narrative in this study

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6. Harry Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World: Europe to the Pacific* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3-6.

7. Joseph Banks, "Introduction," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*, 47.

8. John Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 174-175.



ends with the Botany Bay colony in 1788, Iceland's ends slightly later in 1809. When the British sailed into Iceland and recaptured the prisoner-of-war-turned-revolutionary Jørgen Jørgensen, attempts to convince the crown to annex the island effectively stopped. While Banks would continue to suggest Iceland's annexation for the remainder of his life, the British government no longer seriously considered Banks's proposals after Jørgensen's revolution.

Scientific travel in the last third of the eighteenth century should be viewed in the same knowledge-making context as nineteenth-century exploration. By assigning travel the same intentionality as later exploration, one can better consider questions about the development of the British state in this period. As travelers were both individuals and representatives of institutions, they often found themselves at the center of conflicts between their own personal sense of agency and the institutional powers which they represented. These tensions directed not only the individual actions of Cook and Banks but ultimately helped define what was meant to conduct travel in the eighteenth century. Their views, although often personal, were interpreted as official and, although at times wholly uninformed, were deemed to have been informed by science. In this way, personal opinions and experiences could be, and were, given the credibility of being officially state-sanctioned. Such opinions about Australia, Iceland, native peoples, plants, and geography not only informed the empire but came to define it.

The thesis seeks to understand the role individuals, like Cook and Banks, played in an increasingly institutionalized British government. Doing so allows one to assess the extent to which travel influenced the governmental decisions and processes that led to nineteenth-century colonization. The traveler as an empire-builder can be seen by analyzing both case studies employed in this project. The *Endeavour* voyage heavily influenced Botany Bay's development. Founded at one of Cook's landing points in 1788, Banks served as a governmental advisor

responsible for planning the colony. Britain, by contrast, never developed Iceland into an English colony or brought it into the empire. This result occurred despite Banks's claims that the island would add to the English fishing industry and the population, who were strong coastal sailors, would benefit the Royal Navy.

Broadly this project questions how well eighteenth-century scientific travel served as knowledge-making ventures and what influence exploration had on an increasingly institutionalized and imperial Britain. If nineteenth-century explorers served both as knowledge-gatherers and vessels to extend British influence into unknown cultures, then their eighteenth-century predecessors, arguably, served similar purposes. The following pages will display, within the context of the *Endeavour* voyage and Joseph Banks's time in Iceland, that eighteenth-century travelers developed a systematic knowledge base of the places and people they encountered and by identifying and categorizing that knowledge base, travelers influenced the imperial process.

Focused upon elucidating the relationship between scientific travel and imperial development, the study of the British relationship between science, travel, and empire has increasingly focused upon travel as a metropolitan endeavor. Under this lens, scientific advancement and knowledge making were not merely the byproducts of an objective effort to better understand the natural world, but instead, science was a cultural product of individuals with nationalistic and imperialistic interests. Science served not only as a tool of empire, but scientific travelers like Banks expected their studies to help serve imperial missions. State and individual sponsors endorsed and outfitted trips that would produce knowledge, which would

then benefit the state. Even trips initially taken out of personal interest like Banks's Iceland excursion culminated in arguments for expanding British trade and power.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to emphasizing scientific travel as a product of imperialistic endeavors, historians and other scholars have also suggested reorienting the focus of scientific travel to emphasize the native populations that travelers studied. Moving the focus of scientific travel from the center of European society to the periphery, or those native populations with which Europeans interacted, has changed the way historians approach questions about what constitutes scientific knowledge. Reorienting travel has changed the interpretation from one where movement from the European metropolis extending into unknown territories for scientific or imperial gain to one that emphasizes points of cultural encounter. Under these assumptions, travelers and the ships on which they sailed, existed at the extreme edge of European society coming into contact and conflict with exotic populations. Shifting scientific travel from a European center also brought about new ways in which historians evaluated the scientific knowledge produced during travels. Rather than a product of European intellectualism that evaluated travel journals and specimens after return, travelers and native intermediaries worked with and through one another to produce knowledge across a network that spanned from Europe to the Pacific.<sup>10</sup> Rather than framing the creation of science as wholly a European endeavor,

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9. John Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 1-5; D. Graham Burnett, *Masters of All They Surveyed: Exploration, Geography and A British El Dorado* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5-6. For more information regarding Banks's relationship with the British state, see: John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

10. Liebersohn, *The Travelers' World*, 4-7. For further information on travelers and intermediaries as well as network theory, see: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992); Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj, and James Delbourgo, eds., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelilgence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach: Science History Publications, U.S.A., 2009).

scholars emphasize the ways in which travelers and native intermediaries worked with and through one another to produce knowledge across a global network.<sup>11</sup> This intersection between travelers and native collaborators remains crucial to understanding how knowledge was created and understanding how the British viewed foreign peoples.

Particularly in reference to Banks and his influence over the British state at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth-century historians have also considered the development of a botanic economy between Britain and its colonies.<sup>12</sup> Beginning with the more than one thousand plants, five hundred fishes, five hundred bird skins, 1,300 drawings and paintings, and thousands of insects brought back from the *Endeavour* voyage, historians have considered the dramatic effect plant exchange had on the British economy.<sup>13</sup> Historians have then traced the import of these plants to the rise in national and colonial gardens, nurseries, and botanic marketplaces. Furthermore, the study of botany in Europe has also been a foundational step in nineteenth-century imperialism with naturalists producing using plant studies to produce medicines allowing explorers to penetrate the African and Australian interiors.<sup>14</sup>

The body of this thesis is divided into four distinct sections. Each section is designed to highlight a stage in a traveler's journey and will address the influence travel had on the imperial process. Each chapter also corresponds with a major stage associated with a scientific expedition.

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11. For the influence individual travelers had on the state, see: Lucille H. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion: The Role of the British Royal Botanic Gardens* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979); Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*.

12. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion*. Sarah Easterby-Smith, *Cultivating Commerce: Cultures of Botany in Britain and France, 1760-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Yota Batsaki, Sarah Burke Calahan, and Anatole Tchikine, eds., *The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oak, 2016).

13. Easterby-Smith, *Cultivating Commerce*, 3.

14. Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 58-82.

Chapter two examines the period before travel, in which the expeditions' instructions and purposes will be assessed. The next chapter will consider interactions with and observations made during the expeditions. It will evaluate why travelers recorded events in the manner they chose. Chapter four assesses the reporting of scientific findings. It will focus on the letters and publications that resulted from the voyages. Finally, the last chapter will deal with the forces and influences assessing the voyage. In addition, as this last chapter deals with the British state's relationship with these two expeditions, often more than a decade after the initial voyages, Banks, who outlived Cook by more than forty years, will become the main historical actor for both case studies. Dividing the analysis into these segments allows one to consider the two case studies, Australia and Iceland, concurrently and thematically allows for a more thorough analysis of their relationship and influence over state policy and attitudes toward science and foreign people and places.

## CHAPTER 2

### PLANNING AND INSTITUTIONAL INFLUENCE

Travelers in the eighteenth century were beholden to an array of ideologies, some based on assumptions informed, at least in part, by science, while others were rooted in folklore. For so-called scientific travelers, science, as they understood it, played a role in how they approached and understood the unfamiliar world and peoples they encountered. Their experiences were also shaped by larger institutions that made scientific travel possible and had their own expectations of how travelers should behave, study, and interact with foreign peoples and environments. This complex interplay between science and assumption and between individual and institution shaped not only exploration, but ultimately the empire itself by defining what areas should be populated, annexed, and developed. Scientists like Joseph Banks and explorers like James Cook, through their travels, shaped and helped build the Empire. This chapter will, therefore, focus on the following questions: What control did formal institutions like the Admiralty and Royal Society exert over Cook's first voyage of discovery, specifically April through August 1770, and Joseph Banks's 1772 journey to Iceland? At what points did the differing institutional interests come into conflict? How did competing institutional interests shape the knowledge produced from these voyages?

Before departing Plymouth aboard the *Endeavour* on August 26, 1768, James Cook received three sets of instructions regarding his upcoming voyage. Essentially, these instructions, two sets from the Lord High Admiral's office, the "Secret Instructions," and "Additional Secret Instructions," and one from the Royal Society, "Hints Offered to the Consideration," exhibit the formal institutional interests vested in Cook's journey. Cook used these instructions as a basis for

all major directions he gave to the ship's crew; they appear throughout his journal in the observations he made, informed his encounters with native populations, and directed the territorial claims Cook made throughout the journey.<sup>15</sup> The different sets of instructions provide an example of the institutional control exerted during the journey.<sup>16</sup>

On July 30, 1768, The Admiralty and the Royal Society gave Cook his first two sets of instructions. While they constituted the overall course and direction the *Endeavour* voyage took, they also provided Cook with a degree of flexibility, as he could choose, in a given circumstance, which of the two sets of orders to follow. The "Secret Instructions," focused primarily on the *Endeavour*'s position as a research vessel. Under Cook's command, the Admiralty expected the *Endeavour*'s crew to track Venus's passage across the sun on June 3, 1769. To succeed, the Admiralty instructed Cook to sail from Plymouth Sound to King George's Island [Tahiti] by rounding Cape Horn. The Admiralty instructed that if the Tahitians harassed Cook, he could move the ship to the nearest possible island and observe Venus from there. The Admiralty also advised Cook to "endeavor by all proper means to cultivate a friendship with the natives."<sup>17</sup> The "Secret Instructions" went further, commanding Cook to survey the island and not to be surprised by the natives. The Instructions thus ended with an order for Cook to put to sea and execute his "Additional Secret Instructions."<sup>18</sup>

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15. James Cook, "Draft Rules for Trade at Tahiti," in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 520-521; James Cook, "Rules for Boat-Parties," in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 521.

16. Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 42-50.

17. Edward Hawke, Piercy Brett and Charles Spencer, Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, "The Instructions," in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), cclxxx.

18. *Ibid.*, cclxxix-cclxxxi.

In the second set of instructions also provided on July 30, 1768, known as the “Additional Secret Instructions,” one sees less emphasis placed upon knowledge making, in the form of tracking Venus’s passage, and more on empire-building. The “Additional Secret Instructions,” commanded Cook to search for an unknown southern continent, Terra Australis.<sup>19</sup> Cook’s instructions stated he was to search between 35- and 40-degrees South in a westward direction until he either found the continent or ran into New Zealand. While searching for Terra Australis, the Admiralty instructed Cook to observe, record, and take possession of any islands undiscovered by Europeans. A distinction exists in the “Additional Secret Instructions” between the actions Cook should have taken if he found Terra Australis and when he found any other island. This distinction displays differences in ways the British state, and possibly the larger European society, viewed continents as opposed to mere islands.<sup>20</sup> Instead of claiming the whole of the continent as he might have done with an island, Cook took possession of only the continent’s eastern half. If the unknown continent was inhabited, Cook was instructed to develop, “convenient situations in the country in the Name of the King of Great Britain.”<sup>21</sup>

One of the provisions found in the Lord High Admiral’s “Additional Secret Instructions” stated that Cook was to, “observe with all accuracy the Situations of such Islands as you may discover in the Course of your Voyage that have not hitherto been discover’d by any Europeans,

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19. Terra Australis, the unknown southern continent did not actually exist and should not be confused with the landmass that was, at the time, called New Holland and would eventually become modern Australia.

20. Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 1-24. Beginning with Cook’s oceanic voyages, Kennedy provides readers with a unique overview of European views on continents through the nineteenth century. This view correlates continents with oceans through their vastness. Outside of the highly charted Europe, continents and oceans were both open blank spaces unable to be charted in a single expedition. Islands, conversely, were small units like nations, readily charted and annexed if need be.

21. Edward Hawke, Piercy Brett and Charles Spencer, Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain, “Additional Instructions,” in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), cclxxxii-cclxxxiv.



and take possession for His Majesty. . . as may appear to be of consequence.”<sup>22</sup> The vague wording and failure of the “Additional Secret Instructions” to define inhabitation gave Cook further control in making decisions regarding any territory he chose to possess. As a result, when Cook found only a few natives and infrequent signs of habitation, he decided the Australian natives contained no governmental or tribal structure to negotiate with. He, therefore, claimed eastern Australia as an uninhabited land, an act that would have ramifications for European-Aborigine relations for decades after the Botany Bay colony’s settlement.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast, however, the Royal Society instructed that the native populations were, “the natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several regions they inhabit[ed].”<sup>24</sup> These and several other differences found in the instructions at times exhibit the conflicting interests the Admiralty, an institution representing the state, and the Royal Society, a science-based institution, held for the voyage. Each institution’s mandate partially caused this conflict. The Admiralty served and protected the state’s interests, while the Royal Society represented the pursuit of knowledge and scientific interests. Both had vastly different obligations and expectations for Cook’s voyage.

