

**Empirical Power, Imperial Science:
Science, Empire, and the ‘Classification’ of the Late
Eighteenth Century Pacific**

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By Justin Wyatt Voogel

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Abstract

The Pacific of the mid eighteenth century was far removed from what it would become by the first decade of the nineteenth. The transformation from an expansive, unknown blue desert to a clearly defined space crisscrossed by trade routes and dotted with burgeoning colonial settlements came as the result of four decades of survey and study carried out by the governments of Europe. At the fore of this expeditionary fervor, Great Britain sponsored five separate voyages of discovery that served to codify the Pacific Ocean under the precepts of European cartography and Linnaean classification with the aid of natural historians, botanic draughtsmen, gardeners, and astronomers. At a time when European powers found themselves at odds, if not outright war, these voyages and their discoveries became a focal point of cooperation as the far-flung regions of the globe were slowly given shape and meaning within a European context.

Combining the resources of the Royal Navy with members and backing from the Royal Society, these endeavours sought to bring back to Europe a defined picture of the Pacific, from its coastlines to its flora and fauna and, of course, descriptions of the Polynesian societies they encountered. Covering the final decades of the long eighteenth century, these voyages formed quintessential examples of Enlightenment ideals, seeking out the unknown areas of the globe and sharing those discoveries with the world, and would ultimately be appropriated and used towards the national interest. This thesis, then, serves to highlight the move from empirical voyage of discovery to imperial scientific endeavour through the changing role of naval captains and natural historians and their understanding of their place in this larger endeavour.

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Chapter One
Western Science, Southern Seas:
An Introduction to History and Theory

We are now on the eve of the second transit of a pair, after which there will be no other till the twenty-first century of our era has dawned upon the Earth, and the June flowers are blooming in 2004. When the last transit season occurred the intellectual world was awakening from the slumber of ages, and that wondrous scientific activity which has led to our present advanced knowledge was just beginning. What will be the state of science when the next transit season arrives God only knows. Not even our children's children will live to take part in the astronomy of that day.¹

- William Harkness, speaking before the Transit of Venus on 6, December 1882

Thus where pleased Venus, in the southern main,
Sheds all her smiles on Otaheite's plain,
Wide o'er the isle her silken net she draws,
And the Loves laugh at all but Nature's laws.²

- *The Botanic Garden*, Erasmus Darwin (1791)

A hazardous azure expanse where few ventured too far from the horizon, the Pacific Ocean of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a space wherein one could place any number of fanciful stories or idyllic utopias. Certainly, in the two and a half centuries that separated the circumnavigation of Ferdinand Magellan from the voyages of James Cook, the Pacific remained for many an unknown quantity. This uncharted territory then became the setting for tales such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, making use of the region's mystery and sparse reports to craft fantastic adaptations into literary realities. This utopic vision was reinforced with the return of Samuel Wallis and his descriptions of an apparent tropical eden, Tahiti, in 1768. Over the remainder of the century, Tahiti became the site from which British explorers, driven by scientific curiosity, would expand into the Pacific and craft their own empirical reality.

¹ William Harkness, "Address by William Harkness," *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Thirty-First Meeting Montreal, August 1882* (Salem, MA: The Salem Press, 1883), 77.

² Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden. A Poem in Two Parts. Part I. Containing the Economy of Vegetation. Part II. The Loves of the Plants. With Philosophical Notes* (London: J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1799)

As the 1769 transit of Venus grew near, the last in the previous transit season to which William Harkness referred, the Royal Society approached the Royal Navy for assistance in its observation at some far southern latitude. Tahiti was chosen as the base, and so began an extensive expansion of the European powers into the relatively unknown regions of the Pacific. Disciplines from geography to botany, ethnography to chronometry grew under a rising spirit of scientific inquiry throughout Europe that drove exploration into the South Sea.

Developed by Carl Linnaeus, Linnaean classification took the world's flora and fauna out of the chaos that was nature, bringing them to order within a very distinct, very European, system of organization. Between the mid eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this program of classification and scientific inquiry became part and parcel with exploration and imperial expansion. Samples and specimens were collected and catalogued so that the Pacific became for Europeans more than a curiosities cabinet. The Pacific developed into a workshop for Europe's theories of the natural world to be tested and retested, a laboratory wherein western scientific inquiry was used to make sense of the "new", new world.³

From the first of James Cook's voyages on through to the dawn of the nineteenth century, British explorers crisscrossed the Pacific on expeditions of scientific curiosity. By the time that exploration retreated from the coastlines in the early 1800s, an ambitious program had been established that saw science as a central tenant of empire building. This scientific approach to empire developed through the extensive exploration of the Pacific that took place in the latter eighteenth century. This scientific inquiry was developed into a tool by the end of the century, one

³ Glyndwr Williams, "'To Make Discoveries of Countries Hitherto Unknown:' The Admiralty and Pacific Exploration in the Eighteenth Century," in *Pacific Empires: Essays in Honour of Glyndwr Williams*, ed. Alan Frost and Jane Samson (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), 19-21; Joyce Chaplin, "The Pacific Before Empire, c. 1500-1800," in *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, ed. David Armitage and Alison Bashford (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 71-72; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 31.

that aided the expansion of Britain's empire through knowledge of both rival expansion and, more importantly, of new lands and resources. As settlement begins to follow discovery, by the late eighteenth century inquiry and empirical analysis began to emerge as government policy linking science and empire. This colonization, as a physical manifestation of the British empire, serves to reinforce the role performed by those scientific expeditions, providing a reason for the voyages to take place. Explorers who sailed to the Pacific brought with them an inherent understanding of their importance, placing their endeavours alongside earlier, more overt displays of exploration and empire building from Columbus on through to Wallis. But while a ship's commissioned officers were given explicit instructions regarding the national interests of these expeditions, the accompanying supernumeraries were not, and their discoveries helped to form an intellectual foundation upon which this colonial project developed. Botanists, astronomers, even painters, men of science all, they became instruments of an empirical, imperial project of expansion in their work on the exploratory voyages.⁴

Burdened with scientific purpose and saddled with secondary political aims more secretive than the first, these voyages fostered an intense rivalry among the European nations who sought to lay claim to the islands of the South Sea. While following in the tradition of Columbus, Raleigh, and Champlain, these voyages were also expected to seek out new, undiscovered lands for the benefits of trade, navigation, "the honour of [the] nation as a maritime power ... [and] the dignity of the crown of Great Britain."⁵ More than mere scientific endeavours, the voyages into the Pacific possessed an element of imperial practicality, the knowledge they returned to Britain being used to further the empire's colonization efforts. These voyages, then, became economic and political

⁴ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1994), 8-12.

⁵ J.C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), cclxxxii

enterprises on the international stage. Rivalry between nations would see the introduction of secret sailing orders, the surrender of written materials upon return, and secrecy about where they had been and what they had seen. In part, this suppression of information was a preemptive attempt to publish an account of Britain's findings in the South Sea before those of the French.⁶

Britain, France, and later Spain competed to acquire the largest collection of unknown specimens or produce the most accurate surveys. Capitalizing on the emerging scientific curiosity of the eighteenth century, these endeavours would become the spearhead of a new imperial project. Under the banner of natural history, the powers of Europe would descend on the Pacific, attempting to bring order to the chaos of nature and defining the globe with new techniques and new technologies. As this program of discovery grew so too did its goals and, more importantly, the role of its agents in future imperial endeavours. Gaining support, first from the government and later private societies, voyages of discovery became highly diverse networks of officials, botanists, gardeners, and collectors around the world. From establishing a program of acclimatization that saw useful plants grow in royal gardens from Kew to Sydney to the development of trade networks and political channels half a world removed from the metropolitan centre, this program of scientific exploration helped to unify the previously disparate corners of the globe. Be it for future industry in India or feeding slave plantations in the West Indies, nearly four decades of botany and exploration would produce an interconnected system of science and government that touched much of the Pacific. The development of science throughout the Pacific, from an obscure scientific endeavour to an established imperial project, shaped not only policy but people, who saw their

⁶ Daniel A. Baugh, "Seapower and Science: The Motives for Pacific Exploration," in *Background to Discovery: Pacific Exploration from Dampier to Cook*, ed. Derek Howse (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 34-35; Glyndwr Williams, "The Achievement of the English Voyages, 1650-1800," in *Background to Discovery: Pacific Exploration from Dampier to Cook*, ed. Derek Howse (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), 58-61; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 9.

roles shift from chauffeurs and collectors to agents of imperial and empirical importance during their time in the South Sea.⁷

Men of Science, Men of Empire

The Pacific is big. While that may sound simplistic, it is an unavoidable fact. In examining the expansion of Western science through the region, it is critical to keep the importance of space in mind. From the distances between island chains to the area of an island relative to the Pacific, these factors and more had a role in the development of Island civilizations from the earliest days of settlement. In applying the structure provided by the scientific method, be it through geography, botany, anthropology, or some other such discipline, to these places distant from Europe, the regions of the Pacific became an area distinctly separate, to be imprinted with a foreign concept of the natural world.⁸

The ocean also provided its own challenges to be confronted in the pursuit of science so far from the Universities and Societies of Europe. Challenges of space and size and supply became indicative of working in the South Seas. From the inability of acquiring additional paper necessary for writing up botanic descriptions to the impracticality of replacing essential personnel due to illness or death, compromise and sacrifice became commonplace in an effort to overcome these obstacles.⁹

⁷ Lisbet Koerner, "Purposes of Linnaean Travel: A Preliminary Research Report," in *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany, and Representations of Nature*, ed. David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 117-119, 129-133; 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, 2010), 113-114.

⁸ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1968), 1-15; John Gascoigne, "The Ordering of Nature and the Ordering of Empire: A Commentary," in *Visions of Empire*, 108-111.

⁹ David N. Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 9-14, 81-82.

By mapping out regions of interest or importance, the cartographic products of early expeditions pressed upon the scientific community the need for further inquiry, further expansion. While composite maps of New Holland existed, they were far from complete by the turn of the nineteenth century, with the western coastline floating far from the outline of the eastern shore. One charted in the mid seventeenth century and the other in the mid eighteenth, it was not known how these two coasts connected, if indeed they were connected at all. Not until Matthew Flinders and the crew of the *Investigator* had circumnavigated what is now Australia did Europe know the true extent of this southern continent. Displacing local nomenclature for European names, be they for geographic features or local fauna, Europeans slowly began to undermine established indigenous tradition and lay claim to this knowledge about the land for their own sake.¹⁰

European imperial expansion in the South Pacific over the course of the latter eighteenth century was, then, different to the imperial expansion which saw much of the globe divided amongst European empires in the late nineteenth century. Too, it differed from that earlier expansion which had divided the Americas among the French, Spanish, and English empires in the seventeenth century. Those empires were built along the lines of traditionally defined imperialism, namely the “exercise of power either through direct conquest or (latterly) through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination.”¹¹ This use of power, be it through force or other means, in the pursuit of expansion is the ideological signpost of empire, and much more overt in its intent than the form of imperial ideology that developed over the course of Britain’s Pacific expeditions of the eighteenth century. This new ideology, the focus of this thesis, centered around the sciences, from botany to geography, which,

¹⁰ Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, 155-157; Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 14-17.

¹¹ Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 27-28.

in their infancy, were used as part of a program of scientific exploration and discovery that slowly, subtly, exerted a particular form of cultural domination over the Pacific. The knowledge acquired by these scientific expeditions of the lands and peoples of the Pacific could be later used to conquer, control, or govern them. By engaging Europe's natural philosophers, its men of science, in this way, the European empires developed a more subdued, yet no less potent method of expansion, scientifically grounded imperialism.¹²

An imperial form of science is produced through this process, one that sees the appropriation of a scientific model, method, or endeavour by a government entity for the purposes of improving or expanding a nation's position internationally, be it through new avenues of trade, new resources, or new territories. This imperial science is then a tool through which the interests of the nation are expressed, science in service to the state used as a justification for expenditure and investigation, in the case of the 18th century, around the globe. The information brought back by these voyages of scientific discovery, from their descriptions of flora and fauna to their analysis of coastal geography, all helped to inform the ever expanding picture of continents and coastlines half way around the world. These reports would form the backbone of subsequent colonization efforts, and secure the central role of scientific exploration from the return of the *Endeavour* on to the dawn of the nineteenth century.

As the powers of Europe ventured ever deeper into the Pacific over the course of the eighteenth century, they were at once breaking with and carrying on a tradition of expansion that had begun with Columbus in 1492. Through scientific inquiry, these expeditions maintained the earlier spirit of contact and colonization without bringing settlers in their wake; colonization followed in the next century. This imperialism through science would have a profound impact on

¹² Young, *Postcolonialism*, 15-19; Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 36-40.

the way Europeans viewed the Pacific and its peoples, one as a relatively uninhabited expanse and the other a set of cultures quite unlike what had been understood by the West to be civilization.¹³

This impression of the Pacific was first described by the crews of expeditionary voyages and preserved in their journals and letters, with these original descriptions of encounter highlighting the reciprocal nature of those exchanges. This effect of the visited upon the visitor, be it in art or linguistics, botany or ethnography, helps to demonstrate the dynamic nature that existed between all parties during this period of discovery. Striking a balance between these reciprocal impacts of contact provides insight into the later development of certain island chains as points of refuge more agreeable to periods of prolonged anchorage. From these points grew an air of familiarity that was further supplemented through the release of livestock and fowl, as well as the planting of gardens to provide fresh and familiar supplies over the course of a voyage. This introduction of fauna and flora, the extended dialogue and trade all furthered the development of various Pacific ports of call into unique sites of exchange between contrasting societies. While less colonial than literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt defines, these “contact zones” were the beginning of a push outwards, away from Europe, to those ill-defined regions of the globe in search of trade, raw materials, and territory by the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁴

Natural Philosophers at Sea

For over two centuries, the idea of the British explorer has been shaped and reshaped, molded into something akin to a mythic hero, a romantic approximation of reality. Many audiences love reading about heroes, and authors love to write about them. Born out of the travel narratives

¹³ Young, *Postcolonialism*, 5-6; Thomas, “The Age of Empire in the Pacific,” in *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, eds. David Armitage and Alison Bashford (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 77; Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2, 5, 8; Joyce Chaplin, “The Pacific Before Empire, 1500-1800,” in *Pacific Histories*, 68.