Cook received his third and final set of instructions, “Hints Offered to the Consideration,” on August 10, 1768, from the Royal Society days before he set sail. The Royal

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22. Edward Hawke, “Additional Instructions,” cclxxxiii. The full quote states: “You will observe with accuracy the Situation of such Islands as you may discover in the Course of your Voyage that have not hitherto been discover’d by any Europeans, and take possession for His Majesty and make Surveys and Draughts of such of them as may appear to be of Consequence, without Suffering yourself however to be thereby diverted from the Object which you are always to have in View, the Discovery of the Southern Continent so often Mentioned.”

23. John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (New York, London, New Delhi, Sidney: Bloomsbury Press, 2012), 62-64. Darwin uses the nature of Cook’s claim to Australia to point out that during Australia’s colonial period the Aboriginal population had no legal existence.

24. James Douglas, 14th Earl of Morton, “Hints offered to the consideration of Captain Cook, Mr. Bankes, Doctor Solander, and the other Gentlemen who go upon the Expedition on Board the Endeavour,” in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 514.

Society granted these instructions to Cook, Banks, Dr. Daniel Solander, a Swedish born botanist who would later follow Banks to Iceland, and “the other gentlemen who [went] upon the expedition.”<sup>25</sup> Differing from the “Additional Secret Instructions,” these “Hints” were more scientifically focused and emphasized information gathering over territorial acquisition. They offered explanations on how to collect plant and seed samples, how to interact with native populations, and ways to spot useful resources. The “Hints,” however, cannot be viewed as a purely scientific set of instructions. The document did emphasize native sovereignty over their lands, stating that: “Conquest over such people can give no just title,” which ran counter to the orders provided in the “Additional Secret Instructions,” which instructed Cook to take possession of undiscovered islands.<sup>26</sup> The “Hints,” also provided suggestions for Europeans to demonstrate their technological superiority, including shooting the natives’ huts, animals, or other nearby inanimate objects. The “Hints” emphasized scientific exchange, but also instructed Cook, Solander, and Banks to search for plants, evidence of precious metals, dyes, medicines, and to engage in trade.<sup>27</sup>

Banks’s 1772 voyage to Iceland grew more out of necessity than planning. In his journal, Banks explained that, after returning to England in 1771, John Montagu, the Earl of Sandwich and the First Lord of the Admiralty, propositioned him to join Cook on a second scientific voyage to the Pacific. The Admiralty and the Royal Society would also jointly fund this voyage. Anxious for a second voyage, and to ensure he acquired the best scientific officers, Banks, at his own expense, began hiring researchers with the idea that he would, at a later date, have the

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25. *Ibid.*, 514.

26. Morton, “Hints Offered,” 514. “Additional Instructions,” cclxxxiii.

27. Morton, “Hints Offered,” 514-519.

government reimburse him. Doubtful of the ships' utility for a scientific voyage, Banks asked the Navy to make several alterations to the ships to make them worthier of a scientific expedition.<sup>28</sup> Some of Banks's suggested alterations included raising the entire cabin three inches and laying a spar deck across the length of the ship.<sup>29</sup>

Despite his success as a naturalist aboard the *Endeavour*, Banks remained unable to exert even limited control over the naval authorities in charge of outfitting the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*. As a result, it is apparent that although the second voyage of discovery to the Pacific was important enough, from the state's perspective, to warrant the inclusion of a second ship, it would not be hampered by science as the voyage largely focused upon territorial discovery and acquisition rather than botanic science. After having his suggestions denied, Banks withdrew from the voyage, stating that the navy board threw every possible obstacle at his designs and that, "some of the oldest sea officers who [he] believe[d] that discovery should go out of their line procurd an order that the Ship might be reduced to her original state."<sup>30</sup> Banks, responsible for the research assistants he hired, decided to fund a separate scientific voyage personally. He selected Iceland as it had, "been visited but seldom and never at all by any good naturalist to [his] knowledge."<sup>31</sup>

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28. Two ships were outfitted for Cook's second voyage, the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*. They sailed out of Plymouth Harbor on July 12, 1772.

29. Banks, "Introduction," 45. A spar deck is a lightweight temporary deck added to a vessel. Banks stated these alterations were needed for, "Instead of having provided a ship in which an extraordinary number of people might be accommodated they had chosen one with a low and small cabin and remarkably low between decks. This I objected to and was answered that it could not nor should it be remedied."

30. *Ibid.*, 45-47.

31. *Ibid.*, 47. Despite stating Iceland had never been explored by a good naturalist to his knowledge, Banks listed Neils Horrebow's *Natural History of Iceland* among the books he took to Iceland. See Joseph Banks, "Checklist of the Actual Titles in the Banks Library Taken Ashore in Iceland from the *Sir Lawrence Brig*, 1 September 1772," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 602-603.

Banks's Icelandic journey required the Danish government to issue a passport to him and his research assistants. Issued on July 2, 1772, by Baron William Christopher Diede von Fürstenstein, the Danish ambassador to the United Kingdom, the document set the legal parameters to Banks's excursion in the Danish territory. The document offered safe passage to Banks and his crew, listing each man by name, to Mount Hekla and the Faroe Islands to, "make observations there in astronomy, botany, and other aspects of natural history."<sup>32</sup> While Fürstenstein likely recognized the fame that Banks had garnered as a result of his travels with Cook, he made it obvious he was unaware of exactly what discoveries they had made aboard the *Endeavour*. When explaining his reasoning for offering the passport, Fürstenstein stated that he wanted to support Banks's and Solander's trip to the Icelandic arctic in response to their recent visit to the Antarctic, confusing Australia for the southern continent.

It is apparent in the way Banks left Cook's second voyage that a tension existed between those like Banks and his research assistants, who were primarily interested in using the vessels to expand the available reservoir of natural knowledge, and those like Cook, who was likely under a set of instructions with imperialistic designs.<sup>33</sup> While finding new knowledge about the plants and specimens available in Terra Australis remained important to the Admiralty, it was not important enough to structurally alter the *Resolution* and *Adventure* to achieve that goal. During the first voyage, because Banks largely accented to the demands and expectations of the Admiralty, he gained their respect and enough power to influence the Botany Bay's development markedly. Conversely, by rigidly asserting his needs as a natural philosopher over those of the

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32. William Christopher Diede, "Passport Issued to Banks," July 2, 1772, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 155-158.

33. John Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 176.

state, he lost his position. When he later tried, through similar methods, to influence the development of Iceland as a British colony, the state largely ignored his actions. Furthermore, whereas Cook's first voyage, which remained under the state's control and instruction for its entirety culminated in the territorial acquisition, Banks's voyage to Iceland would end with further scientific research rather than conquest.

As a personally funded expedition, Banks's voyage aboard the *Sir Lawrence* did not have a specific mandate or institutional oversight. Banks's journey to Iceland also had a much less formalized relationship between the individuals involved and the British state's larger institutionalized structure. For the most part, Banks hired his own crew and funded the *Sir Lawrence* out of pocket, and as a result, authority over them rested in his own hands.<sup>34</sup> The crew included Dr. Daniel Solander, who had been on the *Endeavour* and now served as Banks's assistant; Johann Zoffany, John Frederick Miller, James Miller, and John Cleveley as draughtsmen; Frederick Herman Walden and Sigismund Bacstrom as secretaries; and nine unnamed servants to collect and preserve specimens. Aside from those Banks had hired out of his own funds, Banks received permission from the Board of Longitude to take William Bayly and William Wales as astronomers and James Lind, an Edinburgh physician, who initially received a £4,000 grant to sail with the *Resolution* but chose to go with Banks aboard the *Sir Lawrence*.<sup>35</sup>

Banks defined his Icelandic expedition exclusively as a research trip, and as a result, any attempts Banks made to incorporate Iceland into the Empire came after his return to England and

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34. Banks, "Introduction," 46. Banks stated that all the researchers except the astronomers William Bayly and William Wales belonged to him. Bayly and Wales were funded through the Board of Longitude.

35. *Ibid.*, 46. When Lind followed Banks's withdrawal from the *Resolution* voyage, the money Parliament granted was transferred to the naturalists who replaced Banks and Lind aboard Cook's vessel.

not during the voyage itself. Cook's first voyage, however, took a different approach as it was one in which the state constructed a set of instructions for territorial acquisition that also happened to incorporate scientific research. The different emphasis these two voyages placed on research and territorial acquisition not only defined the influence they had on state policy but defined the types of observations and interactions that would occur between the British and the peoples and places they encountered.

Ultimately, Banks's freedom came at a cost. He was free to choose his location, to focus on science, and to largely serve his own interests. However, by refusing state money and control, Banks had, unknowingly to him, also lost all state interest in his project. Banks's individual and scientific interests were the Iceland voyage's primary motivators. While the lack of investment from the Royal Society and Admiralty gave Banks a significant boost in freedom and control over his expedition, it would inhibit his future attempts to convince the crown to annex Iceland. When he returned to England and tried, repeatedly to encourage the crown to incorporate Iceland into the Empire, his pleas, protestations, and his accumulated knowledge were largely ignored.

## CHAPTER 3

### OBSERVATION AND INTERACTION

The following chapter explores the records James Cook and Joseph Banks kept between April and August 1770, as they sailed along the Australian coast, as well as Banks's records from his 1772 voyage to Iceland. Within the context of the *Endeavour* voyage, the chapter will provide a comparative analysis for Cook's and Banks's approach to recording interactions with Aborigines and with the Australian environment. Emphasizing the crew's first encounter with native Australians and the *Endeavour's* collision with the Great Barrier Reef, the chapter will consider the differences and outright contradictions between the two men's versions of selected events. Doing so establishes a better understanding of the different approaches Cook and Banks took to observations and, therefore, builds on the intellectual categories historian Paul Carter used to define Cook as a navigator and Banks as a botanist.<sup>36</sup> Carter used this distinction to define Cook's log and choices for place names on his charts as dynamic, interactive with the environment as Cook saw it.

Conversely, Carter defines Banks's records as static, emphasizing a need to categorize the world into a universal taxonomy. In short, Cook depicted what was in front of him, making little comparison to Europe, while Banks, the botanist, viewed everything as having a place within his scientific world. Cook could, therefore, simply observe his environment. Banks, the scientist, needed to categorize. While Carter uses this distinction to elaborate on the mood Cook's journal would create for future Australian explorers and settlers, it is useful in

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36. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 18-33.

understanding why Cook and Banks, as men of both science and empire, might create conflicting narratives for the voyage.

Likewise, the chapter will begin its section on Banks's Iceland expedition with his first encounter with the Icelandic people. It will establish the similarities between Cook's interactions and Banks's. However, it will also go further, delineating how Banks utilized common language, culture, and religion to overcome any unfamiliarity between him and the Icelanders. The chapter will then analyze Banks's trek from Skarð, in western Iceland, to Mount Hekla and back to his base Hafnarfjörður. This seven-day hike, ranging from September 24 through 30, provides examples of Banks and his crew interacting with both the Icelandic population and environment and as a result, it provides a starting point to understanding where some of Banks's arguments for annexation originated. Both of these examples from Banks's journey through southwestern Iceland exhibit Icelandic and English attitudes toward one another and the common perception of Anglo-Danish relations during this period.

On April 19, 1770, the crew aboard the *Endeavour* had spotted Australia's eastern coast. Within two days, both Cook and Banks described signs of its habitation, and by the third day after reaching the shore, the crew had encountered native Australians.<sup>37</sup> Along with these early encounters, Cook and Banks recorded their observations of and interactions with native Australian populations. These observations include seeing campfire smoke, the difficulties and ultimately failed attempts at establishing trade, incidences of alleged theft, and aid received from the Australians when, on June 11, 1770, the *Endeavour* ran aground on the Great Barrier Reef.<sup>38</sup>

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37. With the exception of the *Endeavour's* time in Tahiti, Cook logged times and dates in his journal by following ship time, which measured a twenty-four hour day from noon to noon. As a result, there are sometimes discrepancies in dating when one compares Cook's journal to Banks's. See Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences, 74.

38. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 297-401. Joseph D. Hooker, ed., *Journal of the Right Honorable Sir Joseph Banks Bart., K.B., P.R.S., During Captain Cook's First Voyage in H.M.S. Endeavour in 1768-1771 to Terra*



For the *Endeavour* voyage, this chapter will focus on the observations Cook and Banks recorded of the Australian peoples, wildlife, plant life, topography, and natural resources. By asking why certain the authors found certain observations worth recording by their authors, why they recorded others with such frequency, and analyzing the way in which they recorded those observations, this chapter will use the framework established in the previous chapters to argue that scientific observations made during these voyages effectively served as cost analysis surveys for the imperial process.

Cook and Banks took qualitatively different approaches to making their records. It is most effective to consider the differences between these approaches before delineating the observations themselves. While Cook and Banks often recorded the same events, they took different approaches with both the descriptions they used and the very objects, events, and people they chose to record. Cook often focused on recording the frequency with which he saw campfires, the suitability of natural harbors, and the number of natural resources harvested. Banks, as one might expect of a naturalist, focused his records on descriptions of plant and animal specimens, descriptions of native peoples' physical characteristics, and detailed observations of his encounters with Aborigines. While Cook provided descriptions of his encounters, they were fewer and more focused on major points of action. Ultimately, Cook's descriptions provided the British reader with an explanation for how well the Australian coast could serve colonial needs.

Both Banks and Cook's journals were written by Europeans for European audiences. To fit the expectations of governmental and scientific communities that funded the expedition and comprised their primary audiences, Cook and Banks attempted to provide objective, scientific

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*Del Fuego, Otahite, New Zealand, Australia, The Dutch East Indies, Ect.* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1896), 254-323.

descriptions of their observations and interactions. With a complete language barrier and cultural unfamiliarity, Banks and Cook designed narratives in which they, as British subjects and individuals, were the protagonists. Furthermore, the narratives these scientific travelers crafted often differed since each author constructed his narrative to support his own aims and ends.

On April 29, 1770, Cook and Banks described their first physical encounter with native Australians.<sup>39</sup> The encounter was a tense, highly-energized event that blended moments of fear, curiosity, and open hostility between two groups completely foreign to one another as they attempted to communicate. The encounter began when the *Endeavour* approached Botany Bay, the site of the future colony.<sup>40</sup> Cook and Banks described seeing about ten native Australians on the beach, who upon sighting the *Endeavour* retreated to a hill.<sup>41</sup> While the two groups observed one another, Banks stated four more Aborigines arrived at the bay in two canoes. After hauling their canoes ashore, these four joined the other natives in watching the crew aboard the *Endeavour*.<sup>42</sup>

At this point, Cook ordered boats to go ashore, “in hopes of speaking with [the native Australians].”<sup>43</sup> Cook brought Banks, Dr. Daniel Solander, and Tupaia, the ship’s Polynesian guide with him.<sup>44</sup> As the boats approached the shore, all but two of the Aborigines retreated.

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39. Unless otherwise stated, this study will defer to Cook’s dating on events. Cook, “Remarkable Occurrences,” 297-299.

40. Cook, “Remarkable Occurrences,” 304.

41. Cook stated there were “several of the natives and a few huts.” Banks, however, explicitly recorded seeing ten natives. Cook, “Remarkable Occurrences, 304-305; Hooker, *Journal*, 263.

42. Hooker, ed., *Journal*, 263.

43. Cook, “Remarkable Occurrences,” 305.

44. Tupaia and a servant joined the *Endeavour* crew on July 13, 1769 while in Tahiti. He would serve as a navigator and interpreter for the vessel until his death from an illness, likely malaria or dysentery, that spread throughout the ship in Batavia, present day Jakarta on December 26, 1770. Cook, “Remarkable Occurrences,” 117, 441-442

Cook stated that he believed those who remained intended to oppose the crew's landing. In response, he halted the boats and tried to communicate with the natives.<sup>45</sup> Stating that neither the Europeans nor Tupaia could understand the natives, Cook then tossed nails and beads ashore and thought, "that they beckon'd [the Europeans] to come ashore."<sup>46</sup>

Banks's account differed from Cook's stating that some thirty or forty Europeans and Tupaia "parlayed with [the two natives] for about a quarter of an hour."<sup>47</sup> During this time, Banks stated that the Europeans attempted to inform the natives, using gestures, that they meant no harm and wished to gather water. In response, Banks wrote, the natives shook their weapons, likely spears, at the Europeans and threatened their boats.<sup>48</sup> For Banks, there were no mixed signals; they did not wish the crew to come ashore.

Following the exchange with the two natives, both Cook and Banks stated that the Europeans recommenced rowing toward the shore. This action caused the natives to either continue or restart their threats against the landing party. Cook then fired a musket shot into the air to frighten the Australians, who in turn retreated a few feet to a supply of lances. Seeing the natives maintain their defensive posture, Cook fired a second shot, hitting one of the natives in the leg. Cook and Banks then disagree a second time regarding the sequence of events. Cook, the one who fired the shot, stated that after his warning shot was fired into the air, one of the natives threw a rock at the crew. Cook's second shot, targeted directly at the natives, was, therefore, a

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45. Neither Cook nor Banks clearly stated how many were in their shore party or how many boats were taken. Cook referred to boats in the plural, while Banks used the singular. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 304-306; Hooker, *Journal*, 263-266.

46. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 305.

47. Hooker, ed., *Journal*, 265.

48. Cook described the weapons as darts, while Banks stated they were lances about ten feet in length. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 305; Hooker, *Journal*, 265.

response to native hostility. Banks's description instead stated Cook fired his second shot simply because the natives renewed their resistance with no mention of a stone. Furthermore, Banks stated that because the natives did not respond to being shot in the leg, "so another [shot] was immediately fired at him."<sup>49</sup>

During the midst of this skirmish, Cook and his crew landed, causing the native Australians to throw their lances at the Europeans, who in response, fired another musket shot. The Aborigines then retreated into nearby woods. Cook initially ordered the crew to pursue the natives but hesitated after conferring with Banks, who surmised the native's might have coated their weapons with poison. The Europeans instead scouted the beach until they came across several huts that housed native children. Both Cook and Banks stated that they left strings of beads, ribbons, and other trinkets with the children as gifts. The *Endeavour's* crew then removed numerous lances from the huts before returning to the ship.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout the night of June 10, 1770, the *Endeavour* sailed slowly along the Australian coast to avoid sandbanks and sunken rocks. Cook mentioned that between 6 and 9 p.m., their soundings had shown the vessel moving into progressively deeper water, going from a depth of fourteen fathoms to twenty-one.<sup>51</sup> After nine, the water's depth dropped to eight fathoms; Cook called for all hands to prepare to drop anchor in fear the ship might run aground. By the time everyone had reached their stations the water depth had increased back to seventeen fathoms.

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49. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 305-306; Hooker, *Journal*, 265. Banks therefore has Cook firing three shots, while Cook's narrative only lists two.

50. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 304-306; Hooker, *Journal*, 265-266. Cook stated they had removed several weapons, while Banks estimated between forty and fifty.

51. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 343.

Before the crew could take another sounding, a little before 11 p.m., the *Endeavour* struck what would eventually be called Endeavour Reef, a segment of the Great Barrier Reef system.<sup>52</sup>

Cook immediately had all sails taken in to keep the ship from moving and causing further damage. He then had several boats hoisted out so that the crew could perform soundings. The seabed was so uneven that they measured the water's depth between three and four fathoms in some places and between eight and twelve fathoms in others. At first, Cook tried to shift anchor placements to wedge the ship off the reef, which came to no avail. After this, Cook ordered the ship be lightened; he had the crew throw out forty to fifty tons of fresh water, iron, guns, ballast, and decayed stores.<sup>53</sup> Time ran against the *Endeavour* crew. As they worked to lighten the ship, the tide dropped, removing any chance they had for raising the ship above the reef. Over the course of the next day, the crew worked continuously at two pumps to keep water out of the hold, with Cook and Banks, themselves, taking shifts at the pumps.<sup>54</sup> At this point, Banks stated that he had, "entirely gave up on the ship, and packing up what [he] thought [he] could save prepared [himself] for the worst."<sup>55</sup> Finally, about 5 p.m., on June 12, the tide began to rise, lifting the ship and forcing the crew to use the third pump. Cook stated that they likely needed to use the fourth pump aboard the *Endeavour*, but they could not make it work. By 10:20 p.m., the crew had succeeded in forcing the *Endeavour* off the reef. Cook measured three-feet, nine-inches of water in the hold with all three pumps working.<sup>56</sup>

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52. Ibid., 344. Hooker, *Journal*, 274-275.

53. Cook, "Remarkable Occurances," 344-345.

54. Ibid., 344-345.

55. Hooker, ed., *Journal*, 276.

56. Cook, "Remarkable Occurances," 345-346.

The next day, June 13, Cook and the crew, at the suggestion of Jonathan Monkhouse, a midshipman, made a sail ready to fother the ship's hull. Fothering was a process used to seal a leak in a ship's hull. Sailors would spread a mixture of oakum, wool, and dung or other filth across a sail. Then using ropes, they pulled the sail under the ship's hull until it covered the leak, at which point, the water pressure would force the mixture into the leak, providing a temporary seal.<sup>57</sup> Cook stated that Monkhouse had previously seen the technique successfully applied while working on a merchant ship.<sup>58</sup> Fothering the ship had been successful, and the leak slowed so much that only one pump was needed. It was fortunate, for there were not enough boats on the *Endeavour* to take the entire crew to shore. Before fothering the ship, the crew's greatest hope was to keep it afloat long enough to run it aground and use the materials to construct a vessel large enough to take them to the East Indies.<sup>59</sup>

With the leak sealed, Cook ordered the ship to be anchored about six leagues from the shore in a depth of seventeen fathoms, while boats were sent out to find a suitable natural harbor. Cook hoped to lay the ship aground and use what materials he could access to repair its hull. At about 8 p.m., on June 14, a boat returned to the ship with its crew stating they had found a suitable harbor about two leagues from their anchor point, and Cook had the crew cast off the next morning in search of what would become the Endeavour River delta.<sup>60</sup> Upon reaching the harbor, Cook stated that the wind blew so hard that they feared the ship would miss the harbor's opening. As a result, they anchored the *Endeavour* about a mile from shore and waited. The crew spent June 15 lightening the ship so they could lay it ashore for repairs. Finally, on June 17, the

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57. Ibid., 346-347.

58. Ibid., 247.

59. Hooker, ed., *Journal*, 276-277.

60. Cook, "Remarkable Occurrences," 347-348.

wind had lightened up enough that they could sail the ship into the harbor. Cook stated that on the first attempt, the ship passed the harbor entry, but on the second attempt, it ran aground.<sup>61</sup>

The above narratives illustrate several facets of British interactions with native populations during the *Endeavour* voyage. Initially, Cook instructed Tupaia to communicate with the native Australians as they approached the beach. In doing so, one sees that Cook, and likely the other Europeans aboard the *Endeavour*, viewed non-European Pacific populations as distinct from themselves and as a somewhat unified group of peoples. Despite significant differences in appearances and behaviors, Tupaia, in Cook's view, should have been able, reasonably, to take on an ambassador role for the group and effectively intermediate between the two groups, thus fulfilling the Admiralty's instructions of establishing relations to benefit the British crown. For Cook's narrative, having Tupaia intermediate between the crew and the natives shifted the burden of failure away from Cook. Cook could argue that when negotiations over the British landing at Australia deteriorated into active fighting, someone else was to blame because Cook, in his view, had gone as far as to have someone structurally similar to the natives try to communicate with them. He, therefore, could not be held responsible for any subsequent violence.

One can view inconsistencies between the two narratives as differences between Cook's responsibility to the Admiralty and Banks's being primarily aligned with the Royal Society, and as Carter suggested, the different lenses Banks and Cook employed. Writing largely for those interested in science, Banks provided his readers with specific descriptions of the native populations, their appearance, and the types of weapons they carried. Cook, on the other hand, emphasized the number of natives they came across, the number of times he saw campfire

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61. Ibid., 347-349.

smokes, and the number of human-made structures he found, as well as the viability of Australia's coastal regions for maintaining populations. These included descriptions of natural harbors, the types, and amounts of animals harvested as food, and the quality of the soil. Banks instead recorded descriptions of different plants and animals rather than their quantity.

Furthermore, conflicts between Banks's and Cook's narratives exhibit a separation between what may have occurred and what became a part of the crafted narrative surrounding the *Endeavour's* scientific mission. For example, while one cannot prove from the descriptions, how many shots Cook fired at the natives or at what point he began firing, both accounts can be gleaned for information that is at least representative of a version of the truth Cook, Banks, and the *Endeavour* crew used to explain their actions. In addition, the crew's finding of the native huts shows how Cook may have wanted his initial encounter to have gone instead of its actual occurrence. By both leaving and taking items, Cook essentially forced the native children to trade with him, an act which, arguably, would have established friendly relations between the two groups. In short, encounters like this one, and how the authors recorded their details, comprise the bulk of European knowledge regarding these exotic lands and people. As a result, they were also formative experiences that impacted the ways Europeans would approach these populations when incorporating them into empires during later decades.