¹⁴ Anne Salmond, *Aphrodite’s Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 459-464; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6, 9.

printed for the invested audiences of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, early scholarly efforts on the topic lean heavily on this traditional, story heavy narrative. Focusing on one ship or one captain, these biographies often forego historical inquiry and analysis for the sake of an established narrative structure. More recent efforts have, however, returned not to the officially published accounts of discovery but instead to the original source material, the unedited journals and logbooks of the captains and naturalists themselves. This shift is owed, in large part, to New Zealand scholar and Cook biographer, J.C. Beaglehole.¹⁵

Though his *Exploration of the Pacific* and *The Life of Captain James Cook* constitute key works of both Pacific history and the history of exploration more broadly, it is J.C. Beaglehole's ambitious undertaking, the transcription of James Cook's journals, which has helped to foster a resurgence of scholarship around British naval exploration. Published with the aid of the Hakluyt Society, these annotated journals chart the progress of the voyage not only through the Pacific but through a changing official record, from handwritten entries to a polished narrative ready for print. Through the Hakluyt Society's publications, materials pertaining to voyages and expeditions of all sizes and degrees of notoriety are being consolidated and made available for study and analysis. Be it James Cook's descriptions of Botany Bay or George Vancouver's negotiations with the Spanish commandant at Nootka Sound, Johann Reinhold Forster's impressions on the necessity of scientific expeditions or Matthew Flinders' encounter with a French expedition in the Great Australian Bight, these transcribed manuscripts offer a more nuanced, yet grounded, understanding

¹⁵ O.H.K. Spate, "Seamen and Scientists: The Literature of the Pacific, 1697-1798," in *Nature in its Greatest Extent: Western Science in the Pacific*, ed. Roy MacLeod and Philip F. Rehbock (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 19; Dane Kennedy, "British Exploration in the Nineteenth Century: A Historical Survey," *History Compass* 5/6 (2007): 1879-1881.

of these voyages of discovery, their scientific and political implications, and their influence on future expeditions.¹⁶

In refocusing the narrative away from the official, polished, record and back towards a more candid register, a balanced interpretation has developed in recent scholarship that sees historical actors less as the national heroes they became, using their own writings produce a more rounded, realized figure around which an argument is formed. More than a humanizing effort, these histories have helped to highlight the reciprocal influences of voyages of discovery between European explorers and Pacific Islanders, between island cultures and British conceptions of the natural world. The role of Pacific Islanders during this period of European expansion has thus been brought to the fore in regional histories of the Pacific. Far from passive observers, Islanders filled key positions as translators, navigators, and ambassadors on British voyages of discovery. Through the work of scholars such as Nicholas Thomas and David Turnbull, a sense of historical agency is increasingly found within the scholarship of exploration and discovery.¹⁷

In moving away from the official accounts of a voyage and back to the journals and manuscripts themselves however, the high-hagiographic portrayal of British captains amongst certain communities they encountered became cause for much debate. Chief among these, the myth of James Cook's god-like status on the Island of Hawai'i and its role in his death, forms the basis of a back and forth between anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere. Though rooted in description from Cook's own crew, and even Cook himself, of the pomp and ritual that surrounded the navigator's arrival at Kealakekua Bay, for Obeyesekere the story rings too familiar

¹⁶ "Objectives and Rules of the Hakluyt Society," Hakluyt Society, accessed September 6, 2017, www.hakluyt.com/hac-soc-objectives.htm

¹⁷ For an example of this scholarship, see David Turnbull, "Boundary-Crossings, Cultural Encounters and Knowledge Spaces in Early Australia," in *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820*, ed. Simon Schaffer et.al. Nicholas Thomas, *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 3; Nicholas Thomas, "The Age of Empire in the Pacific," 78; J.C. Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1974), 346, 521.

to a Cortés or a Pizarro to be wholly accurate. Criticizing Sahlins' *Islands of History* for falling to the simplistic and overused trope without fully acknowledging an increasingly irate and violent Cook, Obeyesekere sees Sahlins and the numerous authors before him favouring an image of the "explorer cum civilizer" who so embodied the Enlightenment. Indeed, while this idealized colonial figure may have emerged from such a preferential treatment, Sahlins highlights the degree to which the event that was European contact was not only understood and interpreted through existing cultural contexts but how the foundation of that context began to change in the wake of sustained contact and exchange, retooling and reordering the structure of Hawaiian society in response to this new reality. In effect, Sahlins acknowledges and reasserts historical agency to those Obeyesekere argues have been underrepresented and whose points of view have been subsumed in favour of the enlightened ideal that surrounded James Cook.¹⁸

The motives of the writers of exploration literature has also been questioned by scholars. Often these expeditions were portrayed as enterprises of scientific merit, and the naturalists at the fore of these endeavours as "benign, often homely [figures] ... simultaneously innocent and imperial." By contrast, Mary Louise Pratt views the naturalists of the late eighteenth century as strategic characters carrying back "commercially exploitable knowledge" of the Pacific.¹⁹ Based on the travel narratives produced, this analysis of advantageous individuals 'exploiting' their knowledge of the Pacific need not be limited to naturalists. Pratt's interpretation of pragmatic personal motivations, however, whatever they were, draws attention to the naturalists' trade off between risks and rewards. Beyond the obvious risk to ones own life, naturalists ran the risk of

¹⁸ Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3, 5-12; Glyndwr Williams, *The Death of Captain Cook: A Hero Made and Unmade* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2008), 159-162; Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 38-42; Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 138-147.

¹⁹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 33-34.

losing standing among their peers during their years at sea, missing opportunity for publication or professional advancement in the pursuit of new discoveries. Those new discoveries, however, would be theirs to bring to the learned of Europe once their findings were published. Less interested in the role of the state, Pratt's generalization of both European naturalists and European nations in demonstrating this risk-reward dynamic in undertaking voyages of scientific discovery is worthy of note.

Historical discussions about the relationship between science and the state with regard to exploration and discovery are often simplified in the extreme. As a consequence of the traditional interpretation to the era of Pacific discovery, the narrative of exploration is the core, with the state's interests and particularly the scientific inquiry of the voyages included as little more than extraneous detail that serve to reinforce the expedition's discoveries. Increased attention, through the work of Historians such as John Gascoigne, Alan Frost, and David Mackay has however begun to illustrate the extent to which Britain's Royal Society advised the government on matters of science and exploration in the late eighteenth century.²⁰ Whereas this attention is focused on governments and institutions such as the Royal Society, this thesis serves to highlight the role of the captains and their supernumeraries in their capacity as explorers and their changing role within an expanding empire. Unified in the pursuit of scientific inquiry, the efforts of these avatars of western science increasingly found their efforts coopted for the purposes of the state in a manner that not only impacted government policy, but played a profound role in the development of Indigenous societies in the decades following European contact. As international competition in exploration began to stress the benefits of science, these voyages became both a matter of national

²⁰ Chief among these works include *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture and Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State, and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution* by John Gascoigne, "New South Wales as *Terra Nullius*: The British Denial of Aboriginal Land Rights" by Alan Frost, and *In the Wake of Cook: Exploration, Science and Empire, 1780-1801* by David Mackay.

prestige and of potential strategic gain, something their captains became acutely aware of by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Rising to prominence in the waning years of the Enlightenment, Pacific exploration was arguably something of a swan song for the intellectual movement. Representations and reproductions of these discoveries, through art and text, drew attention and recognition to both the startling differences and subtle similarities between peoples and cultures that required explanation. Be it the relation between the Maori and Tahitians or the later integration of European custom into Hawaiian society, these voyages raised questions as to the nature of societies and man and the development of both in the face of new realities. While perhaps somewhat romanticised, scientific exploration to the Pacific combined those empirical pursuits of natural philosophy with a free exchange of discovered knowledge and provided a need for philosophical discussions and societal critiques.²¹ It is this contact between Europe and the ‘extra-European world,’ this cross-cultural exchange, that caused Enlightenment intellectuals to become entranced with the Pacific world.

That is not to say, however, that this exchange was limited simply to being between European and non-European societies. In working alongside the supernumeraries, captains and crews gained new insights into the workings of nature and the analysis of its productions. While this reciprocal exchange is reflected in their journals and narratives, the influence among an expedition’s artists is more easily recognizable. More than this, in working closely with natural philosophers, a degree of artistry found its way into the biological sciences, botany and zoology in particular during this period of exploration. While perhaps somewhat obscure, this notion of the Pacific as an entity engaged in a reciprocal, if somewhat one sided, relationship with the naturalists

²¹ Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 23-24; Philip J. Stern, “Exploration and Enlightenment,” in *Reinterpreting Exploration: The West in the World*, ed. Dane Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 54-59; Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: The Remarkable Story of Captain Cook’s Encounters in the South Seas* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), xix-9.

there to study its composition, the artists sent to illustrate its sights, and the navigators plotting its coastlines is something this thesis will highlight.²² It was through this passive adoption of techniques and ideas, of modes of thinking that the science of the West was introduced to the Pacific.

Thesis Outline

Focusing on the journals and written materials of naturalists and naval captains, this thesis relies heavily on literary criticism to serve as a foundation for analysis and discussion of the text. The shifting narrative of exploration, from coastal encounter to printed account, serves to illustrate the evolving understanding of the Pacific, its peoples, and its cultures as voyages of discovery continued their study of the ocean and its productions. In doing so, this thesis demonstrates the development of the Pacific as a region for European colonization through the scientific collection and evaluation. As a result of both the sources used and the question asked, this approach, and therefore this thesis, does not wholly reflect the reality of encounter and exchange but rather one half of that equation and the ways in which Britain's captains and naturalists sought to explain and contextualize the new reality they found themselves in.²³

Including this introduction and a conclusion, this thesis has been divided into five chapters. The following chapter will focus on the three voyage of James Cook, from departure of the *Endeavour* in 1768 to the return of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* in 1780. First and foremost, these expeditions will be examined for their use of scientific inquiry and accomplished illustrators in establishing a standard of science based imperialism that would be emulated for the remainder of

²² Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 1-6; Noel Elizabeth Currie, *Constructing Colonial Discourse: Captain Cook at Nootka* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 46-53.

²³ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 57-69.

the century. Moreover, these voyages and their participants will be scrutinized for their role in influencing the later settlement and commoditization of the Pacific. More than any other, these three voyages established a precedent, the standard for all other South Seas exploration. Journals and logbooks written during these voyages were later reviewed and used as a guide for future sites of expansion. Their later publication garnering public support for similar endeavours. Once returned to Britain these men, and in particular the naturalist Joseph Banks, served to advise, plan, and coordinate future scientific expeditions. The earliest and most scientific of the expeditions being examined in this thesis, the three voyages of James Cook opened the South Seas for British navigators and naturalists, and demonstrated its potential resources to the nation.

Chapter three will center on the 1791 voyage of George Vancouver to the Pacific Northwest. Contemporaneous with the settlement of New South Wales, Vancouver's extended survey serves as a case study of imperial perceptions during a period of the empire's physical expansion into the Pacific. Beyond this expansion, Vancouver and the naturalist Archibald Menzies helped to gather and expand previously acquired crops throughout the more frequented ports of call in a basic replication of ongoing British programs of botanic acclimatization. At a time when this acclimatization project, under the supervision of Sir Joseph Banks, was in its earliest stages, the surveys brought new climates and new natural productions to the attention of the man who would orchestrate much of this imperial project.²⁴ Developing these new sites for transplanting everything from citrus fruits to cabbages, the Pacific increasingly evolved into the seedbank of the British empire. Vancouver's previous experience with Pacific exploration, its scientific and imperial aims, provides an opportunity to study the perception of such endeavours

²⁴ Britain would undertake a practice of acclimatization into the nineteenth century, transplanting beneficial crops from around the empire to boost production. For more see Michael A. Osborne, "Acclimatizing the World: A History of Paradigmatic Colonial Science," *Osiris* 15(2000), 135-151.

from the position of someone with previous experience. Moreover, Britain's newly strained relationship with the Spanish empire over the claims to the Pacific Northwest, culminating in the Nootka Crisis of 1790, helps to solidify the expedition's imperial purpose. A conflict that highlights the importance of consistent survey and exploration in supporting territorial claims in the eighteenth century, Vancouver's voyage demonstrates the impact of scientific exploration in establishing the limitations of a Pacific empire.²⁵

The fourth chapter will round out the frantic period of Pacific naval exploration with Matthew Flinders' circumnavigation of the southern continent between 1801 and 1803. This voyage happened after a decade of British settlement and expansion in New Holland. Its aims were scientific yet with a clear imperial purpose. Boasting the newest scientific equipment and outfitted with the most complete contingent of supernumeraries, the *Investigator* was the most scientifically competent expedition since the second of Cook's three voyages. The voyage of the *Investigator* definitively established, cartographically, the continent and its coastline, and gave rise, officially, to the name 'Australia.' Combining scientific inquiry with the threat of French expansion into the region, the voyage of the *Investigator* and the fate of her captain provides insight into the complex relationship between science and the state in the first decade of the nineteenth century.²⁶ The fifth and final chapter will serve to highlight apparent trends and provide a conclusive analysis of this thesis.

European Encroachment of the Pacific

In 1758, as the Seven Year's War carried on across the globe, the universities and learned societies of Europe awaited the arrival of a phenomenon not seen in 1639, the transit of Venus.

²⁵ For more see Derek Pethick, *The Nootka Connection: Europe and the Northwest Coast, 1790-1795* (Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), 135-143.