Banks hired the *Sir Lawrence*, a 190-ton brig for £869, and his crew sailed out of Gravesend at about eleven p.m., on July 12, 1771, the same day Cook departed Plymouth for his second voyage with the *Resolution* and *Adventure*.<sup>62</sup> The brig sailed south around Dover and

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62. Banks, "Introduction," 48. "Costs for Hiring the *Sir Lawrence*," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 608-609. Banks hired the brig under the command of James Hunter for five months at the cost of £100 per month. Other costs associated with the ship's hiring include outfitting and docking fees. Hunter signed the account closed on December 22, 1772.



then westward along England's southern coast before turning northward into the Irish Chanel. From here, the *Sir Lawrence* continued north, passing the Isle of Man and repeatedly stopping along England and Scotland's western coast before passing the Butt of Lewis and entering the Atlantic proper. From this point, Banks and his crew sailed northwest toward Iceland until they received permission from the Icelandic governor to dock in Hafnefiord on August 29.<sup>63</sup>

The day before his landing, August 28, Banks recorded his first interactions with the Icelandic people, which provide several strong comparison points to Cook's interactions with the native Australians. Banks stated that morning; they were close enough to the shore to see the coast, which Banks described as being flat with several houses scattered around the beach. In addition, Banks stated that "many boats were fishing all around [the ship]."<sup>64</sup> As a result, the crew agreed to hoist the English flag and try to signal one of the surrounding boats so that they might communicate with the Icelanders. The fishing boats, in response, avoided the English. Banks, therefore, ordered a boat to be sent from the ship so they could approach one of the fishing boats.<sup>65</sup>

As the English, with Banks and Solander aboard, approached a fishing boat, Banks stated, "they began to row away with all their strength." The English then pursued and overcame the three Icelandic fishermen. Banks stated that the Icelanders were obviously afraid of the English but remained civil and followed them to the *Sir Lawrence*. Once on the *Sir Lawrence*, Banks stated that the fishermen wore a garment that looked like parchment and served as both their boots and breeches, as well as a sheepskin jacket over their normal clothes. He also stated

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63. Joseph Banks, "The Iceland Journal," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 48-83.

64. *Ibid.*, 81.

65. *Ibid.*, 81-82.

that they, “smelt so fishy and rank that it was disagreeable to come near them and were lousy to admiration.”<sup>66</sup>

Banks then offered each of them a brandy, believing that it would help calm their fears. He then stated that Solander, who had been to Norway and spoke Danish could readily communicate with them. With this discovery in hand, Banks and Solander then led the fishermen to the ship’s cabin, where they ate and drank until the tension between the groups eased. While in the cabin, Banks stated that the Icelanders asked if they, the English, were Christian, and upon hearing the English respond to the affirmative, all tension between the two groups dissipated.<sup>67</sup> One fisherman agreed to stay with them to serve as a pilot and conduct them to the harbor at Hafnefiord, “upon condition however that we [the English] would send presents to his wife for whose terrors upon his account he alone seemd to be anxious.”<sup>68</sup>

There are several points to consider when analyzing Banks’s first interaction with the Icelanders beginning with how the interaction occurred. Much like Cook’s *Endeavour* narrative, we see Banks and his company forcing interaction with a native population. There are, however, some key differences as well. The Icelanders, unlike the native Australians, did not respond to the English aggression with hostility. Banks repeatedly stated that the Icelanders acted in fear of the English that they, “trembled very visibly.”<sup>69</sup> There is also the question of communication to consider. Solander, a Swede by nationality, had been to Norway and spoke Danish, giving him an advantage when interacting with another culture that used a Scandinavian influenced

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66. Banks, “The Iceland Journal,” 82.

67. In 1627, Barbary corsairs had attacked Iceland and taken 400 Icelanders away as slaves. It is possible this action remained in the Icelanders’ cultural memory.

68. Banks, “The Iceland Journal,” 82.

69. *Ibid.*, 82.

language. This ability to communicate is one of the most significant differences between the *Endeavour* and *Sir Lawrence* narratives. It placed the Icelanders a degree closer to the English than the Australians and smoothed relations between the English and Icelanders.

Banks had initially set out from Hafnarfjörður on September 18, 1772, taking an easterly route through Heiðarbær, Þingvellir, Laugarvatn, Múli, and finally to Geysir hot springs at Haukadalur. From there, Banks, Solander, and their party headed progressively south through Skálholt, and then Laugarás, at which point they returned to an eastward route through Þjorsárholt, and finally stopped at Skarð on the night of September 23, a parsonage on the eastern side of the river Þjórsá.<sup>70</sup> Banks and his research crew then awoke early on September 24 and began their trek to Mount Hekla; his first major observation consisted of passing through a half-mile-wide hruan, or lava field where the land was, “covered with ashes flying like the deserts of Arabia.”<sup>71</sup> Again, with this example, we see Banks’s tendency to explain a new phenomenon through comparison.

The party then trekked across fertile land until they reached the base of Mount Hekla, where they found themselves surrounded by lava field. Banks stated that the ashes and lava spread over nearly every part of the landscape, with only occasional patches of grass. The group then set up camp at a ruined church at a farm at Næverholt, dining on sheep’s cream. Banks stated that Næverholt was a place where most people who attempted to climb the mountain lodged, however, Banks and his crew pushed further, riding into the evening until they reached the lava fields of Gráfell, a mountain just west of Hekla. Pitching their tents for the night, Banks stated they shot three partridges for Dr. James Lind to cook, then explored the area. Banks

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70. Ibid., 94-104.

71. Ibid., 104.

walked across the lava field to Rauðöldur, a nearby volcano, to observe its crater, which he described as having, “the West side taken away by Eruption, Hraun, lying as if it came out of it.”<sup>72</sup> After observing the Rauðöldur crater, Banks returned to his camp, noticing two hills of tufa splitting the lava field.

The group rose at four the next morning and, after having breakfast, set out on horseback. They rode through volcanic terrain for two hours, passing through cinders and fields of ash. Upon reaching a new hraun, Banks stated that they left the horses and crossed the lava field by foot. Climbing onto the lava field, the group began their ascent in earnest. They climbed along the mountain’s northern side, fighting against winds so severe, they, “could hardly get on. [The] frost laying and [the] cold [was] very severe.”<sup>73</sup> The men celebrated, having a draught of brandy and believing they were the first to reach Mount Hekla’s summit, but after fog and clouds passed, Banks and his party saw a higher, nearby peak to the mountain.<sup>74</sup> Leaving Solander and one unnamed Iclander to rest, the group hurried to the volcano’s peak, staying long enough to measure the temperature and air pressure before descending.

The group reached their tents at the Gráfell lava fields at about 2 p.m., breaking their thermometer during the descent. Upon reaching the tents, the group rested for a bit before they resolved to make it back to Skarð before breaking for the night. During the return trip to Skarð, Banks mentioned seeing several wild geese. They slept that night in the parson’s house, on good beds with clean sheets, something Banks stated was a rarity in Iceland. From his lodging in

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72. Ibid., 104-106. Tufa is porous rock formed out of calcium carbonate.

73. Ibid., 106.

74. Banks, “The Iceland Journal,” 106-107. James Roberts, “A Journal of a Voyage to the Hebrides or Western Isles of Scotland Iceland and the Orkneys undertaken by Joseph Banks Esqr. In the year 1772,” in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 116. Eggert Ólafsson and Bjarni Pálsson were the first to climb Mount Hekla in 1750. Banks would later attend a feast at Pálsson’s house.

Skarð, Banks mentioned that the next morning, September 26, was clear and that he saw a small pillar of smoke rising from Mount Hekla's peak. The group then set out, crossing the river Þjórsá at the same ford they originally used to reach the volcano. During their journey, Banks mentioned they came to a bay where a man who lived there gave them a bag of agate that he had gathered from a nearby bog. The group then continued westward, stopping to sleep at a church in Hraungerði, a parsonage owned by the Skálholt bishopric.<sup>75</sup>

September 27 began with heavy rain and strong winds from the southeast, forcing the group to remain at Hraungerði until noon when the storm passed. Banks's party then traveled under Ingólfsfjall, a mountain named for Iceland's first settler, and then through flatlands until they crossed the Ölfus River. Banks described this territory as, "flat like [the] Lincolnshire fens."<sup>76</sup> Continuing their trek through rain and wind, the party reached Reykir, a church north of the town Hvergerði, just before dark. Banks rose at 5:30, the next morning to explore a set of nearby hot springs. Afterward, the group traveled the day through hard southeasterly winds and snow until they reached an old road leading them to Hafnarfjörður at five that afternoon.<sup>77</sup>

This chapter has explored the tangible differences between the ways Cook and Banks explored their environments. For Cook's period aboard the *Endeavour*, one sees an emphasis placed on engagement and interaction with the natural world.<sup>78</sup> Cook's records, whether an attempt to come ashore and communicate with Aborigine people or to salvage the *Endeavour* and its crew after a disastrous collision with the Great Barrier Reef, continually referenced action and reaction. As a result, his records, although accurate and precise, informed readers of the

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75. Banks, "The Iceland Journal," 108.

76. Ibid.,108.

77. Ibid.,108-109.

78. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 18-33.

exertion of exploration rather than its observational science. Cook's journal describes a world view in which readers could follow his direction to the newly possessed New South Wales, then engage with its environment on their own, and therefore, draw their own conclusions from it. For Cook, environmental control existed only so far as directing followers to the point of discovery.

Conversely, in Banks's records, both aboard the *Endeavour* and in Iceland, interaction remained secondary to observation. Banks's taxonomical approach to botany spilled over into his environmental observations.<sup>79</sup> Descriptions of native Australians emphasized their appearance in relation to European counterparts, descriptions of terrain emphasized its mineral composition rather than spatial characteristics, and even in the moment of the *Endeavour's* collision, Banks's thoughts remained focused on the specimens and scientific instruments he could save rather than the action he could take. One can use this description of Banks's methodological approach to observation in Australia to understand his views toward Iceland. For example, when he wrote in 1801 that the Icelandic people would better benefit from within the British Empire, he used arguments that defined it in comparison to Britain. For Banks, Iceland, like Britain, was an island nation, maintained a distinct fishing industry, and were strong coastal sailors like the British.<sup>80</sup>

These distinctions between Cook's and Banks's methodological approaches toward recording their observations can be traced to utilitarian motives. After all, it was Cook's method that future explorers and colonizers would emulate when settling Australia.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, as the ship's captain and, therefore, a physical part of George III's government, Cook's career, and advancement weighed much more heavily on the results of his voyage than did Banks, who

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79. Ibid.

80. Joseph Banks, "Memorandum from Banks to Henry Dundas[?] Remarks concerning Iceland," January 30, 1801, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 218-224.

81. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 33.

would remain an informal asset to the state.<sup>82</sup> It is also effective to consider these methodological differences as distinctions between how the two men simply thought, with Cook defining his environment in terms of spatial analysis, while Banks looked for taxonomical structures.

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82. For more on Joseph Banks's lifelong relationship with the British state see: John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture*, (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

## CHAPTER 4

### REPORTING AND INFLUENCE

Having considered differences between James Cook's and Joseph Banks's approaches toward scientific travel in the previous chapter, the following chapter will consider the documents that came out of these voyages. By splitting the documents into formal and informal reports, the chapter will examine the letters, reports, newspaper articles, and journal publications that came out of Cook's and Banks's voyage aboard the *Endeavour* and Banks's subsequent voyage to Iceland aboard the *Sir Lawrence*. Formal reporting, in the *Endeavour's* context, will include those sources that interacted with the British state in some function; the documents include letters to state officials and the exploration journals themselves. Informal reporting includes sources aimed at the larger British public, including personal letters, and newspaper articles about the voyage.

Regarding Joseph Banks's voyage to Iceland from July into October 1772, the chapter will examine the documents produced after Banks returned to Hafnarfjörður, following his ascent up Mount Hekla, to 1801, when he produced the memorandum, "Remarks Concerning Iceland." This memorandum was Banks's first formal attempt to convince the British government to annex Iceland. It serves an effective breaking point after Banks wrote it, Iceland became a question of British state and empire following the development of the League of Armed Neutrality.<sup>83</sup> Before the memorandum, Banks's Icelandic voyage remained a personal scientific excursion, whose greatest impact was to serve Banks's interest in developing a broader

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83. Anna Agnarsdóttir, "Sir Joseph Banks as Protector of Iceland during the Napoleonic Wars," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 29-34.



understanding of global natural history. Examining the documents produced before Banks's memorandum, therefore establishes a context in which one better understands the relationships and correspondence Banks used to develop his expertise regarding Iceland.

On October 14, 1770, in Batavia, present-day Jakarta, Cook passed a letter he wrote that morning to the British Admiralty Secretary onto a Dutch East India Ship bound for Holland.<sup>84</sup> The brief dispatch was Cook's first exchange with either the Admiralty or the Royal Society since leaving South America in November of 1768. In the Interim, Cook had sailed the *Endeavour* to Tahiti, recorded Venus's transit across the sun, circumnavigated New Zealand, charted and possessed in George III's name the eastern half of Australia and several smaller islands, crashed into the Great Barrier Reef, and managed to repair the ship well enough to sail to the Dutch East Indies. Unfortunately, Cook explained, he did not know the Dutch East India ship planned to sail that day until moments before writing. The letter, therefore, only stated that the *Endeavour* had arrived in Batavia, and Cook had obtained leave to heave the ship for full repairs. He closed the letter promising to send a full account when the next fleet sailed.<sup>85</sup>

Cook followed his first letter with two more sent to the Admiralty and Royal Society nine days later, on October 23. To the Admiralty Cook wrote a brief overview of his journey, stating they left Rio de Janeiro on December 8, 1768, and arrived at Success Bay in the Le Maire Strait on the following January 16. While at Success Bay, the crew took on extra wood and water, leaving on January 21. The *Endeavour* then headed to Tahiti, taking, "a far more westerly Track

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84. James Cook to Philip Stephens, October 14, 1770, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 499.

85. Cook to Stephens, October 14, 1770, 499.

than any Ship had ever done before.”<sup>86</sup> Doing this, Cook discovered, and laid claim to, several islands within the tropics and arrived at Tahiti on April 13. The crew remained on the island to record Venus’s transit on June 3 and then left on July 13. At this point, Cook continued sailing west and south searching for the unknown southern continent and discovering islands until he reached New Zealand’s east coast on October 6. He then circumnavigated New Zealand, discovering the territory to be two separate islands, and on April 1, 1770, Cook left New Zealand and continued to sail west.

The *Endeavour* continued to sail west until it came to New Holland’s (Australia) eastern coast, at which point, Cook steered the ship north and sailed along the coast until he, “arrived in the Latitude of 15 degrees, 45 minutes, where on the night of June tenth we struck upon a Reef of Rocks where we lay Twenty Three Hours and received some very considerable damage.”<sup>87</sup> The crew put in at the first natural harbor they found and remained there, repairing the ship until August 4, after which, the crew sailed the leaky *Endeavour* north. On August 22, Cook found a passage into the Indian Ocean between Australia and New Guinea, where he headed toward New Guinea, landing on August 29. Unable to make the repairs the *Endeavour* desperately needed, Cook left New Guinea on September 3 and sailed to Batavia, where the crew landed on September 10.<sup>88</sup>

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86. James Cook to Philip Stephens, October 23, 1770, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 499-501.

87. Cook to Stephens, October 23, 1770, 500.

88. *Ibid.*, 500.

Along with the overview of his journey from Rio de Janeiro to Batavia, Cook sent a completed copy of his journal and copies of several of the charts he had made.<sup>89</sup> Cook then stated that he hoped the discoveries he had made would draw the Admiralty's attention and that he believed there was a possibility the southern continent did not exist. He closed the letter by crediting his entire crew for having, "gone through the fatigues and dangers of the whole voyage with that cheerfulness and alertness that will always do honour to British seamen."<sup>90</sup>

Cook's letter to the Royal Society was brief and emphasized his time in Tahiti. He explained that he sent officers to different parts of the island so multiple perspectives could be observed if the weather were unfavorable, which ended up being an unnecessary precaution. The sky remained clear from every vantage point the entire day, and Cook promised that Charles Green, an astronomer aboard the ship, would transmit the results to the Royal Society. Cook closed, simply stating that the crew had left Tahiti on July 13, 1769, and had arrived in Batavia on September 10, 1770, where they would stay to repair damages to the ship.<sup>91</sup>

The differences in Cook's reports to the Admiralty and the Royal Society likely developed out of the different expectations each institution had for the voyage. With the Admiralty, Cook offered a near complete narrative that included the discovery of several islands, interactions with native populations, and details about the damage the ship had taken on. Furthermore, Cook made sure to credit the behaviors and abilities of his sailors, recognizing that the Admiralty would be the institution that would recommend promotions. Conversely, the Royal

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89. Ibid., 500-501. Cook stated that he provided the journal and the charts he had time to make copies of and thought would effectively illustrate the narrative in his journal. He did not state an exact number or list which charts were added.

90. Ibid., 501.

91. James Cook to the Hon'ble the Presidt & Council of the Rl Society, October 23, 1770, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 502.

Society remained the institution most invested in the voyage as an attempt to pursue knowledge. As a result, Cook only explained his observations surrounding Venus. He took care to let them know the voyage's results would come with a variety of data points and perspectives. One interesting facet of both letters comes in the fact that Cook never mentioned to either recipient that he had claimed territory in Australia. While this would become apparent when the Admiralty combed through Cook's journals, he did not directly state it in his letter.

When it came to the voyage's Australian period, Cook emphasized the reef incident, even in his personal correspondence, as the most important event of the journey. Cook provided a two-part overview, in 1771, of his voyage to his friend and former master John Walker. Cook's first, and briefer, letter dealt mainly with his excursion between the Le Maire Strait and Tahiti.<sup>92</sup> Cook wrote to Walker a little more than a month after his return to England, having waited for an order from the state to make the contents of his voyage public. That order having not yet been issued as of the moment he wrote the letter, Cook only described the discoveries and accomplishments he thought were of no great importance. These successes included rounding Cape Horn and discovering several new islands along the route. Two possible reasons stand out for why Cook chose to end his first letter with his departure from Tahiti, the first being it was the moment where he switched from following the "Secret Instructions," to following the "Additional Secret Instructions." As a result, Cook's goals shifted at this point from delivering the scientists to Tahiti, so they could track Venus's passage, to searching for the unknown southern continent.

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92. James Cook to John Walker, August 17, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 505-506.

The other and more likely reason Cook chose to break the narrative he created for Walker at his departure from Tahiti comes from the drastic change in circumstances he and the crew endured after leaving, as Cook wrote, “we left the above Islands, the Voyage was very agreeable and pleasant.”<sup>93</sup> It was after leaving Tahiti, however, that Cook fell in line with the eastern Australian coast, fired on a group of Aborigines, collided with the Great Barrier Reef, delayed his voyage by a month, and lost several crew members on the voyage to malaria and dysentery in Batavia.<sup>94</sup> In many ways, for Cook, the change in the crew’s fortune remained directly connected with the *Endeavour’s* experiences following Tahiti. After all, as late as October 23, 1770, Cook had written the Admiralty stating: “I have the satisfaction to say that I have not lost one man by sickness during the whole voyage.”<sup>95</sup>

Cook sent his second letter to Walker a little less than a month after the first on September 13. In it, he opened with a brief recounting of his time in New Zealand with commentary on the native population, its culture, and industries, before spending the rest of the letter discussing his time in Australia.<sup>96</sup> Being a personal correspondence, rather than a letter to the state, in which Cook’s, and his crew’s, careers were at stake, Cook provided more intimate details of his voyage. He admitted that originally, he intended to sail from New Zealand to the southern edge of Van Diemen's Land, present-day Tasmania, but the winds forced the *Endeavour*

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93. Ibid., 506.

94. James Cook to Philip Stephens, May 9, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 502-503. Cook records having lost 24 men between Batavia and the Cape of Good Hope.

95. Cook to Stephens, October 23, 1770, 501.

96. James Cook to John Walker, September 13, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 506-509.

northward by forty leagues, so he landed at the southern end of Australia instead. He then pointed out that the coast was covered with small islands and shoals so that for nearly four hundred leagues of travel, they had to keep boats out ahead of the ship to direct it from running ashore. He also maintained that despite these difficulties, he found an entirely new entryway into the Indian Ocean.<sup>97</sup>

Cook also repeated twice in the letter that he now called the territory New South Wales instead of New Holland. The emphasis that Cook placed onto his name for the territory demonstrates that, for Cook, the discovery was inherently an imperial process.<sup>98</sup> Through emphasizing that the eastern half of Australia was qualitatively different from New Holland, Cook sought to strengthen his claim as an explorer. In addition, when describing the Australian natives to Walker, Cook pointed out that he felt them to be in a pure state of nature, and that they, “live chiefly on Fish and wild Fowl and such other articles as the land naturly produceth, for they do not cultivate one foot of it.”<sup>99</sup> For Cook, the lack of evidence of society meant his discoveries could be claimed for the Empire. Using the concept of land cultivation,

In 1776, Cook also wrote a letter to Sir John Pringle, physician to George III and president of the Royal Society, in which he provided Pringle with an overview of his observations on the tide at the Endeavour River.<sup>100</sup> Cook split the brief letter into two parts, the first, and largest portion of the letter, explained how the ship arrived at the Endeavour River. After hauling the *Endeavour* off the reef, where it had sat stranded for twenty-three hours, Cook

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97. Ibid., 508.

98. Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, 18.

99. James Cook to John Walker, September 13, 1771, 508.

100. James Cook to Sir John Pringle, April 2, 1776, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 509-510.

navigated the ship to the river's mouth, where they laid it aground for repairs from June 17 to August 4, 1770.

After explaining the process by which they waited for the nighttime high tide to heave the ship free from the reef, Cook began the second part of the letter where he relayed his observations from the shore. Cook waited a full day to heave the *Endeavour* off the reef partially because he found the evening high tide to be higher than the daytime high tide, a fact he reiterated in his letter, "the evening tide at the height of the Spring, [had risen] nine feet perpendicular, the morning tide scarce seven."<sup>101</sup> He also explained that, for their entire time on the Endeavour River, the wind remained a brisk gale consistently blowing from the southeast. Cook added that the wind blew stronger during the day than at night, but he remained unsure as to what effect that distinction might have had on the tide. Cook showed that for the entirety of his time along the Endeavour River, he remained consistently focused on his environment and how that environment might affect future ships attempting to reach New South Wales.

Much like personal letters showed how Cook wished to craft the narrative surrounding the *Endeavour* voyage, newspaper extracts also provide a unique insight into how the public came to perceive the voyage. It is important, however, to first distinguish eighteenth-century newspapers from their current counterparts. They are useful as a source of original and immediate information, but not necessarily accurate information.<sup>102</sup> As a result, one can accurately analyze how newspaper extracts attempted to sway public interest and support, but one cannot necessarily analyze how accurate their reports were in relation to the journals. As a

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101. Ibid., 510.

102. J. C. Beaglehole, "Newspaper Extracts," in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 642; Marcus Daniel, *Scandal and Civility: Journalism and the Birth of American Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 29-32.

result, one unique aspect of the newspaper reports that came out immediately after the *Endeavour*'s return to England, is their emphasis on Banks and Dr. Daniel Solander instead of Cook.<sup>103</sup>

Papers such as the *London Evening Post* explained that Banks had spent months among the natives of Tahiti with no mention of Cook or the other members of the voyage.<sup>104</sup> They provided frequent descriptions of the islands visited and discovered, stating that the native population were hospitable and civil, but displayed no form of religion. These same papers also made reference to Tupaia, a Polynesian navigator picked up in Tahiti, and his assistant, mentioning that they voluntarily traveled with Banks. Others, like the *General Evening Post* and the *Middlesex Chronicle* produced anonymous letters from the voyage, stating they came from, “the three years voyage lately made by Mr. Banks, and Dr. Solander.”<sup>105</sup> The papers went further to make the voyage out to be Banks's accomplishment by stating the overwhelming quantity of samples Banks brought back from the voyage.<sup>106</sup>

When describing the voyage to their readers, newspapers also associated discovery with territorial expansion and botanic commercialism. This included telling readers that those on the *Endeavour*, had, “discovered a Southern Continent in the latitude of the Dutch Spice islands,” or

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103. J. C. Beaglehole, “Newspaper Extracts,” 642.

104. *London Evening Post*, July 23, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 644.

105. *General Evening Post*, July 29, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 644-649; *Middlesex Chronicle*, July 29, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 644-649.