²⁶ David Mackay, *In the Wake of Cook: Exploration, Science and Empire, 1780-1801* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 3-4

Offering the chance to expand the field of astronomy and calculate the scale of the Solar System, this observation required a concerted, cooperative effort to succeed. To better achieve this aim, multiple observations from around the globe were required, a method not wholly conducive to a period of global war. War led to fragmentation, not cooperation. While one hundred and twenty-two observations were made from sixty-two separate locations, unforeseen variables hindered the production of favourable results. Nevertheless, the many attempts by different people from different nations to chart the transit established an avenue of international competition, science. This form of competition, sought after the war to solidify or even advance a nation's strategic position, would find new arenas to prove superiority. Britain's less than optimal response to the 1761 transit was not enough to cause the effort that was made in anticipation of the 1769 transit.²⁷

While Britain's apparent interest in the Pacific, evident by the circumnavigations of George Anson and, later, John Byron, were to some signs of imperial intentions, for France, dispossessed of much of her overseas territory and fearful of Britain's newfound prominence, the edges of the globe held hope for rectifying the new imperial disparity. Shortly after the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Louis Antoine de Bougainville began planning a new colonial venture in the South Atlantic. Strategically situated at the entrance of the Magellanic Straits, as barren as they had been when first discovered in 1690, the Falkland Islands were, critically, among Spain's colonial possessions. Undeterred, Bougainville sailed from France, reaching the islands and founding the Port Louis settlement in January 1764. Responding in kind, Britain, by way of one of Byron's store ships, founded the settlement at Port Egmont in 1765.²⁸

²⁷ Allan Chapman, "The Transits of Venus," *Endeavour* Vol. 22, No. 4 (1998), 148-149; William Sheehan and John Westfall, *The Transits of Venus* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 144-152, 162-165.

²⁸ John Dunmore, *French Explorers in the Pacific: Volume I - The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 58-64.

By maintaining the colony, the Falklands became a source of contention with the Spanish for nearly a decade. Ultimately surrendering their claim to the islands, the Spanish demonstrated the fragility their position when “contention for a few spots of earth, which, in the deserts of the ocean had almost escaped human notice” could threaten the “whole system of European Empire.”²⁹ Writing in 1770, Samuel Johnson’s words are almost prophetic with regard to the exploratory fervor that would soon begin. The Falklands action of 1765, then, served as Britain’s first test of Spain’s centuries old hegemony over the Pacific and its western approaches. In doing so, the ocean and everything that lay hidden behind the Spanish Empire for so long was open for rediscovery in a new age of science and study. The techniques and methods of navigation, of natural history, and of astronomy that had taken root during the Enlightenment were brought to bear on the Pacific in a new vessel, a partnership between science and the state that saw study and analysis as central components of discovery.³⁰

²⁹ Samuel Johnson, *Thoughts on the Late Transactions Respecting Falkland’s Islands* (London: T. Cadell, 1771), 1-2.

³⁰ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2004), 327-329; Nicholas Tracy, *Navies, Deterrence, and American Independence: Britain and Seapower in the 1760s and 1770s* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 96-99.

Chapter Two
*'By Cook's Example Taught'*³¹
Scientific Prelude to Empire, 1768-1780

November 15th - At daylight, Tahiti, an island which must for ever remain classical to the voyager in the South Sea, was in view. At a distance the appearance was not attractive. The luxuriant vegetation of the lower part could not yet be seen, and as the clouds rolled past, the wildest and most precipitous peaks showed themselves towards the centre of the island.³²

- *The Voyage of the Beagle*, Charles Darwin (1839)

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.³³

- *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1798)

In the period following the Seven Years War, as science grew to prominence as a mode of international competition, European nations looked outwards once more for new lands and new resources. While violence, or the threat thereof, was ever present, in this period of Pacific exploration science became the primary method of establishing an imperial presence over the far off regions of the globe. In contrast to the power exercised through coercive force, observation and scientific description “exercise quite another kind of power, milder, subtler, often benign in its intentions, yet possessed none the less of its own significance,”³⁴ by using language, methods, and techniques to superimpose specialized, often foreign, order to the peoples, places, and productions they describe. While those who undertook this observation perceived their actions in a less imperial light, this scientific analysis became an increasingly critical method by which Western Europe established, and later expanded, control over the lands of the Pacific. The three voyages of Captain

³¹John O’Keefe and William Shields, *A Short Account of the New Pantomime called Omai, or, A Trip Round the World* (London: T. Cadell, 1785).

³²Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son, 1937), 407.

³³Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (London: Zodiac Books, 1949), 11.

³⁴Ian Donaldson and Tamsin Donaldson, “First Sight” in *Seeing the First Australians*, ed. Ian Donaldson and Tamsin Donaldson, (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 15.

James Cook, between 1768 and 1780, began this process, identifying and informing the future development of Britain's empire in the Pacific.

Establishing the model for future empirical, imperial, expeditions, the Cook voyages were critical in designating the scientific, observational, and aesthetic methods that grounded the Pacific in a set of relatable, exploitable, European contexts. Constructed and refined over a decade of circumnavigating the globe, this language drew on past experiences, combining observation with suggestion from leading figures. In doing so, a pattern of contact and investigation was established that brought Europe's perceived understanding of the Pacific out of the speculative and into the ordered categories of scientific inquiry. While not itself imperial, this scientific language bears the hallmarks of its regional development. Through the process of scientific exploration these regional practices were granted new modes of employment that expanded their use out of traditional borders for the first time, effacing and superseding local knowledge. Shaped as much by the voyages as the voyagers, this language shifted subtly in its usage over the course of the decade. As the designs of an expedition changed from one voyage to the next, so too did the voyager's perceptions and with it the uses of this scientific language.³⁵

Te Waipounamu / New Zealand

“[Though] made with all possible care and accuracy,” the data collected during the 1761 Transit of Venus was not enough for astronomers “to determine with certainty the real quantity of the sun's parallax.” However, as the British astronomer Thomas Hornsby reminded the Royal Society, “[in] this uncertainty, the astronomers of the present age are peculiarly fortunate in being

³⁵ Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, 128, 133-134, 153-156.

able so soon to have recourse to another transit of Venus in 1769.”³⁶ Identifying possible locations from which this forthcoming transit could be observed, Hornsby concluded that “the great South Sea, where it does not certainly appear that there is any land” encompassed the greatest portion of observable positions.³⁷ Hoping to more accurately fix the longitude of set points throughout the globe through this solar parallax calculation and using Hornsby’s analysis of the transit’s path, two years of discussion and planning among the members of the Royal Society began, from where the observations should take place to who those observers should be.³⁸

[The] passage of the planet Venus over the disc of the Sun, which will happen on the 3rd of June in the year 1769, is a phenomenon that must, if the same be accurately observed in proper places, contribute greatly to the improvement of Astronomy, on which Navigation so much depends. ... [The] British nation has been justly celebrated in the learned world, for their knowledge of astronomy, in which they are inferior to no nation upon earth, ancient or modern; and it would cast dishonour upon them should they neglect to have correct observations made of this important phenomenon...³⁹

Echoing the urgency of Hornsby’s remarks and stressing the international community’s response to the upcoming transit, the Royal Society’s memorial to King George III, sent in February of 1768, played upon the pride and scientific reputation of the nation. In requesting £4,000 to outfit an expedition to the South Seas to observe the event, and the use of a ship to convey them, the Society made the first step in uniting science, exploration, and empire.

Drawn up in February, 1768, the Royal Society’s loose plans for observing the transit of Venus the following year were handed over to the Royal Navy, and worked into the comprehensive set of sailing orders given to Lieutenant James Cook at the end of July. Supplemented by the

³⁶ Thomas Hornsby, “On the Transit of Venus in 1769. To the Right Honourable The Earl of Morton, President, to the Council and Fellows of the Royal Society, This Discourse is, with All Humility, Inscribed, by Their Humble Servant, Thomas Hornsby,” *Philosophical Transactions* 55 (1765), 326-327.

³⁷ Hornsby, “On the Transit of Venus in 1769,” 334; See also Sheehan and Westfall, *The Transits of Venus*, 164

³⁸ Charles E. Herdendorf, “Captain James Cook and the Transits of Mercury and Venus,” *The Journal of Pacific History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 1986): 39-41, 44-48; James Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 513-524

³⁹ Memorandum from the President, Council and Fellows of the Royal Society to George III, 15 February 1768, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1768-1820, Volume I: Letters 1768-1782*, ed. Neil Chambers (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 2.

information provided by the newly returned *Dolphin*, Tahiti was chosen as the *Endeavour*'s destination ahead of the transit of Venus the following June. More than a strictly scientific affair, they provided instruction regarding what should be noted along the journey, what routes to take, and, if possible, to lay claim over any lands they may discover. Included among Cook's additional, more secretive, packet of instructions, this order of possession came with the hope of discovering the southern continent long theorized to exist somewhere in the great Pacific expanse.⁴⁰

In searching for this geographic spectre, the crew of the *Endeavour* was instructed to carefully "observe the nature of the soil and the products there of; ... to observe the genius, temper, disposition and number of the natives ... [and] with the consent of the natives, to take possession of convenient situations in the country in the name of the King of Great Britain."⁴¹ The more empirical of these aims were aided by the involvement of the young, ambitious, and above all wealthy, botanist Joseph Banks. At his expense, Daniel Solander, naturalist and student of Carl Linnaeus, Sydney Parkinson, botanical draughtsman, Herman Spöring, naturalist, and Alexander Buchan, landscape painter, found themselves among the *Endeavour*'s supernumeraries. This position, for Banks and Solander in particular, would have a profound impact on not only their work but their future endeavours and those of the empire as well. Venturing into regions "Intirely unknown to a Naturalist[, with] the South Sea at least [having] never been visited by any man of Science in any Branch of Literature," for Banks the voyage provided no "finer [an] opportunity for the Exercise of [his] Poor Abilities than Ever man before had."⁴² And it was through this

⁴⁰ Salmond, *Aphrodite's Island*, 86; Howard T. Fry, *Alexander Dalrymple (1737-1808) and the Expansion of British Trade* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 113-119; Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, 124-127.

⁴¹ Hawke to Cook, 30 July 1768, in *The Hawke Papers: A Selection, 1743-1774*, ed. Ruddock F. Mackay (Aldershot: Scholar Press for the Navy Records Society, 1990), 427.

⁴² J.C. Beaglehole, "Introduction: The Young Banks," in *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771*, vol. 1 (Sydney: the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in association with Angus and Robertson, 1962), 22-30; Joseph Banks to William Philp Perrin, 16 August 1768, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir*

capacity that Banks would begin to develop a program that would spread British influence throughout the globe.

The *Endeavour* sailed away from the British Isles in August of 1768. Its crew was a mix of experienced seamen, Royal Marines, and civilian men of science, who possessed emerging sense of national purpose. Combining analytical, scientific observation with Britain's seapower, "the very scheme" William Philp Perrin wrote to Banks, "is for the Honour of the Nation ... we are called upon to do something of this Kind, for ... I think Eng:^d has hardly made sufficient Advances of late years to support her ancient Character."⁴³ Echoing the sentiments of the Royal Society's memorandum to the King, emphasizing Britain's celebrated place as the foremost nation in the fields of astronomy and navigation, and the possible decline of Britain's position among nations with regard to the "Improvement of Natural Knowledge," this association between scientific discovery and national pride became increasingly central to the identity of the expedition.⁴⁴

This scientific investigation, over the course of the *Endeavour*'s three year voyage, made, in broad strokes, substantial advancements in geography, natural history, and anthropology through survey, collection and observation. While hindered at times by weather, terrain, or political obstruction, European science, through its avatars on board the *Endeavour*, was aided in its expansion through periods of prolonged encounter and exchange with Pacific Islanders. These encounters set the stage for cooperation, waxing and waning with the shifting relations between groups and individuals, between Islanders and sailors. At first facilitated by those crewmembers

Joseph Banks, 26; Joseph Banks to Thomas Falconer End of March/early April 1768, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, 5.

⁴³ William Philp Perrin to Joseph Banks, 15 April 1768, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, 7.

⁴⁴ Memorandum From the President, Council and Fellows of the Royal Society to George III, 15 February 1768, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, 3; Harold B. Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks, 1743-1820* (London: The British Museum (Natural History), 1988), 74-75.

who had served on the *Dolphin*, the *Endeavour* was later aided in their expedition by the Tahitian navigator/translator/priest Tupaia. While these encounters, the basis for much of the new knowledge collected by Banks and Solander, gave insight into the traditions and customs of Tahiti, and Polynesia more broadly, they brought some debate as to the veracity of Tupaia's maritime knowledge and how it related to the particular form of European survey that was underway.⁴⁵

In truth, much of Tupaia's role aboard the *Endeavour* fell into question, not only in connection to European versus Polynesian understandings of navigation, but to the usefulness of the man himself. Cook was eventually convinced as to Tupaia's knowledge "of the Geography of the Islands situated in these seas, their produce and the religion laws and customs of the inhabitants ... and was the likeliest person to answer our purpose," and thus the benefits provided in navigating waters unknown to him.⁴⁶ Moreover, with Tupaia's aid the navigator formulated a list of some 74 islands around Tahiti and their general bearing, a great aid in their search for the southern continent. Banks, however, while just as convinced as to the "benefit he will be of to this ship, as well as what he may be if another should be sent into these seas," wanted to "keep [Tupaia] as a curiosity" in the same manner as "[his] neighbours [did] lions and tygers."⁴⁷ For Banks, the *Endeavour* voyage was his grand tour. Unlike the European excursions of "Every [other] blockhead ... [his] Grand tour [was] one round the whole globe."⁴⁸ In joining the *Endeavour*, Banks was not only helping to bring the order of Linnaean taxonomy or European notions of latitude and longitude to the South Seas, he was bringing the unknown back to England. His sense of adventurous prerogative, collecting specimens and curiosities, stories and illustrations of far-

⁴⁵ Anne Salmond, "Voyaging Worlds," in *The Hakluyt Society: Annual Lecture 2007*, 8-15.

⁴⁶ James Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 117.

⁴⁷ Joseph Banks, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1761-1771*, Vol. 1, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Sydney: the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in association with Angus and Robertson, 1962), 312-313.

⁴⁸ Edward Smith, *The Life of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society: With Some Notices of His Friends and Contemporaries* (London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1911), 16; Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, 16-17; Beaglehole, "Introduction: The Young Banks," 23.

flung antipodes is indicative of how Banks perceived not only his role in the voyage but the voyage itself. His perceptions, when contrasted with those of Cook, appear almost naive, and belie the future importance the voyage would have for Banks.⁴⁹

Unlike the ship's civilian cohort, Captain Cook had a series of instructions to follow. As the *Endeavour* sailed into Matavai Bay in April 1769, the transit of Venus, and thus the voyage's primary objective, was still a month and a half away. Securing permission for the use of the high ground on the bay's eastern edge, the aptly named Fort Venus was constructed well in advance to provide for the needs of the observers. Cognisant of the failed 1761 observations, Cook, Green, and the other scientific gentlemen prepared for the upcoming event. They dispersed additional parties "to other parts to Observe for fear [they] should fail." Their fears proved unfounded, however, as "the Air was perfectly clear, ... [offering] every advantage [they] could desire in Observing the whole of the passage."⁵⁰ From the data gathered at Tahiti, together with observations made at multiple spots around the world, the size of the Solar System and a more accurate measure of longitude could both be readily calculated. The observation successful, thoughts began to turn towards future discoveries, by way of those "circumstances [Cook] may judge the most eligible way of returning home."⁵¹ This latitude was utilized to its fullest in producing a route back to England most conducive to the completion of his orders through the unexplored South Pacific.