106. *Westminster Journal*, 10-17, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 651.



that, “the celebrated Mr. Banks will shortly make another voyage to St. George’s Island, in the South Seas, and it is said, that Government will allow him three ships, with men, arms, and provisions in order to plant and settle a colony there.”<sup>107</sup> The papers, at times, blatantly stated that the discoveries made aboard the *Endeavour* would expand Great Britain’s territorial holdings.<sup>108</sup>

In terms of establishing a positive public perception regarding botanic commercialism, newspapers like the *Public Advertiser* admitted that the voyage’s scientists, Banks and Solander had failed to bring back samples of gold and silver ore, but that they had instead brought back plants valuable enough to be housed in the royal gardens.<sup>109</sup> Others, like the *Westminster Journal*, pointed out the sheer number of plant specimens brought back, stating that, “no less than seventeen thousand plants, of a kind never before seen in this kingdom, have been brought back by Mr. Banks.”<sup>110</sup> The newspapers also directly established a link between the plants that Banks and Solander brought back from the voyage and their commercial aptitude, explaining that

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107. *London Evening Post*, July 23, 1771, 644; *Westminster Journal*, August 31-September 7, 1771 in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 655; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, September 2, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 655; *Middlesex Journal*, September 3, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 655.

108. *Public Advertiser*, August 21, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 652.

109. *Public Advertiser*, August 2, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 650-651.

110. *Westminster Journal*, August 10-17, 1771, 651.

the men brought back species of bay or laurel trees after watching Pacific islanders extract camphor from the plants.<sup>111</sup>

After spending eight weeks in Iceland, Banks returned to England in October of 1772.<sup>112</sup> His total voyage aboard the *Sir Lawrence* had taken him through the English Channel and into the Irish Sea. He then traveled through the Western Isles of Scotland, collecting plant and mineral samples before directing the 150-ton brig toward Iceland. Once there, Banks and his assistants scoured western Iceland for mineral deposits, hiked volcanoes, observed geysers, and climbed Mount Hekla, a feat they believed themselves the first to accomplish.<sup>113</sup> Upon leaving the island, Banks traveled through the Orkney Islands before landing in Edinburgh. From there, he took a land route to London.<sup>114</sup> Throughout his journey, Banks established connections in Iceland that would last until his death in 1820. Even before his 1801, “Remarks Concerning Iceland,” in which he first formally advised the island’s annexation into the British crown, Banks had already sent or received more than thirty letters regarding Iceland.<sup>115</sup>

Banks’s correspondence regarding Iceland varied widely between personal and scientific interests to requests for sponsorships and celebrations of Banks’s scientific accomplishments.<sup>116</sup>

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111. *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, August 26, 1771, in J. C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1968), 652.

112. Joseph Banks to Thomas Falconer, January 12, 1773, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 168-174.

113. Banks, “The Iceland Journal,” 106-107. James Roberts, “A Journal of a Voyage,” 116.

114. Joseph Banks to Thomas Falconer, January 12, 1773, 168.

115. “Anna Agnarsdóttir, “Calendar of Letters and Documents,” in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 141-142.

116. Teitur Jónsson to Joseph Banks, December 27, 1772, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 166-168.

One such letter from Bjarni Jónsson, sent on September 28, 1772, requested Banks to sponsor his eldest son, Páll's studies at the Copenhagen Academy. Jónsson initially reached out to Banks on September 22, 1772, with a congratulatory ode entitled, "Song of Joy," in celebration of their journey through Iceland.<sup>117</sup> Opening his September 28 letter with an allusion to that ode, Jónsson explained that as rector of the Skalholt School with five surviving children and a salary of sixty rixdollars, he could barely afford his personal needs, much less his son's academic costs. After three years of eating through his savings, Jónsson lamented, he had been forced to call his son home. Believing Banks's to be a cultured man, Jónsson asked, "most humbly, whether you [Banks] would consider this poor, virtuous young man as your own son, and help his lack of means both materially and with good counsel in such a way that he can successfully finish weaving the web of his studies that he has begun."<sup>118</sup> In return for any assistance Banks might offer, Jónsson offered his and his son's services in procuring and translating any Icelandic histories into Latin.

Maintaining an active and generous social life while in Iceland likely attributed to both requests—like Jónsson's—and much of the praise Banks would receive from the Icelanders upon his return to England. Banks actively entertained local elites, attended Icelandic worship services, attended feasts, and cultivated friendships that would aid in his own scientific research

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117. Bjarni Jónsson to Joseph Banks, September 22, 1772, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 159.

118. Bjarni Jónsson to Joseph Banks, September 28, 1772, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 160-162. Páll Bjarnson, Jónsson's eldest son, of whom he discusses in the letter, died of measles shortly after. His burial date is recorded November 5, 1772. Jónsson would inform Banks of his loss in a letter dated August 12, 1775. See Bjarni Jónsson to Joseph Banks, August 12, 1775, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 188-191.

long after he left the island. Toward the end of his trip, for example, Bjarni Pálsson, the Icelandic state physician, wrote to Banks on October 4, inviting him and Solander to come to one such feast.<sup>119</sup> Offering to give Banks and Solander a tour of his natural history collection and to share with them any specimens they might become interested in, Pálsson invited them to his home in Seltjarnarnes, outside of Reykjavík. Banks and Solander spent the day at Pálsson's, where they likely learned that it was Pálsson, himself, who first climbed to Mount Hekla's peak in 1750, more than twenty years before their ascent.<sup>120</sup>

In addition, Banks developed a correspondence with Ólafur Stephensen, at the time district governor and eventually governor of Iceland, that would last well past his attempts to convince the British crown to annex the island. While in Iceland, Stephensen hosted Banks and procured mineral samples for him. These samples included a variety of silica and chunks of obsidian and opal.<sup>121</sup> On June 24, 1773, Stephensen wrote Banks, conveying his excitement to hear that Banks had safely made his way back to London. Stephensen also let Banks know that he had hired Iceland's, "best copyists to transcribe the antiquities and saga."<sup>122</sup> He explained that he had sent transcribed copies of sagas written by Þrómóður Torfason to Andreas Holt, a deputy

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119. Bjarni Pálsson to Joseph Banks, October 4, 1772, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 164-166.

120. Anna Agnarsdóttir, "The Banks Expedition in Iceland," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 17-20.

121. Ólafur Stephensen to Joseph Banks, October 2, 1772, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 162-164.

122. Ólafur Stephensen to Joseph Banks, June 24, 1773, 183-184, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 183-184.

in the Danish Board of Trade in Copenhagen. Holt, Stephensen explained, had been instructed to then deliver the sagas to Banks in London at the earliest possible opportunity.

Along with the twenty-four sagas sent via Holt, Stephensen would write Banks again in 1775 on August 24. In this instance, Stephensen enclosed a mineral sample he had found and an additional eighteen saga transcriptions. He explained that he had not received word that the original sagas had been transported to London, but he had heard rumor that Banks had gone on another voyage. As a result, he waited a year before writing. Stephensen also enclosed a tea tray set Banks had given him in the letter, explaining that one of his servants had damaged it. Finding no one in Copenhagen capable of repairing the tea set, he sent it to Banks in hopes that someone in London might succeed.<sup>123</sup>

Along with the numerous correspondence Banks kept in Iceland, he also wrote extensively about his voyage to contacts in England. In the first of these letters, Banks sent a complete overview of the voyage to his friend Thomas Falconer. Opening on January 12, 1773, Banks explained that he had directed the *Sir Lawrence* through the English Channel and into the Irish Sea. Moving north, Banks explored the Western Isles in Scotland before turning toward Iceland. Much like Cook's letters to John Walker, Banks's narrative was split into multiple parts, with the first letter focusing entirely on his time in the Western Isles.<sup>124</sup> Explaining that despite his disappointment with the outcome regarding the *Resolution* and *Adventure* and the lateness of the year, Banks still wanted to conduct a scientific voyage. For Banks, Iceland was a place

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123. Ólafur Stephensen to Joseph Banks, August 25, 1775, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 191-192.

124. Joseph Banks to Thomas Falconer, January 12, 1773. 168-174.

whose people had, “for some ages signaled themselves both in Learning and adventure but had now been almost unvisited by travelers for many ages.”<sup>125</sup>

Writing on April 2, 1773, Banks followed up on his previous letter to Falconer, stating that they left the Butt of Lewis on August 18, steering directly for Iceland. They then arrived at Bessastaðir on August 29, and were introduced to the Royal Governor Laurits Andreas Andersen Thodal, who provided housing for Banks’s and his assistants in unused merchant quarters. Banks told Falconer that: “We soon fixd ourselves not so conveniently as in English houses but more so than we could have done in the Ship.”<sup>126</sup> Banks also informed Falconer that he believed Iceland to be an area larger than Ireland, and even though he had traveled on horseback, because of Iceland’s size, he could not examine it in its entirety. Therefore, Banks tried ascending mountains and volcanoes to get a better view of Iceland’s topography while remaining within the region surrounding his base in Hafnarfjörður. Banks also made it clear that he observed as many plant species as possible.

Banks closed his letter to Falconer with a postscript detailing a proposed expedition to the Arctic Circle for later that year. Explaining that his friend, Constantine Phipps would command the expedition, Banks asked Falconer for any advice he might offer on the Arctic climate.<sup>127</sup> Initially, Banks had planned to join Phipps on the voyage, but a 1773 trip to Holland became his

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125. Ibid., 168.

126. Joseph Banks to Thomas Falconer, April 2, 1773, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 176-179.

127. Falconer had written to Banks in 1768, before he left for the *Endeavour* voyage recommending an expedition to Iceland.

last voyage abroad. The Arctic voyage would be a success, with Phipps being the first European to describe a polar bear. A young Horatio Nelson also served on this expedition.<sup>128</sup>

The major question for this chapter has regarded the transmission of knowledge produced on the *Endeavour* and Iceland expeditions to the British state and public. As a result, it has examined the documents that Cook and Banks produced following their voyages consisting of letters written to state officials, personal correspondence, and newspaper excerpts. With Cook and the *Endeavour* voyage, the chapter took the time to assess how he portrayed the voyage and its Australia segment in his correspondence, asking why he chose to emphasize certain events over others. It then considered newspaper extracts following the voyage and considered how almost immediately newspapers used the voyage to push for an expansion of British territory. Finally, the chapter gleaned Banks's correspondence to show the sophisticated network of personal connections he created between the end of his voyage and his 1801 memorandum, "Remarks Concerning Iceland." All these examples have explored ways in which historical actors like Banks, Cook, and their correspondents examined, refashioned, and produced new knowledge regarding the voyages at different stages of communication.<sup>129</sup>

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128. Joseph Banks to Thomas Falconer, April 2, 1773, 179. Anna Agnarsdóttir, "Sir Joseph Banks, 1772-1820," in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 25-29.

129. Raj, *Relocating Modern Science*, 225-226. Jan Golinski, *Relocating Modern Science: Constructivism and the History of Science, with a new Preface*, 1998 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005). 39-42.

## CHAPTER 5

### ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL COLONIAL ASSETS

The following chapter will more closely consider the relationship between late-eighteenth-century exploration and British imperialism, more specifically, it will consider the extent to which Joseph Banks, as an informal advisor, could influence the British state. Having sufficiently established the sense of investment and ownership the British government had over the *Endeavour* voyage in previous chapters, this chapter will begin with Australia's early colonization process. James Cook's 1779 death at Kealakekua Bay in Hawaii removes him from this chapter. Cook, as a representative of the state's interests, is then replaced with Arthur Phillip, commander of the First Fleet and the first governor of the New South Wales Colony. Using Phillip's journal, the chapter will explore some of the challenges the First Fleet faced upon their arrival and the influence Banks had over that process.

While the First Fleet and the New South Wales penal colony provide ample evidence of Banks's ability to influence and negotiate British state policy, Iceland better exhibits Banks's failure to do so. Iceland first became an interest to Britain during the Napoleonic Wars when Denmark entered the League of Armed Neutrality, and then again after the British bombardment of Copenhagen when Denmark entered into alliance with Napoleon.<sup>130</sup> The chapter will, therefore, use Banks's 1801 memorandum, "Remarks Concerning Iceland," and his 1807 "Project," in which he designed a plan to annex Iceland, to show how even during moments when Banks had active state interest in Iceland, his informal network of influence failed to coerce the British state's bureaucracy to accede to his aims.

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130. Agnarsdóttir, "Joseph Banks as Protector of Iceland During the Napoleonic Wars," 30.



In 1778, at thirty-five years of age, Banks rose to the presidency of the Royal Society, a position he held until his death in 1820. This, and his experiences in the 1760s in Newfoundland and Labrador, in the 1770s in the Pacific aboard the *Endeavour*, and in the north Atlantic aboard the *Sir Lawrence*, made Banks a strong advisor to governmental questions regarding science, exploration, agriculture, and botany.<sup>131</sup> In 1797, Banks cemented this advisory role when he was elevated to the Privy Council, where he served on the committee on trade and the committee on coin. Banks first advocated for a Botany Bay penal colony before a committee of the House of Commons in 1779. Using the speech to advocate the advance of British imperialism, Banks recommended Botany Bay for the site of a new penal colony as a partial remedy for the loss of England's thirteen American colonies. The development of Botany Bay would, therefore, begin when the First Fleet would sail from England in 1787.

Major preparations for the First Fleet began in earnest in March 1787, when the fleet, the *Sirius*, *Supply*, *Golden Grove*, *Fishburn*, *Borrowdale*, *Scarborough*, *Lady Penrhyn*, *Friendship*, *Charlotte*, *Prince of Wales*, and the *Alexander*, rendezvoused at the Isle of Wight.<sup>132</sup> Phillip explained that the ships remained at their station for two months, during which time, sailors made the convicts, "fully sensible of the nature of their situation; in pointing out to them the advantages they would derive from good conduct, and the certainty of severe and immediate punishment in case of turbulence or mutiny."<sup>133</sup> Phillip explained that despite concerns over the convicts' behavior, while the ships remained in port they gave the sailors no concern and,

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131. John Gascoigne, *Enlightenment Origins of European Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14. Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, 40-44.

132. Arthur Phillip, *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay: With an Account of the Establishment of the Colonies of Port Jackson and Norfolk Island* (London: 1789), 13-16.

133. *Ibid.*, 15.

therefore, required no severe punishment. Phillip even remarked that two of the prisoners aboard the *Alexander* received a full pardon before departure and then remained in England.

That June, the First Fleet stopped for a week at Tenerife to resupply and give the crew, soldiers, and convicts and opportunity to refresh themselves on fresh meat, fruit, and vegetables. Phillip remarked that it had been Cook who first suggested periodic stops, arguing that, “such expeditions might be made for the health of those engaged in them.”<sup>134</sup> Phillip allotted each marine daily ration of a pound of bread, a pound of beef, and a pint of wine; the convicts received three-quarters of a pound of bread and beef, but no wine. For fruits, Phillip had the crew gather figs and mulberries. Phillip added that by the end of the visit, on June 9, one convict aboard the *Alexander* had attempted to escape, but was almost immediately recaptured.

From Tenerife in the Canary Islands, Phillip directed the First Fleet toward Rio de Janeiro, where they landed on August 5. Phillip, aware of Cook’s experience in Rio de Janeiro, worried that like Cook, that the viceroy might prevent the English, as they had Cook in his 1768-1771 voyage, from landing. Conversely, Phillip stated that he found the new viceroy, Don Lewis de Varconcellos, to be “polite and flattering to a great degree, and free from every tincture of jealous caution.”<sup>135</sup> He stated that, even at the First Fleet’s departure, the viceroy complimented them with a twenty-one-gun salute. Phillip found provisions inexpensive in Rio de Janeiro, having allotted twenty-one ounces of meat a day to the crew and convicts. Along with rice, one hundred sacks of cassava, a type of root that can be used to make bread, and other fresh

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134. Ibid. 21-22.

135. Ibid., 41.

vegetables, Phillip spent nearly a month in Rio de Janeiro gathering, at Banks's recommendation, plants like coffee, indigo, and cotton, that were expected to do well in New South Wales.<sup>136</sup>

On January 3, 1788, Phillip recorded sighting New South Wales for the first time. Between January 18 and 20, the First Fleet would slowly land at Botany Bay, the site Banks first suggested in 1799. Phillip would disagree with Banks's assessment of Botany Bay, moving the colony to Port Jackson, a bay Cook named a few miles to the north. Stating: "Errors, sometimes inseparable from hasty observation will then be corrected by infallible experiences,"<sup>137</sup> Phillip found Botany Bay completely unsuitable for colonization. He remarked that the harbor offered no shelter from easterly winds, and that it was too shallow for larger ships, and would, therefore, force them anchor in the open ocean. Fresh water also remained an issue. Phillip stated that most of the nearby creeks and rivers ran through swamps, making it unusable.

After settling the colonists at Port Jackson, Phillip suggested that the choice of Botany Bay might have come out of different expectations for the voyage. Cook, Phillip stated, simply needed to resupply a single small vessel. Needing only a brief respite, Phillip stated that Cook most certainly would have described the bay in a favorable light. However, Phillip needed to provide for a new colony with more than a thousand settlers. As a result, Phillip needed a bay that contained deep harbors for a large variety of shipping vessels. Phillip also added that Botany Bay's placement was, "picturesque and pleasing, and the ample harvest it afforded of botanical acquisitions, made it interesting to the philosophical gentlemen engaged in that expedition; but something more essential than beauty of appearance, and more necessary than philosophical

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136. Ibid., 30-41; Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the Enlightenment*, 203.

137. Phillip, *The Voyage of Governor Phillip*, 2-3.

riches, must be sought in a place where the permanent residence of multitudes [was] to be established.”<sup>138</sup>

Along with advising Botany Bay as the initial site for the New South Wales colony, Banks also maintained influence throughout the early colony’s settlement. In the 1790s, the New South Wales agriculture primarily focused on cultivating non-native plants and animals introduced during the colonization process. One early example of Banks’s recommendation for transplanting agricultural goods included the introduction of Merino sheep in Australia. Originally, they were bred for dry plains in Spain, but under Banks’s recommendation, they were imported to Britain. They could not adapt, however, to Britain’s wetter climate. They flourished in Australia.<sup>139</sup> Banks, although not an official advisor ultimately had tremendous influence on the development of Australia, and given this influence, one must have assumed he could have had a similar influence over British policy regarding Iceland.

At the request of Prime Minister William Pitt’s administration, Joseph Banks produced a memorandum titled “Remarks Concerning Iceland,” on January 30, 1801.<sup>140</sup> As the starting point for Banks’s unofficial role as the government’s expert on Iceland, the memorandum provided a broad overview of Iceland’s history, economy, and population. Banks explained that Iceland first became isolated in 1465 when Denmark excluded all other nations from trade with the island, however, a year later the Danes rescinded the act, and English subjects could once again trade in the Icelandic fishing industry. As a result, trade, primarily for north Atlantic fish, continued until the mid-sixteenth century when England turned its focus to the Newfoundland fishing industry.

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138. *Ibid.*, 60-61.

139. Gascoigne, *Enlightenment Origins of European Australia*, 73.

140. Agnarsdóttir, “Sir Joseph Banks as Protector of Iceland during the Napoleonic Wars,” 30.

Decline in trade then continued until 1733, when the Danish crown granted a trade monopoly to the Iceland-Finmark Company, forbidding all foreigners to trade with Iceland.<sup>141</sup>

Banks also explained along with the Danish trade monopoly, international trade with Iceland shifted to Newfoundland for other reasons. He stated that the heavily forested regions of Newfoundland made it cheaper and more attractive to traders than the treeless Iceland. Emphasizing this difference in resources, Banks stated that trade between the two countries therefore through the fishing industry declined of natural causes rather than from political interference. As a result, he did not expect there to be an immediate rise in the Icelandic fishing industry if Great Britain were to annex the island. However, he would later state that if Britain actively invested in the Icelandic population, the fishing industry would show significant returns in the distant future. Banks also suggested that the Icelandic sulfur mines could not actively compete with those in Italy.<sup>142</sup> AS the above example demonstrates, Banks was even-handed in his approach to Iceland; he refused to exaggerate or make claims, like an immediately improved trading industry, that he did not believe would occur even if he suspected that it was something that the government would have liked to hear.

Banks then argued that despite being slightly larger than Ireland, Iceland had a sparse population. As a result, the island had no major towns. Even Reykjavík, Iceland's future capital, founded in 1786 only had a population of around 300 at the time Banks wrote the memorandum. Explaining that the climate remained surprisingly mild for its latitude, and therefore, Banks found that, "turnips, cabbages, lettuce, pease, cauliflowers, and some other kinds of garden stuff prospered well in the Governor's garden, under the shelter of banks of earth raised for their

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141. Banks, "Remarks Concerning Iceland," 218. Recent research has shown that Danish authorities were ineffective at enforcing the trade monopoly.

142. *Ibid.*, 219.

protection.”<sup>143</sup> Banks stated most of the land was covered in lava fields, but that in the areas that were not covered, pastures and meadows could be found, and as a result, cattle and sheep could be found in abundance. Despite this, Banks stated that fish remained the chief source of protein for the Icelanders.<sup>144</sup>

When approaching the question of conquest, Banks stated that the Icelanders were mild, inoffensive, and timid. He explained that he saw no soldiers of any kind during his visit and that there were only four persons of authority for the whole of the island. These figures included the governor, lieutenant governor, and two bishops; Banks added that three of the four lived within a few miles of each other near Hafnarfjörður. Should the island be taken into the empire through territorial exchange with Denmark, or conquered by force, Banks had no doubt, “that five hundred men, with a very few guns, to be mounted on horse when the troops arrive, would subdue the island without striking a blow.”<sup>145</sup> Emphasizing the terrain, Banks mentioned the entire island was covered with good natural harbors that protected ships from the weather. As a result, it would be easy for England, or one of England’s enemies to land a ship on the island. However, crossing the island’s mountainous and volcanic terrain would be an entirely different matter.<sup>146</sup>

Pushing for annexation, Banks stated that conquering the island would give Britain control of all islands in Northern Europe and that, “she would emancipate from an Egyptian bondage a population, consisting entirely of fishermen, and consequently of seamen, that would

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143. Ibid., 220.

144. Ibid., 221.

145. Ibid., 222.

146. Ibid., 222-223.

rapidly increase under her mild government.”<sup>147</sup> Arguing that annexing Iceland would drastically increase the supply of seamen for the British navy, Banks also stated that opening it up to the British Empire’s market, with long term investments, would revive Iceland’s fishing industry and make it one of the best in the world. Emphasizing the humanitarian aspect, Banks offered that he would not expect the island to produce profits for some time, and that they would need ample food supplies sent before they could become of significant economic value to Empire.<sup>148</sup>

Banks’s based his recommendation for Iceland’s annexation, partially on humanitarian recommendations, in part on potential future revenues from the fishery, and partially on the opportunity to politically embarrass Denmark. Stating that, “depriving Denmark of a part of the ancient hereditary dominions of the Danish Crown, would probably produce a greater effect on the public opinion of Europe, than would be done by depriving her of the whole of her colonies, both in the East and the West Indies.”<sup>149</sup> Banks’s original plan had little impact and, therefore, failed to convince the government of the need for Iceland’s annexation.

Six years later, however, in 1807, Robert Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury, the Home Secretary approached Banks asking for him to construct a new plan detailing the feasibility of annexing Iceland.<sup>150</sup> The request would follow Denmark’s entrance into an alliance with Napoleon.<sup>151</sup> In late December of that year, Banks would write to one of the sons of his friend

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147. Ibid., 222-223.

148. Ibid., 223-224.

149. Ibid., 223.

150. Robert Banks Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury to Joseph Banks, November 29, 1807, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 236. Hawkesbury’s letter is the only extant document showing a secretary of state contemplating Iceland’s annexation.

151. Agnarsdóttir, “Sir Joseph Banks as Protector of Iceland during the Napoleonic Wars,” 30.

Ólafur Stephensen, stating: “No one who looks upon the map of Europe can doubt that Iceland is by nature a part of the group of islands called by the ancients ‘Britannia,’ and consequentially that it ought to be part of the British Empire, which consists of every thing in Europe accessible only by seas.”<sup>152</sup> Banks would construct and offer a step-by-step process for the island’s incorporation into the British Empire.<sup>153</sup>

Banks recommended the government begin by offering parole to all people in Icelandic ships currently in British imprisonment, whether they were native Icelanders or naturalized through living on the island so long as each person could prove he had spent at least one winter on the Island. Concurrently, the government would then send all Danish seamen into the same custody as the current prisoners of war. Banks stated the government would then release all property belonging to the Icelanders and allow them to take possession of any Danish property confiscated by the British government. Banks argued this measure would allow Icelanders to supply themselves until the next spring. Following this, Banks stated all Icelandic ships must be manned with Icelanders or English seamen with no exceptions.<sup>154</sup>

At this point Banks recommended a fleet under the command of at least two frigates to sail into Iceland with soldiers on board. This measure, Banks argued, would force the Danish Royal Governor to surrender. Following the Danish governor’s surrender, the English could

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152. Joseph Banks to Mr. Stephensen of Reikaivick, December 1807, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 254-256. The letter is addressed to a ‘Mr. Stephensen.’ Ólafur’s eldest son, Magnús was in Copenhagen at this time, and having received a letter in October from Magnús, Banks believed Ólafur to be dead. Banks, therefore, must have addressed it to either Björn or Stefán Stephensen. See also, Magnús Stephensen to Joseph Banks, October 17, 1807, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 227.