In doing so, Cook developed and refined two separate plans of discovery. One saw the *Endeavour* heading first South to the islands of New Zealand then West into the unknown and towards the Dutch discoveries of New Holland and Van Diemen's Land. The other, "what [Cook] most wish'd," would serve to prove or disprove the existence of the Southern Continent, and would

⁴⁹ Neil Chambers, *Joseph Banks and the British Museum* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 5-10; Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 290-294.

⁵⁰ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 97.

⁵¹ Hawke to Cook, 30 July 1768, *The Hawke Papers*, 427.

form the basis of his second voyage.⁵² Before the *Endeavour* could begin their lengthy southern cruise back to England however, they had to contend with the presence of European competition in the Pacific.

Though the *Endeavour* had been hindered by European colonial authorities early in the voyage, news of two vessels arriving at Tahiti the year before provided direct evidence of competition in the Pacific. While aware of Bougainville's earlier voyage, the colours identified by the Tahitians indicated a Spanish origin instead. These Europeans, it was said, brought with them the venereal disease that had begun to spread throughout the island. Following the explorers throughout the southern Pacific, the disease became a symbol of the unintended destruction of the perceived eden that was Tahiti, and a concrete disruption which could be attributed to a competing power. More than any perceived threat of competition, the presence of venereal disease in the South Pacific began to influence the descriptions and discussions of Tahitian, and later Polynesian, society and values in a manner more subtle but no less relevant than any obstacles that were faced in the collection and description of Pacific flora and fauna.⁵³ While those challenges were not found solely in the expansive blue of the Pacific alone nor were they wholly related to the fields of natural history and astronomy, rather roadblocks of a political nature plagued the *Endeavour* at every foreign port of call, and served as a reminder of the tumultuous period which had so recently held Europe's attention.

Troubles with the Portuguese authority at Rio de Janeiro in November 1768 had already made Cook cautious of inquiring Europeans in and around the Pacific, and with the presence of

⁵² Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 272; Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter J. Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era: Bodies of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9-12, 17-23.

⁵³ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 98-100; Rod Edmond, "Island Transactions: Encounter and Disease in the South Pacific," in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity A. Nussbaum (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 253-258.

non-English ships at Tahiti, even more so. Encountering no other ships en route to New Zealand and later the eastern shore of New Holland however, the crew of the *Endeavour* instead fell into a routine of survey and study.⁵⁴ The unknown character of their discoveries, be they flowering plants, grasses, or marine life, were of great value to the imperial project that Banks and Solander, two Fellows of the Royal Society, were undertaking. Though several years removed from the gardens at Kew, the *Endeavour*'s naturalist was developing the main tenants of imperial collection and description that unified the diverse flora of the world under a single language of Linnaeus and later shifted its products around the globe for the betterment of the empire. Though once unclear or uncaring of the discoveries made by the naturalist, in the year and a half spent before the *Endeavour*'s arrival at New Holland Cook had begun to understand, or at the very least recognize the goal of his scientific supernumeraries, prompting the name of Botany Bay in recognition of the "great quantity of New Plants &c^a M^r Banks & D^r Solander collected in this place," give rise to the name Botany Bay.⁵⁵ The quantity of specimens, wholly different from any that had been encountered before, gave troubles to Solander, on whom the bulk of descriptive responsibilities fell. Though paper and ink, the naturalist's tools, were limited, the Swede's journals are rife with corrections, deletions, and false starts. Such was the nature of specimens found in the South Pacific.⁵⁶

"D^r Solander [sitting] at the Cabbin table describing, [Banks] at [his] Bureau Journalizing, between [them] hangs a large bunch of sea weed, upon the table lays ... wood and barnacles"⁵⁷

Far less romantic than scouring the lands and the seas for specimens, it was through this type of

⁵⁴ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 22-29, 429-430; Joseph Banks to William Philp Perrin, 1 December 1768, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, 35.

⁵⁵ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 310.

⁵⁶ Daniel Solanders journals, complete with specimen lists and a rough Tahitian vocabulary are now located in the Library and Archives of the Natural History Museum. *Pisces & Anim. caetera Oceano Pacifici* - 44NHM ALMA; Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 29-32; Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 44.

⁵⁷ Banks, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks*, 396.

scene that the science of Linnaeus was ultimately applied to the Pacific. This science and, by extension, this curiosity that was implicitly connected to the voyage was indicative of the early manner by which Britain approached the Pacific. Between their descriptions and Sydney Parkinson's sketches, the Pacific's natural history was being recorded not simply for posterity but for future use, be it a new source of food or an abundant resource of shipbuilding materials, and all of it done ahead of Britain's European rivals. In doing so, Banks and Solander brought their specimens out of their reality and into a foreign environment of catalogued order, fostering a sense of foreign yet known that belies their original context. Through this policy of scientific inquiry, then, the *Endeavour* spread European order to the scattered isles of the South Pacific.

Cook, "confident [the eastern coast of New Holland] was never seen or visited [sic] by any European before ... Notwithstanding[ing] ... took possession of the whole Eastern Coast from [38° South] down to this place [Possession Island] by the name of *New South Wales*."⁵⁸ A profound moment for Britain and the Pacific, the act signaled the end of the *Endeavour*'s voyage through the unknown Pacific. The observations made during the voyage along the coast of New South Wales, from its coastal features to the behaviour of the continent's inhabitants, its flora and its fauna, would shape the continent's future. The descriptions brought back by Banks, Cook, Solander, and others painted an image of a land that was vast, uncultivated, and sparsely populated (Figure II). These reports, in combination with the numerous specimens and descriptions collected, would form the basis of Europe's future interest in the continent. While his personal experience would play a significant role in that future, Banks was, as with the acts of possession in New Zealand eight months earlier, focused on matters more immediate to his situation.⁵⁹ Cook focused

⁵⁸ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 387-388.

⁵⁹ Banks, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks*, 461; Joseph Banks, *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks, 1761-1771*, Vol. 2, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Sydney: the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales in association with Angus and Robertson, 1962), 109-110. For Cook's take on the possession of New Zealand on 31,

on his orders, Banks his adventures, in spite of their shared experience in the South Pacific, they remained fundamentally at odds as they began their extended voyage back to England.



Figure II: James Cook, A Chart of New Holland, 1770
http://gutenberg.net.au/MapsAndCharts-sea-images/22_Cook.jpg

When the *Endeavour* began her two month respite in the Dutch East Indies, rumblings and rumor in England feared her lost at sea. Though letters had been sent from Batavia and again from the Cape, the vessel’s return was still suspect a week from the English coast.⁶⁰ Upon reaching the

January 1770, see Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 242-243; Alan Frost, *Botany Bay: The Real Story* (Collingwood, VIC: Black Inc., 2012), 194-199.

⁶⁰ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 476. For some discussion on the nature of this speculation, see J.C. Beaglehole, “Introduction,” in *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery: The Voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771*, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), clxv-clxvi.

Downs on 13, July 1771, Cook, Banks, and Solander left the *Endeavour* for London. Rumor of the voyage and its discoveries gave way to accounts, official or otherwise. Speculation, however, remained, “for such [is] the disposission,” writes Cook, “of men in general in these voyages that they are seldom content with the hardships and dangers which will naturally occur ... magnifying the most trifling accidents and Circumstances to the greatest hardships.”⁶¹ Conflating the particulars of the voyage, the dramas and dangers encountered over the three years, the press celebrated the endeavour and the contributions of one man in particular, Joseph Banks.

Out of the *Endeavour*'s 1,051 day voyage came over a thousand species of plants, birds, fish, and mammals unknown to Europe as well as descriptions and illustrations of foreign lands and customs, and collections of art, arms, and tools from throughout the Pacific. At the centre of this was Banks.⁶² Lionized in the press as the driving force behind the voyage's success, Banks, and at times Solander, were responsible for making “more curious Discoveries in the way of Astronomy, and Natural History, than at any one Time have been presented to the learned World for these fifty years past.”⁶³ Opening a continent to exploration, study, and potential settlement, along with the interest shown by George III in the materials brought back by the *Endeavour*, “whose patronage ... cannot fail of being an additional motive to the learned persons to undertake their second voyage the ensuing spring,” speculation over a possible return to the Pacific ran rampant.⁶⁴

Tongatapu / The Friendly Isles

In the wake of the *Endeavour*'s reception, speculations arose over the possibility of another voyage to the South Seas. In writing the postscript to his journal of the *Endeavour*, James Cook

⁶¹ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 461.

⁶² Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks*, 550; Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, 273.

⁶³ *Public Advisor*, 7 August 1771, in Appendix VII, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, ed. Beaglehole, 651.

⁶⁴ *Westminster Journal*, 24-31 August 1771, in Appendix VII, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 652.

expanded on the plan of study he had devised in Tahiti for “the most feasible Method of making fu[r]ther discoveries in the South Sea,” a roughly defined course by which “the discoveries in the South Sea would be compleat.”⁶⁵ Greater than the first voyage in its scope, this second voyage made use of the anchorages favored by the *Endeavour* to resupply and make repairs as the two vessels, the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*, carried out their low latitude sweeps in the hope of putting to rest doubts surrounding the existence of a continent in the South Pacific.

Building on his earlier success, perhaps somewhat bolstered by the reception he was receiving in the press, Joseph Banks began gathering a new group of scientific personnel to accompany himself and Captain Cook to the South. Larger than before, this company was to include draughtsmen, a painter, and the Astronomer/Physician Dr. James Lind, for whom Parliament provided a £4,000 grant to secure his services. Banks, while seeking to expand upon the discoveries made by the *Endeavour*, was interested in more than the products of the “Three Kingdoms of Nature,” writing to Count Lauragais in December 1771 “O! how glorious to set my heel upon the Pole! and turn myself round three hundred and sixty degrees in a second.”⁶⁶ This romanticization of the voyage and his role in it was a product of both the period and his previous experience, and was one that he would continue to foster as his role in British politics, commerce, and science grew. Banks’s involvement in the voyage of the *Resolution*, however, was to come to an abrupt end.⁶⁷

The demand placed on the *Resolution* in accommodating the supernumeraries forced the construction of an additional deck and a roundhouse for Cook, having given over use of the great cabin to Banks. Exceedingly top heavy, unsuitable for the voyage ahead, the works were ordered

⁶⁵ Cook, *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, 479.

⁶⁶ Joseph Banks to Count Lauragais, 6 December 1771, in “Appendix G,” *Sir Joseph Banks K.B., P.R.S.: The Autocrat of the Philosophers* by Hector Charles Cameron (London: The Batchworth Press, 1952), 319-320.

⁶⁷ Fulford, et al., *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era*, 33-36.

to be torn down and the *Resolution* returned to her former state. Though he had enjoyed the successes of the *Endeavour*, Banks's romantic conceptions of the forthcoming voyage and the importance of his role therein was too great. Having threatened to quit the voyage due to issues with the accommodations on several occasions, Banks removed himself and his companions from the voyage on the grounds that "the Sloop was neither roomy nor convenient enough for his purpose, nor noways proper for the Voyage."⁶⁸ The removal of nearly all scientific personnel in late May 1772 necessitated the substitution of another naturalist. Considering himself "appointed by his Majesty on the Expedition," Johann Reinhold Forster, along with his son/draughtsman Georg, made their way from London to Plymouth ahead of its July 1772 departure.⁶⁹

A Prussian scholar living in London, educated in natural history, botany, and mineralogy as well as languages and theology, Forster had, with his son, carried out an extended meteorological survey along the Volga and the Kalmuck Steppe for the Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg in 1765. Along the way, the father and son duo had established a program of study and description that would they carried over to their role on board the *Resolution*. Contentious and quick to temper, in the confines of the *Resolution* Forster found himself at odds with the crew on numerous occasions.⁷⁰ Despite his displeasure with the crew, his cabin, and, at times, the Captain, Forster, the most professional among Cook's scientific men, went beyond the "impressionable

⁶⁸ James Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook: Volume II - The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, 1772-1775*, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1961), 7; Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, 291-295.

⁶⁹ Johann Reinhold Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*, Vol. I, ed. Michael E. Hoare (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1982), 125.

⁷⁰ Michael E. Hoare, "Introduction," in *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*, Vol. I (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1982), 15-18, 20-23, 63-64.

romantic Rousseauist[s]” that came before him to “be as often as possible a shore, & to collect as many plants as lay in [his] power.”⁷¹

In the three years on board the *Resolution*, Forster was given the chance to do just that. From Tongatapu to Easter Island, Dusky Sound to the Antarctic Circle the father and son pair, accompanied by Anders Sparrman whom they had recruited at the Cape, acted as “senior representative[s] of *scientia britannica*” with Johann, the “King’s scientist,” at the head.⁷² More than a curiosities collector or specimen hunter, Forster engaged with the communities the *Resolution* encountered, at times, in a manner befitting a modern anthropologist in the field, his observations more ethnological than ethnographical. Dividing the work with Georg, the pair helped to advance the study of societies beyond their material products and into its more abstract aspects of social structure, language development, and artistry. While aboard the *Resolution*, Forster then helped to draw the study of cultures out of natural history and into a ‘science of Man’ all the while continuing the Linnaean classification of the Pacific.⁷³

Staying at anchor only long enough to make ready for another antarctic cruise or South Pacific sweep, the *Resolution*, her support ship the *Adventure*, and their men of science made great strides into the study of Polynesian culture. Aided by the addition of Mai (Omai) and Mahine (Odiddy) in September 1773, the *Resolution* and *Adventure* continued to explore the limits of the Polynesian triangle, interpreting and positing explanations for cultural variation along the way. Given time to reflect upon his initial observations, “If allmost all the customs are the same or

⁷¹ Michael E. Hoare, *The Tactless Philosopher: Johann Reinhold Forster (1729-98)*, (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1976), 97; Johann Reinhold Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*, Vol. II, ed. Michael E. Hoare (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1982), 355.