153. Joseph Banks, “Project,” December 1807, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 256-257.

154. *Ibid.*, 256.



install their own governor and leave all Icelandic laws and customs in place. Banks's distinguished Icelandic laws from Danish laws, allowing the Icelanders to repeal any Danish laws placed over them. Banks stated that the island should be considered conquered territory, and that no laws made by the Icelandic Alþingi, or general assembly, would have power until George III approved it in council. Banks closed the document recommending that if force became necessary to subdue the island, all Danish property could be offered as prize to the captors.<sup>155</sup>

In 1809, Banks sent his friends William Jackson Hooker, future director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and Jörgen Jörgensen to Iceland on a plant finding expedition.<sup>156</sup> They traveled with a trading expedition licensed by the Privy Council and commanded by a London soap merchant, Samuel Phelps. Banks had first met Jörgensen in 1806, when Jörgensen reached out to Banks regarding the publications of his own Pacific travel journals. At the outbreak of conflict between Great Britain and Denmark in 1807, Jörgensen returned to Denmark and was given command of the *Admiral Juul*, a Danish privateer. After the British captured Jörgensen, they released him as a prisoner-of-war in London due to his status as a captain.<sup>157</sup>

After the Danish governor refused to allow Phelps to trade with the Icelanders, Jörgensen seized the governor and declared himself protector of an independent and republican Iceland. Jörgensen's Icelandic revolution would last less than two months, with the British navy capturing Jörgensen and returning the Danish governor to power. After Alexander Jones sailed the *Talbot* to Iceland and recaptured Jörgensen, the British government tried him for breaking parole. Jörgensen would spend the next several years, intermittently, serving as a British secret agent

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155. *Ibid.*, 257.

156. Agnarsdóttir, "Joseph Banks as Protector of Iceland During the Napoleonic Wars," 32. Hooker would lose all his notes and specimens in a fire, forcing him to recall the revolution and his entire voyage simply from memory. See William Jackson Hooker, *Journal of a Tour in Iceland in the Summer of 1809* (London, 1813), i-iii.

157. Agnarsdóttir, *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic*, 632.

and building gambling debts until, in 1822, the government would sentence him to death. Jørgensen's would later have his sentence commuted to life spent in Van Diemen's Land, later Tasmania, where he would become, among other things, an explorer, police constable, and author, having more than four books published in England.<sup>158</sup> The incident, while short-lived, left a deep impression on Banks, who would later obsessively collect documents relating to the incident and compile them into multiple memoranda to the foreign office condemning Jørgensen's actions in Iceland.<sup>159</sup>

It should be recognized that the documentary evidence shows Banks believed the Icelanders would peacefully and gladly transfer allegiance to the British crown. All suggestions Banks made regarding resistance during Iceland's conquest were directed at the Danish authorities, who he believed would be the only challenge to British power. Even his recommendation for warships came with the caveat that an Icelander should be sent with them to negotiate with the local population.<sup>160</sup> This conclusion likely stemmed from the network of friends and confidants Banks had developed during and after his voyage to Iceland. Having developed a network of humanitarian and scientific companions, Banks likely believed a similarly styled argument would convince them to side with the British. In addition, despite the British government's failure to adopt Banks's plan for peaceful conquest, it did release Icelandic

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158. *Ibid.*, 633. See also Jørgen Jørgensen and James Francis Hogan. *The Convict King: Being the Life and Adventures of Jorgen Jorgenson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

159. See Joseph Banks, "Memorandum from Banks to [Marquess Wellesley]," January 12, 1810, in Anna Agnarsdóttir, ed., *Sir Joseph Banks, Iceland and the North Atlantic 1772-1820 Journals, Letters and Documents*. (London: Routledge for the Hakluyt Society, 2016), 377-381.

160. *Ibid.*, 257.

merchant ships with British licenses permitting them to carry on their traditional trade routes with Denmark.<sup>161</sup>

Ultimately, England would not annex Iceland despite Banks's efforts. While he had long advocated annexation and remained dedicated to the cause, his role remained informal, and lack of an official position made it difficult for him to direct the government toward annexation.

While striking at the Danes immediately held British interest, Iceland did not. None of Banks's arguments, economic, social, geo-political, or scientific moved the government toward annexation.

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161. Agnarsdóttir, "Sir Joseph Banks as Protector of Iceland during the Napoleonic Wars," 30-31. Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 174-175.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The above study has employed the 1770 Australian segment of the Royal Society and Royal Admiralty's joint scientific voyage aboard the *Endeavour* under the command of James Cook and Joseph Banks's personally financed scientific voyage to Iceland in 1772 as case studies to explore relationship between scientific travel and imperialism in the late eighteenth century. By emphasizing the voyages, their reports, and outcomes, the study has also considered the level of individual influence people like Cook and Banks maintained in the British government during a period of rapid bureaucratic development. As a result, the study has effectively shown that the period moving from the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, the British government became increasingly bureaucratic. However, that process was not one that completely shut out the influence of individuals. As shown, particularly by Banks's involvement in both Australia and Iceland, individual influence over state policy and ventures remained a core part of British governance. However, that influence only existed so long as the state itself remained invested in the ventures. As a result, early scientific expeditions like Cook's first voyage of discovery, which culminated with the annexation of Australia, and Banks's voyage on the *Sir Lawrence* served as effective, although imperfect, feasibility studies in a larger imperial process.

Opening with the period before the *Endeavour* and *Sir Lawrence* voyages embarked, the study's second chapter examined the influences that state institutions, like the Royal Society and Admiralty, and individuals, in the persons of Cook and Banks, exerted over scientific voyages. Before leaving England on his first voyage, the Admiralty and Royal Society gave Cook three

sets of instructions, the “Secret Instructions,” “Additional Secret Instructions,” and “Hints Offered to the Consideration,” each of which emphasized the varying institutional interests vested in the voyage. While the Admiralty’s “Secret Instructions” helped define Cook’s overall voyage, its influence primarily focused on Cook’s time in Tahiti, in which he tracked Venus’s 1769 passage over the sun. As a result, this study has focused on the Admiralty’s “Additional Secret Instructions,” and the Royal Society’s “Hints Offered to the Consideration,” as these documents had the greatest influence on the *Endeavour*’s voyage following its departure from Tahiti. Through analyzing these documents, the study has shown that, at least during the period from April through August 1770, the *Endeavour*’s voyage was controlled by both scientific and imperialistic interests. Furthermore, the competing nature of these institutional interests gave Cook, as commander of the vessel, a degree of freedom when making major decisions. Finally, the chapter established that when tensions arose between the institutional interests aboard the *Endeavour* Cook could be more readily identified with the Admiralty’s, and thus the state’s imperial interests while Banks, who as a representative of the Royal Society, could be more readily identified with the state’s scientific mission.

Banks self-funded his voyage to Iceland aboard the *Sir Lawrence*, hiring the ship and crew out of his own pocket. Banks planned the Iceland voyage after significant conflicts with the Admiralty during preparations for Cook’s second voyage of discovery aboard the *Resolution* and *Adventure*. As a result of these conflicts over how to outfit the ships, Banks removed himself and the crew he hired from the voyage and chose Iceland as his new destination, arguing that no good natural history had been written about the island.

By personally funding his expedition, Banks had the freedom to direct his Icelandic voyage. Banks initially conceived of the voyage as a purely scientific effort. He did not have to

report to a governing agency and could allow scientific inquiry to determine his movements. However, a consequence of that near-unlimited control over the expedition, Banks would later see severe limitations placed on his ability to influence state decisions over whether to annex the island into the Empire.

The study's third chapter more closely assessed the data that came out of the voyages. As a result, it asked questions regarding the observations made and interactions that occurred during Cook's period along the Australian coast and Banks's time in Iceland. Using the *Endeavour* crew's first interaction with native Australians and the *Endeavour's* June 10 collision with the Great Barrier Reef as in-depth examples, the study considered the observations both Cook, and Banks's made when recording the sequence of events. By comparing the two narratives, the study exhibited ways in which they differed and often directly conflicted with one another. The conflicting narratives found in these journals then brought fourth questions regarding the journals' intended audiences and goals. Simply put, the study asked what advantage there might have been for Cook's journal to differ from Banks's and vice versa. It concluded by asserting that the differences came from a combination of utilitarian reasons, such as expectations the British state may have put on Cook, and simple thought processes, like Banks's training as a botanist.

The Iceland section of chapter three opened with Banks's introduction to the Icelandic population. This afforded the opportunity to compare Banks's first contact with Icelanders to his and Cook's contact with the native Australians. Communication was the major point of analysis, showing not only the differences between Banks's interactions with Icelanders and Cook's interactions with native Australians, but in how relations were established. With Banks's voyage

to Iceland, the crew had an effective translator in Daniel Solander, who allayed the Icelanders' fears and established them as two Christian groups attempting to communicate with one another.

“Reporting and Influence,” the study’s fourth chapter analyzed some of the documents that came out of these scientific journeys. By first examining the letters Cook wrote to the Admiralty and the Royal Society, the study questioned what events from the voyage Cook thought most important. From there, the chapter questioned why Cook might have provided slightly different narratives to the Admiralty and Royal Society. It then reinforced the argument that, to Cook, the most important event from the voyage remained the *Endeavour*’s collision with the Great Barrier Reef. Throughout his personal and professional correspondence, when describing the voyage after his departure from Tahiti, Cook’s major point of interest remained heaving the *Endeavour* off the reef. The chapter then analyzed newspaper excerpts that followed the *Endeavour*’s return to England. These extracts provided a greater context for understanding how details from the voyage were used to inform public perceptions around scientific voyages and discoveries.

In Iceland, the study’s fourth chapter examined some of the letters Banks sent and received between the end of his voyage and his 1801 memorandum, “Remarks Concerning Iceland.” It explored the relationships Banks developed with Icelanders during his excursion and how those relationships would inform his discussions surrounding the island. It looked at examples of requests for aid from the Icelanders, as well as Icelandic responses to Banks’s own requests. Afterward, the study moved to consider the narrative Banks provided for his associates in England. Overarchingly, the chapter considered what networks Banks established through his Icelandic expedition, and how they would inform his eventual thoughts about the island’s sovereignty.

Chapter five's section on Australia looks more closely at the period in which Port Jackson and Norfolk Island, New South Wales first colonies, were established. Using Phillip's journal, the study shows how the First Fleet's commander frequently compared his journey to Cook's 1768-1771 voyage aboard the *Endeavour*. It also goes further, exploring Banks's influence over the colony, ranging from suggesting its initial placement to controlling major aspects of the colony's early agricultural program.

The study's fifth chapter utilizes Banks's memorandum, "Remarks Concerning Iceland," and his subsequent, "Project," to his limitations regarding influence over the British government. Through these documents, and Robert Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury's 1807 letter to Banks, we see that even in moments when the government was receptive to the idea of annexing Iceland, Banks remained unable to completely convince the state into achieving his goals. The chapter also explored the impact Banks's Icelandic journey had on him individually. Given the relationships Banks had developed with the Icelanders, he likely believed that a peaceful transfer of power could occur in Iceland.

Ultimately, the thesis demonstrates that the role of an individual in an increasingly bureaucratic state had been reduced. The Empire was becoming more streamlined and oversight became increasingly normalized. The empire would increasingly work through official channels, forcing the role of the scientific explorer to change. The eighteenth century would, therefore, give rise to a new type of traveler such as the legendary explorer David Livingstone, whose independence and solitude, real or imagined, shaped nineteenth-century public understanding of the traveler. For the eighteenth century though, as this thesis has demonstrated, it would be the state who wished to control, profit from, and shape scientific exploration.



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VITA  
RYAN BARKER

- Education: B.A. History and English, Creative Writing Concentration, Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee 2015  
M.A. History, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee 2019
- Professional Experience: Student Editor, Tusculum College, The Tusculum Review, 2010-2014  
Intern, Tusculum College, Museums of Tusculum, 2012  
Peer Tutor, Tusculum College, 2014-2015  
Communications Specialist, Presbyterian College, Clinton, South Carolina, 2015-2017  
Tuition Scholar, East Tennessee State University, 2017  
Graduate Assistant, East Tennessee State University, 2018-2019
- Research Presentations: Barker, Ryan. (2012). "In Reverence to the Anti—." 19th Blue Ridge Undergraduate Research Conference. Maryville College, Maryville, Tennessee.  
Barker, Ryan. (2013). "Roman Britain: Claudius's Social Obligation." 20th Blue Ridge Undergraduate Research Conference. Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.  
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Barker, Ryan. (2018). "Travelers and Intermediaries: Interactions with Pacific Populations During the

Awards and Recognitions:

*Endeavour Voyage.*” 3rd Annual  
History Graduate Research  
Symposium. East Tennessee State  
University.

Bruce G. Batts Award, Tusculum College  
2015

History Honor Key, Tusculum College, 2015  
English, Creative Writing Honor Key,  
Tusculum College 2015