⁷² Hoare, *The Tactless Philosopher*, 78-79.

⁷³ Hoare, “Introduction”, in *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, Vol. I*, 112-113; John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 136-140; Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 130-139.

nearly so; if the language corresponds; if there is a probability of their Migration to the more remote parts, these arguments together have some weight [in] proving a relation between these Nations,” Forster would later expand upon this idea of ‘cultural adaptation’ when it came time to publish his *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World* in 1778.⁷⁴

Through the three years of near constant sailing, South of the Antarctic circle to North of the Tropic of Capricorn, the *Resolution* and, for a time, the *Adventure* searched for a continent that few believed to exist by voyage’s end. Preempting criticisms for not venturing further than 71°10’ South, Cook wrote that the “risk one runs in exploring a coast in these unknown and Icy Seas, is so very great, that I can be bold to say, that no man will ever venture farther than I have done and that the lands which may lie to the South will never be explored.” Moreover, it would have been rash “to have risked all which had been done in the Voyage” in seeking a coast “which when done would have answered no end whatever, or been of the least use either to Navigation or Geography or indeed any other Science.”⁷⁵ In a region “hardfavoured by Nature, & by no means inviting for an habitation to the human Species, ... of very little consequence to Great-Britain or any nation,” Forster claimed that the “charm is gone” from what he had previously described as “one of the most important [expeditions] in regard to the geography of the Antarctic world & of the South Sea.”⁷⁶ Victim to the romantic notions that captured Banks’s imagination too, Forster would remain embittered to the conditions and the opportunities afforded to him, uncaring of the achievements that had been accomplished. Enduring rain and snow, frozen seas and islands of ice,

⁷⁴ Johann Reinhold Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*, Vol. IV, ed. Michael E. Hoare (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1982), 634; John Gascoigne, “Cook, the Sea and Culture Contact in the Pacific,” *The Great Circle*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2004): 8, 12-13.

⁷⁵ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, 637-638.

⁷⁶ Johann Reinhold Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775*, Vol. III, ed. Michael E. Hoare (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1982), 408, 450.

separated from the *Adventure* twice, the *Resolution*'s voyage had closed, for a time, the question of a Pacific continent.

Returning to the Pacific after a year in England, the *Resolution*'s crew could provide more context to the rumors and conjecture of European competition they received in the Society Isles and New Zealand. Already having settled the issue of the 'Spanish' at Tahiti, the question shifted to other aspects of contact. The question of venereal disease arose once more, if only to be verified by "unanimous consent of the whole Nation" of Tahiti as having been communicated to the Society Isles by Bougainville.⁷⁷ Speculation of cannibalistic tendencies among New Zealand's inhabitants too were confirmed in November 1773, made even more troubling the following year when, having been separated from the *Adventure* nearly a year, the *Resolution* heard rumour of a ship lost in the strait and its crew killed, and possibly consumed. Upon witnessing such an act onboard the *Resolution*, Cook sets aside his personal feelings on cannibalism to provide an eyewitness account of a custom "handed down ... from the earliest time," once which those in Europe questioned when it was included in the published *Endeavour* journal.⁷⁸ Cook's impassive survey of cannibalism is far more analytical, more level headed than Forster's corresponding passage, a subject which "[filled his] Soul with feelings of compassion & horror."⁷⁹ For all his scientific acumen, Forster was an impressionable and sympathetic Romantic. Much like Joseph Banks during his days on the *Endeavour*, the Prussian scholar held grand aspirations for the voyage. But while Banks focused on the wonder and adventure of discovery, Forster held tight to its political power, and the role it served in building a new form of empire.

⁷⁷ Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster*, Vol. III, 348.

⁷⁸ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and the Adventure*, 292-295, 572-577.

⁷⁹ Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster*, Vol. III. 427.

The most vocal proponent of Britain's empirical program and its usefulness in developing imperial policies during the voyage came not from the officers nor the crew, but from the civilians, or rather one civilian, Johann Reinhold Forster. "The thirst of knowledge ... to be happy to find perhaps one or more substances that might be useful to mankind in general & to the Dominions of Great-Brittain in particular, were the motives that animated [him] to go on this Expedition," to find collections that would rival those brought back by the *Endeavour* and receive the acclaim of a nation as Banks had.⁸⁰ For Forster, "The great Impartiality & Justice of the English Nation is so well known & so well attested ... that she no doubt will reward one way or other Her brave Sons, who navigated these inhospitable Seas," himself included. These future accolades were under threat, in his opinion, by Cook's apparent need to remain constantly at sea, "as if envy would have it so, that lands should be discovered, but none of its productions, that if any man but [himself] makes discoveries, [his] reputation & fame would decrease in the same proportion, as that of others gets a little addition."⁸¹ Focused on his own reputation, Forster perceived Cook's actions as an ambitious, even selfish, play at fame. The captain, however, was of a more humble opinion.

In February of 1775, after two and a half years at sea and nearing the end of the *Resolution's* expedition, Cook offered some indication as to the voyage's purpose and his role therein. By circumnavigating the globe in such southerly latitudes, twice traversing the South Pacific, he "Thus [flattered himself] that the intention of the Voyage has in every respect been fully Answered, the Southern Hemisphere sufficiently explored and a final end put to the searching after a Southern Continent."⁸² The *Resolution's* voyage of discovery was, for Cook, a matter of duty, carrying out orders, orders that he had a hand in writing, in keeping with his role as Captain in the Royal Navy.

⁸⁰ Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster*, Vol. III, 438-439.

⁸¹ Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster*, Vol. IV, 578.

⁸² Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, 643.

This grounded understanding to the expedition and its aims placed Cook at odds with his naturalist, for whom the voyages were about something more. More than the knowledge that would be brought back, such expeditions were matters of honour and pride for their respectful national governments and, by extension, those who toiled away in making such discoveries. While extolling support for the nation of his employ, not uncommon in his journals, Forster stated that “no Nation has undertaken upon so extensive & noble a plan & which no Nation will in future times undertake.” Moreover,

Britannia’s glorious son’s will stand unrivalled in this arduous task: the Track of the Resolution will remain for ever an eternal & only monument of the power & greatness of the Nation, of the wisdom & attention of the Men, who are at the head of the Affairs & of the Conduct, bravery & perseverance of the people who went on this perilous & difficult Expedition.⁸³

Though Forster was certain of the praise that was to come to Britain and her sons, his concern as the *Resolution* returned to England in July 1775 was focused on his reputation. Comparing his achievements to those of Banks and Solander onboard the *Endeavour*, Forster’s anxiety for his prospective fortune and acclaim centered on the two years his predecessors had had to publish their findings. While he would come to discover they had produced no such work, the naturalist’s worries over his own future was not altogether unwarranted.

Immediately following the return of the *Resolution* it was Cook, and his geographic contributions, who was lionized, not the foreign naturalist. Adding insult to injury, Forster’s role in the official account of the voyage was greatly reduced and, ultimately, removed altogether. In the months that followed, Cook found an editor by which he could collaborate and compose an accurate history of the voyage, John Douglas, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Having settled the questions of the South Pacific, expanded Britain’s territorial claims once again,

⁸³ Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster 1772-1775*, Vol. III, 439.

and sowed the islands with the flora and fauna of England for the benefit of future generations, Cook settled into life in London once more.⁸⁴

Hawai'i / The Sandwich Isles

If the first voyage of the *Resolution* embodied science in the pursuit of discovery, its second would demonstrate the role of discovery in the pursuit of economic and imperial gain. Acknowledging the possibility of a continent beyond the navigable portions of the sea, Cook “did expect and was in hopes that [he] had put an end to all Voyages of this kind to the Pacific Ocean,” for “the world will not be benefited” by the discoveries that lay beyond the ice.⁸⁵ Appointed as the Fourth Captain at Greenwich Hospital soon after his return, Cook requested that the Lords Commissioners would “allow [him] to quit [his position] when either the call of [his] Country for more active Service, or that [his] endeavours in any shape can be essential to the publick.”⁸⁶

That public service, Cook’s final voyage, grew out of another centuries old geographic spectre, an English obsession from the days of Drake, finding the Northwest Passage. Offering a route to the Pacific up and over Spanish territory, the Passage had been sought by land and sea for over two centuries. While Spain’s power had waned in that time, the benefits of such a shortcut from the Atlantic to the Pacific remained. A “well-regulated commerce as well as navigation in general, has its foundation in science, and at the same time receives light from it, while this, in return, derives support from, and owes its extension to the two former.”⁸⁷ As noted by Anders

⁸⁴ Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, 450-451, 458-463.

⁸⁵ James Cook to John Walker, 14 September 1775, in Appendix I, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, 699; James Cook to the Admiralty Secretary, 22 March 1775, in Appendix I *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, 693.

⁸⁶ James Cook to the Admiralty Secretary, 12 August 1775, in Appendix VIII, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, 958.

⁸⁷ Anders Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, Towards the Antarctic Polar Circle, and Round the World: But Chiefly Into the Country of the Hottentots and Caffres, from the Year 1772, to 1776* (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1786), xiii.

Sparman, the reciprocal relationship between scientific discovery, navigation, and commerce was one that had the capacity to alter the balance of trade that existed in Europe before the American War of Independence. While Banks and others had focused on the benefit exploratory expeditions brought to the fields of natural history, its potential advantage to commerce and trade, navigation and international prestige was in focus while planning the North Pacific voyage of the *Resolution* and *Discovery*.⁸⁸

Despite the failure of a similar such endeavour three years prior, that of Constantine John Phipps, British action was again spurred on by rumors from France that a return to the Pacific by Bougainville was imminent. In the intervening months, Cook had corresponded with a French naval officer seeking advice on such an issue, Latouche-Tréville. The particulars of the voyage outlined by Cook in this correspondence, while not undertaken by Latouche-Tréville, were to influence French discoveries in the Pacific for nearly a half century. Indeed, while Cook had speculated another voyage was to soon return the Tahitian youth Mai to the Society Islands, he seemingly had no preconceptions as to his future role.⁸⁹

In September of 1773 the *Resolution* and *Adventure* each had taken onboard a Society Islander desirous of seeing the land of ‘Pretane’. While Mahine took leave of the *Resolution* in June of 1774, the “youth of good parts, [who] like most of his countrymen ... [was] wholly ignorant of their Religion, Government, Manners, Customs and Traditions, [from whom] consequently no material knowledge could have been gathered,” was, by Cook’s estimation “[a] better Specimen of the Nation in every respect than the one on board the *Adventure*.”⁹⁰ When the *Adventure* returned

⁸⁸ Glyndwr Williams, “Myth and Reality: James Cook and the Theoretical Geography of Northwest America,” in *Captain James Cook and His Times*, ed. Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1979), 59-70; Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 39-42, 157-158.

⁸⁹ Glyn Williams, *Arctic Labyrinth: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (Toronto, ON: Viking Canada, 2009), 132-134; Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, 453-454.

⁹⁰ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, 428.

to Britain after being separated from the *Resolution* off the coast of New Zealand, it carried Mai with it. Despite Cook's reservations the Raiatean youth ingratiated himself in British life quite well, spending the two years under the watchful eye of Banks, Solander, Lord Sandwich, and others. By the time Cook had resettled him on Huahine in November 1777 however, his opinion had changed. "Whatever faults [Mai] had they were more than over ballanced by his great good Nature," and though he would always remember "the highest sence of the favours he received in England nor will he ever forget those who honoured him ... his knowledge of things was very general and in many instances imperfect."⁹¹

When the *Resolution* again sailed for the Pacific in July of 1776, accompanied this time by the *Discovery*, the hallmarks of Cook's earlier expeditions were absent. The *Resolution's* supernumeraries and scientific personnel amounted to the painter John Webber and the surgeon William Anderson, whereas the *Discovery* carried with it William Bayly, astronomer, and a gardener from Kew, David Nelson.⁹² Recalling the earlier troubles with Banks and later the unyielding Forster, the lack of scientific persons lent credence to the oft quoted, yet dubious, remark of Cook's ahead of the 1776 voyage, "Curse all the scientists and all science to the bargain."⁹³ The veracity of the statement notwithstanding, it is indicative of the voyage's distinct nature. Again given latitude should it be found "more eligible to pursue any other measures ... in order to make a discovery of the beforementioned Passage," instruction regarding the productions of nature, of peoples encountered and investigation thereof are greatly reduced. Upon turning northward, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* were ordered to take care "not to lose any time in search

⁹¹ James Cook, *The Journals of Captain James Cook: Volume III, Part I - The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780*, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1967), 240-241.

⁹² For a complete listing of the companies of both Ships, see *The Journals of Captain James Cook: Volume III, Part II - The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780*, ed. J.C. Beaglehole (Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1967), 1459-1478.

⁹³ For more information on the veracity of this statement, see Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, 501-502.

of new Lands, or stop at any [they] may fall in with.” This third voyage then was to answer questions of speculative geography, yes, but directed in a manner of purpose and benefit far more concrete than “the improvement of Geography and Navigation” that had come before.⁹⁴

Cook did just that in January of 1777, touching at Van Diemen’s Land just long enough to gather wood and water enroute to New Zealand. Correcting, but not expanding upon, the reports made by Furneaux three years prior, the famed navigator accepted the *Adventure* captain’s report on the nonexistence of a strait separating Van Diemen’s Land from the coast of New South Wales without further investigation. At Tahiti and Tonga too, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* stopped long enough to carry out their orders and no more. Happening upon the Hawaiian Islands in January 1778 those orders held firm, the two ships spent only two weeks between the Islands of Niihau and Kauai. The short stay afforded Cook opportunity to expand on a question he had discussed with Forster and Banks before him, the spread of Polynesian culture “from New Zealand to the South, to these islands to the North and From Easter Island to the Hebrides; an extent of 60° of latitude ... north and south and 83° of longitude ... east and west.”⁹⁵ As to how such an expansion was carried out, Cook is silent, offering instead comparing cultural difference between his various points of reference before turning his log once more to his intended goal, the coast of New Albion.

From Cape FoulWeather then began Cook’s search for the Northwest Passage. Beginning in March, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* began their survey of the North American coastline from 44°55’N to 70°44’N. Stopping first at Nootka Sound and later at English Bay, the expedition never found itself in completely unknown territory. Confirming, correcting and rejecting the work done before by Bering and others, the crews were confronted with the evidence of earlier contact along

⁹⁴ *Secret Instructions for Cap^t James Cook, Commander of His Majesty’s Sloop the Resolution*, in *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery - Part I*, ccxx-ccxxiv.

⁹⁵ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery - Part I*, 279; Tobias Furneaux, “Furneaux’s Narrative,” in Appendix IV, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, ed. Beaglehole, 735-736.

the Alaskan Peninsula. Russian letters and European gestures were replaced by a Russian storehouse among the Aleutian chain, its occupants responsible for the trade of otter pelts to the Kamchatka Peninsula.⁹⁶

Less productive than either voyage previous, Cook's journals say little on the benefits the region may hold save the "fur trade [which] might be carried on with the Inhabitants of [the] vast coast." Unaware of the vast trade his statement would inspire, Cook felt that "unless a northern passage is found ... [the region] seems rather too remote for Great Britain to receive any emolument from it."⁹⁷ With the advance of the ice signaling the end of northward exploration, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* prepared for the winter. His orders suggesting Petropavlovsk as a possible winter respite, Cook rejected the notion owing to "the great dislike [he] had to lay inactive for Six or Seven Months, which must have been the case ... in any of these Northern parts." Deciding instead to make for what he had dubbed the Sandwich Isles, located "so conveniently within ... reach where [they] could expect to meet with [the] necessary articles" of refreshments and provisions, the *Resolution* and *Discovery* quit their first season in late October 1778 and headed South.⁹⁸

The events leading up to 14, February 1779, the day of Cook's death at Kealakekua Bay, have been told and retold, interpreted this way and that for over two centuries, ultimately have no bearing here. It's consequences, however, do. Taking command, Clerke led the *Resolution* and *Discovery*, now under the command of John Gore, in one final search for the passage, stopping first at Kamchatka to relay the news to England.⁹⁹ When the two vessels ultimately returned to the

⁹⁶ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery - Part I*, 383-384, 450-458.

⁹⁷ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery - Part I*, 371; Pethick, *The Nootka Connection*, 12-16.

⁹⁸ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery - Part I*, 441-442.

⁹⁹ Peter Simon Pallas to Joseph Banks, 10/21 December 1779, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, Vol. I*, 260-262.

Thames in October 1780, also without Clerke, the first wave of British exploration in the Pacific came to an end. In its place would be voyages of completion and correction, of scientific experimentation and economic exploitation, carried out by those who learned under Cook, and those who learned from his students.¹⁰⁰

Cook's three voyages produced contrasting results. While the final voyage was one of imperial results, and the second was a triumph of scientific exploration, the first voyage was a demonstration of the possibilities when science and government were united in purpose. Expanding the reach of Britain, sailing from 70°44' North to 71°10' South, Cook and those who sailed with him established a precedent for future generations. While some were carrying out orders, some seeking adventure, and others still seeking recognition, the different voyages nevertheless produced the same reaction at home, one of national pride, a display of exemplary character in an unknown world, a stark contrast to those who had gone before. According to Forster, "[acts] of violence have been allways the beginning of settling & establishing the power of Europeans among new discovered Nations ... The Spaniards were cruel in a less refined age; [Britain] should, with more light & principles, endeavour to avoid the reproach of following their footsteps."¹⁰¹ Forster's argument for a more civilized form of exploration, of colonization, not dissimilar to the idealized enlightened explorer that grew out of the travel narratives and pantomimes of the late eighteenth century, forgoes the possibility of more subtle methods by which power and change may occur.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Beaglehole, "Introduction," *The Voyage of the Endeavour*, cxxii.

¹⁰¹ Forster, *The Resolution of Johann Reinhold Forster*, Vol. IV, 613; Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 80-81; Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 90-91, 200.

¹⁰² Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, 126-135.

This change, noted yet not seen for what it was, eluded even Cook. The introduction of iron, of plants and animals to various islands, the favouring of particular harbours, of particular individuals in places such as Tahiti and New Zealand, had lasting repercussions for these societies. As the islands were increasingly frequented by traders en route to Nootka, Macao, and later Port Jackson, everything from the value of trade goods to fashion, structures of authority and later systems of governance were refashioned in response to these new travelers. Change was defined as change for the better, and better was seen as being more in keeping with European practices. When returning Mai to Huahine, Cook equated the youth's lack of mastery in any one skill as the "kind of indifference [as] the true Character of his Nation, [for] Europeans have visited them at times for ... ten years past, yet [he could] find neither new arts nor improvements in the old" moreover, "nor [had] they copied after [them] in any one thing."¹⁰³ While not overt, change, or lack thereof, was neither irrelevant nor one sided.

From their comprehension of Polynesian languages and their observance of customs both religious and political, to something as simple as an *arioi* tattoo, these experiences served to educate and inform the explorers of places and cultures dissimilar to their own. Turning their experience into serialized publications, poems and pantomimes, art and exhibition, these voyagers reinforced the notion of the Pacific as a tropical eden throughout Britain and beyond. Moreover, the information they brought back helped fuel the questions of what societies are, what forms they can take, how they develop, and Europe's role in that progression. This experience would, then, have profound significance on the future of the Pacific and of Britain's role therein. Subsequent encounters would rely on the experience and knowledge gained during the 1760s and 1770s. Carried on by his successors, the lessons of Captain James Cook were preserved in the printed

¹⁰³ Cook, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Discovery - Part I*, 241; Sahlins, *Islands of History*, 140-143.

journals of his voyages, forming a benchmark for British navigators throughout the century. Opening the door for expansion, these three voyages demonstrated what could be done, and what could still be done, by impressing science into the service of empire.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Salmond, "Voyaging Worlds," 9; Kennedy, "British Exploration in the Nineteenth Century," 1884-1885; Nicholas Thomas, "Introduction," in *Tattoo: Bodies, Art, and Exchange in the Pacific and the West*, ed. Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole, and Bronwen Douglas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 14-19; Wilson, *The Island Race*, 71-78.

Chapter Three
The Island of Quadra and Vancouver
Science, Politics, and Empire in the Pacific

... having placed before her a common English chart of the World, [I] pointed out the situation of New Holland. She shook her head. ... “Why, ... it is terribly out of the way down in the very right hand corner of the world.” The chart being mine I cut it in two, through the meridian of Iceland, transposed the parts laterally, and then upside down. “Now,” asked I, “Where is England?” “Ah! boy,” she replied, “you may do what you like with the map; but you can’t twist the world about in that manner, though they *are* making sad changes in it.”¹⁰⁵

- *A Letter from Sydney*, Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1829)

Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! ... The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.¹⁰⁶

- *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad (1899)

As Europe turned towards conflict and political turmoil during the 1780s, Britain began to look outwards once more. A decade of exploration had revealed the coastline of a seemingly fruitful southern continent, the western edge of another northern one teeming with goods to be traded for, and a convenient chain of islands to wait out the winter months. Spurred on by firsthand accounts of these endeavours, the 1780s abounded with entrepreneurial schemes seeking to capitalize on these discoveries. With varying degrees of success, these ventures helped shape the course of Britain’s involvement in the Pacific through to the end of the century.

Not long after the return of the *Resolution*, as knowledge of Cook’s demise spread across Europe, traders from England, Spain, and later America found themselves fueling a developing trade route between the Pacific Northwest and the ports at Macao. This rise of new markets and new industries brought with it the need for a more defined picture of those once unknown places among traders and governments alike. The French began a second wave of voyages in 1785 and

¹⁰⁵ Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *A Letter from Sydney, the Principle Town of Australia: Together With the Outline of a System of Colonization*, ed. Robert Gouger (London: J. Cross, 1829), 115-116.

¹⁰⁶ Joseph Conrad, “Heart of Darkness,” in *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*, ed. Cedric Watts (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 104-105.

then the Spanish four years later. Britain would not follow with their own such an expedition for another two years. The British expedition followed up the scientific legacy of James Cook with clear imperial purpose. The 1791-95 expedition of George Vancouver sought to expand formally the reach of the Empire, to halt further European presence in the North Pacific and increase British knowledge of the western coastline of North America.

European claims around Nootka Sound had been a non issue for much of the 1780s, with no one power claiming the territory as their own. With the increase in trade however, the question of regional control became a serious topic of concern. In the face of growing Russian interests to the North and Spanish claims to the South, enterprising Britons formulated numerous plans to secure even a toehold in the region. Both private schemes and public endeavours, these plans saw only one storehouse constructed in the Sound by 1789. That same year, Spain began to engage in a series of exploratory voyages to forestall competing claims and reassert their control over the Pacific coast. It was under these circumstances that a Spanish vessel seized British trading ships which had established a factory at Nootka in the spring of 1789.¹⁰⁷

The Nootka Convention

News of the seizure reached England in 1790, sparking outrage and provoking an official response. In the months of negotiation that followed, Britain fought for the right to establish a presence along the Northwest coast. After ten months an agreement, the Nootka Convention, was reached which, however vague, would expand British commercial interests and restrict Spanish influence north of California. Just how that presence would be established, and what it might bring to the Empire, was unclear. Indeed, plans for settlement had been proposed as early as July 1788.

¹⁰⁷ Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 146-151; Alan Frost, "New South Wales as *Terra Nullius*: The British Denial of Aboriginal Land Rights," *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 77 (1981): 514-518.

To that end, a private effort, a convict colony, was planned by Richard Cadman Etches & Company to “not only secure the complete discovery of that extensive and unexplor’d part of the World, but wou’d open, and secure a source of commerce of the most extensive magnitude [for Britain],” was brought before Sir Joseph Banks for review.¹⁰⁸

In presenting this plan to Banks, now President of the Royal Society and a most vocal proponent of imperial science, Etches had hoped to gain governmental support for his colony. Awaiting news of two separate undertakings in the South Pacific, the penal colony in New Holland and the transport of Tahitian breadfruit to the West Indies, Banks was otherwise engaged in developing his policy of acclimatization, which saw the transplanting the of productive crops from one region to another to either create new, or support existing, industry in a form of economic botany. While Etches plan for a colony never came to fruition, it served to refocus the Royal Society’s President away from the South Pacific for a time. While both of Banks’s projects opened the Southern Sea to a more direct form of Britain’s imperial efforts, the lessons learned therein served to strengthen both these and future endeavours moving forwards.¹⁰⁹

The New South Wales colony of Port Jackson was a practical lesson in mid eighteenth century imperial expansion. Reports of the country, taken from the *Endeavour*’s crew, along with Banks’ own experience with the coast, saw the region labeled as a *terra nullius*, a no man’s land. Such a perception, in addition to the acts of possession undertaken by Cook in August 1770, placed the territory, at least symbolically, within Britain’s newly emerging empire. This symbolic possession was less of a legal claim than it was a vehicle for competing European powers to expand

¹⁰⁸ R. Cadman Etches to Sir Joseph Banks, 17 July 1788, in “Four Letters From Richard Cadman Etches to Sir Joseph Banks, 1788-92,” by F. W. Howay, *The British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI (1942): 132; Barry M. Gough, *The Northwest Coast: British Navigation, Trade, and Discoveries to 1812* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1992), 140-144.

¹⁰⁹ Fulford, Lee and Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era*, 108-113.

their influence and, in the mid eighteenth century, was rarely followed by physical colonization. While Cook claimed the coast of New South Wales for Britain, he never made such claims in the Pacific Northwest. Port Jackson, the colony settled by the First Fleet in 1789, then proved an oddity, a settlement chosen based on earlier scientific exploration. In proposing a settlement, however small, at Nootka Sound, Etches & Company had opened the sovereignty claims of the Pacific to a considerable point of discussion, the role of colonization in securing imperial claims. Should symbolic possession carry the same legal weight as the establishment of a colony, and if not what did that mean for the multitude of Spanish claims in and around the Pacific? In finalizing terms of the Nootka Convention, Britain held the Spanish to this new edict: no possession without colonization. In doing so, the lands of the Pacific Northwest, and indeed the globe, were opened to British imperial efforts like never before.¹¹⁰

With the conclusion of the Nootka Convention in October 1790, two vessels were made ready for sailing in the northern Pacific. Placed in command of the forthcoming expedition was Captain George Vancouver, a competent seaman and veteran of Cook's two polar voyages. The scope of the endeavour was laid out in the instructions given to Vancouver before he sailed; exploration and discovery were to be put aside in favour of science and survey. To this end Archibald Menzies, at present "upwards of twelve months retained by Government to go out as [a] Naturalist," sought to join the expedition as its surgeon and part time natural historian.¹¹¹ Having visited the coast in the late 1780s with a fur trading vessel, Menzies was already familiar

¹¹⁰ Frost, "New South Wales as *Terra Nullius*," 513-514; Bain Attwood, "Law, History and Power: The British Treatment of Aboriginal Rights in Land in New South Wales," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol 42, No. 1 (2014): 176-178.

¹¹¹ Archibald, Menzies, *Journal of Archibald Menzies, Surgeon and Botanist on Board Discovery, 1790-1794*, British Library - Add MS 36461/1b; Joseph Banks to Evan Nepean, 15 December 1790, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, Vol. 3*, 177-178; Glyndwr Williams, *Naturalists at Sea: From Dampier to Darwin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 133-136.

with its productions and, with the support of Banks, would join the expedition as its Naturalist, though his skills as a surgeon would become invaluable as the surveying carried on.

As Britain's territory in the Pacific was expanding, so too was the nation's understanding of the world's natural history. It had become commonplace to establish gardens, release livestock, and generally 'improve' those places most frequented by ships in the Pacific for the future benefit of European sailors. However, with the rise of Kew Gardens as a place of empirical learning, plans to exploit the benefits, both practical and commercial, offered by natural productions transplanted elsewhere in the empire began to take root. Constantly improving and experimenting with this program, natural history became the means through which far flung colonies and scientifically minded adventurers not only made sense of the world but helped to consolidate those discoveries through centers of collection at Kew, Paris, and others. Developing plans for the transport of live specimens across oceans, from covered baskets to on deck greenhouses, served to further both the Kew collection and the expanding interests of the British scientific community. This policy of exchange and experimentation between the global periphery and the colonial center spurred the study of new flora to maximize the benefit of this new, practical outgrowth of natural history. It was to this purpose, this imperial project, that Banks threw his influence behind. When it became necessary to reclaim Britain's interests at Nootka, that influence was utilized to the fullest.¹¹²

With the restoration of British lands, or rather the lands of her subjects, resting wholly on full and complete knowledge of the area surrounding Nootka, Vancouver's survey was central. From 30° N to 60° N, the *Discovery* and *Chatham* were ordered to examine the coast in search of

¹¹² David Mackay, "Banks Bligh and Breadfruit," in *Science Empire and the European Exploration of the Pacific* ed. Tony Ballantyne (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 139-140, 145-150; Alan Frost, "The Antipodean Exchange: European Horticulture and Imperial Designs," in *Visions of Empire*, ed. David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill, 58-63; Thomas R. Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora: Environment and History in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 33-37.

any substantial waterways that communicated with the more populous side of the continent. Vancouver, too, was to look for the Northwest Passage. Convinced that the spirit of the age was devoted to the “[discovery] and [delineation of] the true geography of the earth,” Vancouver was well suited to that task. While being “careful not to do anything which may give occasion to any interruption of that peace which now happily subsists between His Majesty and all other powers,” the expedition was to make note of all settlements by any European nation they encountered.¹¹³ Should the *Discovery* encounter Spanish vessels engaged in a similar pursuit however, Vancouver was instructed unreservedly to share access to all plans, charts, and information made during the course of their respective voyages. Lacking any direction as to the discovery of new lands or laying claim for the benefit of Britain, Vancouver’s instructions are in keeping with the wary air of cooperation that had begun to surround the expedition.

Departing Britain at a time when, for Archibald Menzies, the “public affairs throughout Europe seemed to indicate a general War, ... resigning the post of honor at a moment so impregnant with important events,” the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* sailed out of Falmouth on the first of April, 1791.¹¹⁴ For Vancouver, the voyage was a “long and remote exile” in “barbarous regions ... now destined, for some years, to be [their] transitory places of abode.”¹¹⁵ For a man who had once clambered to the end of a bowsprit to become, for a time, the closest man to the South Pole, this exile, in conjunction with his orders, proved a setback in establishing himself as a legitimate successor to his esteemed former captain. By contrast, Menzies saw the voyage as an opportunity to take occasion of those “advantages held out to [Britain] by the conventional articles” and “obtain a more correct knowledge of that country and the different Inlets with which

¹¹³ George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World, 1791-1795*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb 4 vols. (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1984), 1:283-286, 275-276.

¹¹⁴ BL - Add MS 36461/4b.

¹¹⁵ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 1:310

it is variously intersected.”¹¹⁶ From the expedition’s early days then, the difference by which the two men approached their respective projects was clear. Tasked with a search much like he had undertaken with James Cook in 1776, Vancouver sought to distinguish himself, while Menzies remained wary of the Captain’s ambitions, and focused on the possibilities of what might be found.¹¹⁷

Towards Friendly Cove

It is perhaps this drive which caused Vancouver to head towards the South West coast of New Holland, intent on settling its position and producing a survey of the coastline as far as Van Diemen’s Land. It was his hope that, though late in the season, some intelligence might be obtained “which would render the task less difficult to those, whose particular object it might hereafter be to explore that country.”¹¹⁸ Reaching the continent in late September, the scene described by Menzies was far from barren as he joined Vancouver in an examination of what was to become King George the Third’s Sound. It was during this first foray into the continent that Vancouver took it upon himself to take “possession of the country from the land [seen] north-westward of Cape Chatham, so far as [they] might explore its coasts, in the name of His present Majesty.”¹¹⁹

In this verdure country of “trees hills & valleys forming a rich & picturesque prospect” was found the remains of a village, reasoned to be recently depleted.¹²⁰ For the nearly two weeks spent in and around the Sound, neither Vancouver nor Menzies encountered anything more than the remnants of the local population. Vancouver had no local place names to rely on when making his charts of New Holland, falling instead on tradition to define his newly mapped coastlines. This

¹¹⁶ Lamb, *The Voyages of George Vancouver*, 1:5; BL - Add MS 36461/1a.

¹¹⁷ Williams, *Naturalists at Sea*, 139-142.

¹¹⁸ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 1:325.

¹¹⁹ Now simply King George Sound. Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 1:337.

¹²⁰ BL - Add MS 36461/22b.

collection of islands and bays would remain as one of Vancouver's more traditional 'discoveries' of the expedition, laying down a primary investigation for others to revise. The Sound provided an "eligible situation for a settlement ... [with] its nearness & easy access to [British] settlements in India [granting] peculiar advantages not to be derived from the opposite shore."¹²¹ Already acting against his instructions, in the face of contrary winds and pressed for time, Vancouver was "compelled to relinquish, with great reluctance, the favourite project of further examining the coast of [the] unknown though interesting country" and press forwards to the Pacific.¹²²

In the Pacific, from Dusky Sound to Matavai Bay and through to the Hawaiian Islands, the voyage becomes more of verification and minor correction. The memory of Captain Cook, "whose steps," Menzies writes, "[they] were now pursuing ... [with] admiration on the justness of his observations ... throughout every part of the complicated survey," leaving Vancouver as little more than "a transitory visitor, [with] little else than the power of confirming his judicious remarks and opinions."¹²³ Following in the wake of Cook, the voyage becomes for a time one of curious investigation, a search for remnants of his expeditions and evidence of Britain's earlier imperial project. At New Zealand it was hoped to find some offspring of the geese left by Cook so as to provide a fresh meal, and a search for the garden, planted at the *Resolution's* anchorage, was conducted by Menzies in earnest. In Tahiti, Menzies encountered the shaddock trees planted by Banks, and took on board several of the orange trees planted by William Bligh. They were increasingly reminded of the impact left by their nation's efforts, "partaking in the fruits of [their] benevolence" and recording the impacts of those 'discoveries' as a whole.¹²⁴ It is among the Sandwich Islands, however, where the traces of earlier explorers were clearly evident.

¹²¹ BL - Add MS 36461/30b-31a.

¹²² Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 1:342-345.

¹²³ BL - 36461/46b; Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 1:365.

¹²⁴ BL - 36461/44a, 46b, 66b, 74b.

To those efforts, the *Discovery* and *Chatham* added their own ‘fruits’. At the Sandwich Islands Menzies distributed orange plants from Tahiti, garden seeds of every kind, and seeds of the Imperial Cabbage given to him by the gardeners at Kew. Eagerly received at both Kauai and Niihau, hopes were high for their survival and the benefit they posed for future navigators. From here the expedition’s goals turned towards the geographic and the extensive survey to which they had been tasked. While Vancouver’s upcoming survey may not have held the recognisability of Menzies botanic collection and classification, he would nevertheless produce a distinctly European, distinctly British, representation of the Pacific Northwest that would influence the region all the same.¹²⁵

As the *Discovery* fell in with the continental coast Vancouver’s survey began to take shape, and follow those instructions set out for him nearly a year prior. Several miles shy of 41°N, Vancouver began the laborious task of renaming the coastline in a way that was both literally derivative (Rocky Point) and imperially imaginative (Point St. George and the nearby Dragon Rocks). All the while, the crews of the *Discovery* and *Chatham* were verifying, and at times apologetically correcting, the charts and positions established in Cook’s final voyage. These errors, the fault of the “tempestuous weather” that plagued Vancouver’s former captain, were among the many that would be investigated over the course of the survey, each of them serving to demythicise the legacy of James Cook from the hagiographic nature it was beginning to attain. Continuing their study of the coast into the speculated Strait of Juan De Fuca, the expedition found themselves “further up [the] inlet than ... (to [their] knowledge) any other person from the civilized world.”¹²⁶ Having received some information from Robert Gray regarding his work navigating the interior

¹²⁵ BL - 36461/85a, 101a.

¹²⁶ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:490-495, 510; BL - Add MS 36461/112a

coast, Vancouver was now focused on refuting the work of speculative geographers who had postulated ports, rivers, and inland seas.

The work of these geographers, Vancouver feared, had “been adopted for the sole purpose of giving unlimited credit to the traditionary exploits of ancient foreigners, and to undervalue the laborious and enterprising exertions of [his] own countrymen, in the noble science of discovery.”¹²⁷ To that noble science Vancouver would now add his own efforts, and the efforts of Menzies who, “after [his] long confined situation on board & the dreary sameness of a tedious voyage,” began to join the surveying parties to expand the size his natural history collection would ultimately take.¹²⁸ These additions, though they provided Menzies with what Vancouver describes as “constant amusement,” Menzies was “afforded so little time on shore . . . for obtaining a general knowledge of the produce of the country” that his collection, while successful, was wholly incomplete.¹²⁹ This divide between survey and botany, borne out by Cook and Forster, and Banks before him, would by no means end with Vancouver and Menzies. Nevertheless, their efforts would add to Europe’s ever expanding understanding of the Pacific.

Presuming their position as the first Europeans to venture so far into the Strait, Vancouver and several officers took to the shore on the fourth of June 1792, and took possession of the coast from 39° 20’ N to the entrance of the Juan de Fuca Strait on the occasion of King George III’s birth. Arguably, the very idea of Vancouver’s New Georgia, lying within Spain’s territorial claim, would violate the letter of his orders “to avoid, with the utmost caution, the giving of any ground of jealousy or complaint to the subjects of His Catholic Majesty.”¹³⁰ Vancouver was

¹²⁷ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:511.

¹²⁸ BL - Add MS 36461/115b.

¹²⁹ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:534; BL - Add MS 36461/126a; Williams, *Naturalists at Sea*, 143-147.

¹³⁰ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 1:285.

therefore mortified when he encountered two Spanish vessels engaged in a similar survey of that same coastline. These two vessels, Menzies stated, offered to combine their two surveys in an effort to expedite their investigation of such a broken coastline, an offer declined by Vancouver and not mentioned in his journals. It was from these vessels, the *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, that the expedition learned that the Spanish delegation sent to resolve the Nootka Crisis was waiting for their arrival at the Sound. As the Spanish turned back the English captain took a longer route to Nootka, one that would demonstrate their position not within a transcontinental waterway but a strait between the continent and an island, one that Vancouver would be the first to circumnavigate.¹³¹

As the *Discovery* and *Chatham* made their way to Nootka Sound upon termination of the northern surveying season, plans were already being made to further their efforts South in the coming Fall. When the expedition made their way into Friendly Cove at the end of August 1792, they found the Spanish, under Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, waiting. The negotiations which took place between Vancouver and Quadra, both here and later in San Francisco, would lay a foundation for the expedition's future reputation and the reputation of its captain. If successful, this voyage would be to Britain's commercial advantage in so remote a port and a site, perhaps, for a new Pacific settlement. From his interactions with the Spanish to his conversations with the Nuuchanulth, all would be judged in relation to this, the "execution of His Majesty's commands at Nootka."¹³²

To this point, the expedition had been unremarkable towards those the *Discovery* encountered, particularly when they reached the North American coast. By no means hostile to

¹³¹ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:519-593, 614-616; BL - Add MS 36461/143a; James K. Barnett "Alaska and the North Pacific: A Crossroads of Empire," in *Enlightenment and Exploration in the North Pacific, 1741-1805*, ed. Stephen Haycox et al. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997), 11-15.

¹³² Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:657, 670.

these groups, Vancouver nevertheless had limited contact with them, or at the very least his recording thereof. This neglect allowed for Vancouver to continue with his system of assigning place names based both on British peerage, exceptional crewmembers, and the occasional family member for the majority of his charts. Vancouver's charts probably did more to impress Britain's geographic rationales on the coast than Cook had done previously. In continuing a tradition of discovery that highlighted individual efforts and European benefactors, these charts portrayed a coast and a country that ran counter to the realities of the Pacific Northwest. With Quadra's aid, some of this apparent apathy of Vancouver's towards the residents of Friendly Cove was undone for the sake of Britain's possession of the territory.¹³³

In working with Quadra, Vancouver sought to dispel any fears leveled against the *Discovery* since their sudden appearance in Friendly Cove. Spreading rumours suggested the British had returned for revenge against the Spanish, rumours which were quelled by the intervention of Quadra. The Spaniard's rapport with the assembled chiefs was on more than one occasion used to its full advantage. Quadra helped to calm fears both large and small over possible mistreatment at the hands of the British. Quadra's involvement, and a day of meals, entertainment, and trade helped to improve relations. Upon taking possession of the territory Vancouver intended to install Lieutenant Broughton as a temporary official, thus keeping Britain's control of the region and limiting exploitative trading.¹³⁴

When it came time to restore the buildings and lands seized in 1789, however, Vancouver encountered a series of issues raised by Quadra that significantly hindered the process. The

¹³³ Daniel Clayton, "On the Colonial Genealogy of George Vancouver's Chart of the North-West Coast of North America," *Cultural Geographies* 7, no. 4 (2000): 378-379; J. Brian Harley, "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82 (1992): 522-523.

¹³⁴ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:660-662; BL - Add MS 36461/186a-b; Janet R. Fireman, "The Seduction of George Vancouver: A Nootka Affair," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Aug, 1987): 431-444.

agreement which had been reached in Europe had a degree of ambiguity to it, leaving open to interpretation several key points including the location of the Spanish territorial border. Quadra sought to place it at the newly established settlement at the entrance to the De Fuca Strait, giving over to Britain Friendly Cove and all the buildings, gardens, and improvements found at that port. This, Vancouver contended, was counter to the essence of the convention, the restoration of the whole coast to its state three years prior. The issue, Menzies asserted, lay with Quadra's "[empowerment] by the Court of Spain to enter into a general discussion ... [to] settle the line of demarcation," a position not held by Vancouver for whom no "instructions than merely to receive the place when it was given up to him."¹³⁵ Despite the progress that had thus far been made between the two negotiators, they were unable to reach an agreement for want, Vancouver argues, "of sufficient diplomatic skill."¹³⁶ The lack of agreement, to both ownership of the cove and the territorial boundary between the two powers, further loosened Spain's claims to the Pacific coast while bolstering those of the British.¹³⁷

While the transfer of possession had been undone through differing interpretations of the accord, the scientific dialogue between the two nations, via their representatives, also suffered in the face of concerns and a protection of national pride. The recent interest of the Spanish government in the natural productions of New Spain, of accurately charting and recording the vast possessions, Menzies argued, was nothing more than an attempt "to shake off ... that odium of indolence & secrecy with which they have been long accused."¹³⁸ If the Spanish were attempting to catch up with the expeditions of Britain and France however, then Vancouver was intent on

¹³⁵ BL - Add MS 36461/192b; Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:665-669.

¹³⁶ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:682.

¹³⁷ Herbert K. Beals, "Introduction - The 1775 Journal of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra," in *Four Travel Journals: The Americas, Antarctica and Africa, 1775-1874*, ed. W.F. Ryan et. Al (Burlington, VT: The Hakluyt Society, 2007), 80-84.

¹³⁸ BL - Add MS 36461/195a-b.

preserving the accuracy and eminence of Britain's findings in the eyes of Europe. Though instructed to share charts and information with Quadra, he was reluctant to provide them as his "longitude of the several parts of the coast differed in many instances from that laid down by Captain Cook."¹³⁹ The expedition's sharing of information only went so far, as Vancouver's endeavours became as much about preserving Britain's legacy of discovery as it was expanding that domain.

Their diplomatic discussions leading nowhere, the issue was sent by dispatch to be sorted out in the courts of London. As the second portion of Vancouver's instructions were therefore concluded, the surveying could begin in earnest. First to the south, putting in at several of the Spanish settlements, and then to the Sandwich Isles before resuming their northern survey the following season. In commemoration of those inconclusive negotiations, that large tract of land so recently circumnavigated was subsequently named the Island of Quadra and Vancouver. Compiling the charts of the first season, the Vancouver expedition produced an expansive silhouette of the continent, a blank space in the European atlas to be filled in at a later date. That first survey would not be the only contribution the voyage would add to that atlas.¹⁴⁰

A Coastline Defined

Though competing for the same portion of coastline, at both San Francisco and Monterey the expedition was received as warmly. From the seemingly endless stock of New Spain was provided sheep and cattle to populate the colony at Port Jackson, and the same provided for the Sandwich Islands. With Quadra's support the voyage was well equipped for the winter to come, returning to the Island of Hawaii well stocked both with gifts and expansive ambitions. With the

¹³⁹ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:678.

¹⁴⁰ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:672, 678.

end of the original two year survey fast approaching and no conclusion reached regarding Nootka, Vancouver's expedition was in need of an achievement, be it through discovery or diplomacy, that would ensure their place among Britain's builders of empire.¹⁴¹

Returning to what Cook had dubbed the Sandwich Islands brought with it the opportunity to extend British dominion to that region of the Pacific. With local opinion favourable towards Britain and British traders over other nations, the introduction of sheep and cattle was received exceedingly well. It was a gift, Vancouver told Kamehameha, in keeping with the instructions of his sovereign who "in his humane and friendly disposition" wished for nothing more than to add to the "comfort and happiness" of the island.¹⁴² This was the first in a series of gifts and exchanges, of requests and refusals, that Vancouver undertook during this stay to secure the island as part of Britain's overseas territory. What he recounted as a negotiation of peace among the islands, Menzies wrote was a far more direct request whereby Vancouver prevailed upon Kamehameha to "[declare] himself & his Subjects together with the whole Island under the dominion of the King of Great Britain."¹⁴³ A request made by Vancouver in the knowledge that Kamehameha's price for such submission, a Royal Navy vessel left in defence of the island, was not paid.

Such a defence had increasingly become a necessity throughout the Sandwich Islands as the chain's reputation as a Pacific waypoint became known over the 1780s. As a "baneful consequence arising from the injudicious conduct of unrestrained commercial adventurers" Vancouver argues, the articles of trade most demanded became arms and ammunition.¹⁴⁴ On this point both he and Menzies agreed, and condemned those traders from whom the practice of

¹⁴¹ BL - Add MS 36461/233b; Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:734, 3:787.

¹⁴² Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver Vol III*, 813; The view held by Hawaiian Islanders towards Britain had been influenced to a certain extent by the opinions offered by a pair of American traders who found themselves living on the island for several years at this point, see Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 2:473-474.

¹⁴³ BL - Add MS 36461/269b; Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:837-840.

¹⁴⁴ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:797-798.

exchanging weapons for refreshment became commonplace. As men under the employ of the Royal Navy, they were prohibited from conducting such trade themselves. Using his experience with the spiritual and political structures of the island to his advantage, Vancouver later placed both arms and ammunition under a taboo, at once quelling future requests and the possibility of theft. This distinguishment between the navy and trading vessels lent credibility to Vancouver's authority, and he again sought to secure the islands for Britain.¹⁴⁵

The territorial dispute at Nootka, in Vancouver's opinion, resulted from a material change in the long standing European tradition of preliminary sovereignty based on first discovery and occupation.¹⁴⁶ That material change rested upon the importance granted to the cession of Friendly Cove by Maquinna to the Spanish. While there had yet to be any challenge to Britain's apparent claim to the Sandwich Islands, Vancouver hoped to gain "the voluntary resignation of these territories ... to the power and authority of Great Britain ... [thus] establishing an incontrovertible right ... [and] preventing any [future] altercation with other states."¹⁴⁷ The time may soon come, he thought, that the islands would have to submit to the authority of others and, by Cook's discovery, it was Britain's claim to lose. Though such an acquisition was outside the scope of his orders, Vancouver nevertheless sought to secure Cook's legacy. The lengthy negotiations finished with representatives of all islands proclaiming they were now the people of Britain. "[Whether] this addition to the empire will ever be of any importance to Great Britain," Vancouver writes, "time alone must determine."¹⁴⁸ These efforts to secure the islands for Britain ensured the final

¹⁴⁵ BL - Add MS 36461/251a-b; Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:855, 1174; For a discussion of the Hawai'ian concept of tabu or taboo, see Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom*.

¹⁴⁶ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:1160-1163.

¹⁴⁷ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:1162.

¹⁴⁸ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:11623, 1180-1183; Pethick, *The Nootka Connection*, 98-102.

resting place of his hero remained within British control, and retained the nation's international claim in light of a changing political reality.

Leaving the Sandwich Islands for the final time in March 1794, the expedition showed signs of its strenuous three years of service. As Vancouver prepared to head into the North Pacific, plans for the final survey season were finalized. Once more retracing Cook's steps from Possession Point to Nootka Sound, this season began at the northern limit of their instructions, Cook's River. Investigating the river, actually an inlet, the expedition turned South and pressed on until the coast, from 60° N to 30° N, was charted. Covering such an extensive and broken coastline, the expedition had, over the course of three seasons, produced an array of charts and views more comprehensive and exacting than ever. Describing territory that had been traversed by Russian and Spanish expeditions before, the surveys of Vancouver took great pains to correct and adjust those charts to produce a more precisely defined coast. The method undertaken for this survey, sending out small parties to examine the myriad of inlets, islands, and archipelagoes, provided an unparalleled opportunity for conversation and trade with native groups of the northwest coast. Indeed, the expedition produced perhaps the most detailed collection of Pacific manufactures and productions seen in Europe to that point. The charts produced by the voyage, however, provide little evidence as to this extensive exchange.¹⁴⁹

Vancouver's naming conventions trended towards the traditional, and often led to an exclusion of local place names. The charts produced by the expedition showed a continent which, for the most part, bound by the European conventions of space and place, remain wholly devoid of any local presence. While in part due to mutual incomprehensibility, attempts were made to

¹⁴⁹ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:1206-1211, 1215-18; 4:1369-1371; J.C.H. King, "Vancouver: Cautious Collector," in *Enlightenment and Exploration in the North Pacific, 1741-1805*, ed. Stephen Haycox et al. (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1997), 149-150.

converse in Spanish or Russian depending on the present latitude and, as the seasons progressed, a variety of coastal languages learned over periods of prolonged contact. Menzies recorded one such encounter, matching numerals at New Eddystone with those he collected further North at Port Mulgrave as recited by a group of natives interested in trading with the *Discovery*. It was from these men that Menzies learned the name of Vancouver's New Eddystone, Shekil, a name absent from Vancouver's own account of that same meeting. Through these omissions, as much as through Menzies collecting and description, the expedition observed, measured and calculated the Pacific coast into something more defined, more comprehensible to both the British government and its public.¹⁵⁰

All told, the surveys lasted three years and four months. The final two surveying parties, led by Whidbey and Johnstone, marked their accomplishment by once more raising the traditional marks of possession at Prince Frederick's Sound, claiming for Britain the continent and adjacent islands from New Georgia to Cape Spencer. Vancouver and the survey crews "zealously pursued ... with a degree of minuteness far exceeding the letter of [his] commission or instructions," in doing so sought to put to rest the speculation surrounding the existence of a northwest passage.¹⁵¹ The charts and views, not only of the *Discovery*'s track but those of the boats, it was hoped, would make the "history of [their] transactions ... *as conclusive as possible*, against all speculative opinions respecting the existence of a *hyperborean or mediterranean ocean* within the limits of [the] survey."¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ BL - Add MS 36461/336b-337a; Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 3:1006-1007; Ken G. Brealey, "Mapping Them 'Out': Euro-Canadian Cartography and the Appropriation of the Nuxalk and Ts'ilhqot' in First Nations' Territories, 1793-1916," *The Canadian Geographer*, 39, no.2 (1995): 142

¹⁵¹ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 4:1382-1383, 1390.

¹⁵² Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 4:1391 (emphasis in the original).

The expedition's return to Nootka saw little progress in the negotiations surrounding ownership of territory. For all that the Nootka Convention's implementation would have granted Britain, Vancouver's expedition returned with something of far greater value, an exacting map of the coast. While the vessels prepared for the return to England by way of Cape Horn, the charts and positions of the voyage were corrected and finalized. These positions, at times wholly different than those of Cook, were found by Vancouver to be correct as "the means of being accurate [fell], more fully in [their] power than fell to the lot of that renowned and illustrious navigator," the benefit of a decade of technological progress and specificity of purpose. The Pacific Northwest, as laid out by Vancouver's surveys, became a place at once recognizable and yet unfamiliar, another blank space on which later policy and settlement was decided. Cartography, above all else, helped to establish the role of the *Discovery* within the British empire.¹⁵³

Returning to London in October 1795, the *Discovery* put an end, for a time, to the notion of a northwest passage and demonstrated the utility of extensive geographic and scientific investigations. In concluding this published journal, Vancouver defined this utility as the sole undertaking of Britain's navigators, their primary considerations

[having] been to direct their inquiries to objects of an useful nature, and to investigate and support the truth, by a plain narrative of those facts, which fell within the sphere of their observation, rather than to give encouragement, by the obtrusion of specious opinions to hypotheses, however ingenious.¹⁵⁴

It is thus, Vancouver saw, the legacy of Britain's navigators to leave the geography of the globe in a state of complete and comprehensive reality. In doing so, the speculated and the fabled vestiges of geography were replaced with order, precision, and a record to support the navigator's discoveries. And while the expedition failed to find evidence of the theorized passage between the

¹⁵³ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 4:1397-1399, 1409; Daniel Wright Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2000), 190-194.

¹⁵⁴ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 4:1542.

Pacific and Atlantic, like the apparent success of Cook in refuting of the southern continent's existence, it was not for lack of trying.¹⁵⁵

The expedition of Vancouver, more than any that had come before, was truly a voyage to serve a dual purpose, one imperial and empirical. From the outset, the endeavour was focused on carrying out an expansive, empire building convention whose foundations lay not in the traditional model of territorial claims but in a more progressive method of observation and analysis that built on the efforts of earlier expeditions. This method, though flawed, recognized the existence of rights and claims of local populations, to a certain extent, and subsequently saw the development of a host of colonies throughout the Pacific from 35°S to 59°N, 118°E to 136°W. In doing so, Vancouver opened the Pacific to future expansion and settlement, providing a picture of the Pacific's extremities, its inhabitants, and its productions. Vancouver's expedition helped to reinforce the rising perception of Britain's superiority in all things naval, correcting and refuting foreign charts while acquitting their own navigators of those same errors.

By producing such an exacting outline of so far removed a place, Vancouver's surveys firmly stamped his nation's geographic mark on that quarter of the globe. Though by no means confined to his charts alone, by omitting place names, settlements, and other marks of indigenous habitation from his charts, Vancouver charted a seemingly empty coastline. While a reading of his journals argues otherwise, for want of time the navigator was unable to develop anything beyond the most basic of relations with the numerous indigenous groups the expedition encountered up and down the coast. As his role continued to develop through the voyage, Menzies increasingly found himself the 'ethnographer-designate'. His accounts are, however, less focused on the knowledge acquired from native groups than on his own descriptions and classifications. As had

¹⁵⁵ Vancouver, *The Voyage of George Vancouver*, 4:1541-1543.

been experienced by Johann Reinhold Forster during Cook's second voyage, between Vancouver's survey schedule and the rigors of sailing through the South Seas, Menzies's own studies fell to the wayside. The necessity of Vancouver's tedious survey required a limited amount of time in any one place, borne out by the disparity between Menzies's descriptions of the Sandwich Islands and the North Pacific coast. The voyage's results, then, were more geographic than botanic. The impact of the charts and descriptions produced is clear nevertheless. In upending the information thus far collected regarding the northern coast and replacing it with a new set of labels and definitions, the expedition presented to the European community a definitive picture wholly derived from Britain's efforts.¹⁵⁶

While Vancouver's charts would not serve an immediate purpose, they would form the basis of a diplomatic, imperial obfuscation of the coast as it existed in favour of one that would be irrevocably tied to the endeavours of both Cook and himself in later years. In much the same way as James Cook before him and Matthew Flinders after, George Vancouver's imperial efforts stem from his empirical surveys, which provided others with the tools necessary to exert power over a coast half a world away. When combined with the prevalence of the travel narrative as a format for transmitting knowledge of the lesser known regions of the globe, charts such as these provided an almost romantic depiction in the hearts and minds of Britain's early Pacific colonists.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ For more on the issues of time and Vancouver's orders to cultivate relationships with those groups encountered, see Robin Fisher's "George Vancouver and the Native Peoples of the Northwest Coast" in *Enlightenment and Exploration in the North Pacific, 1741-1805*, ed. Stephen Haycox et al.

¹⁵⁷ Clayton, "On the Colonial Geography of George Vancouver," 384-387; Carol Bolton, *Writing the Empire: Robert Southey and Romantic Colonialism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 115-120.

Chapter Four
Terra Australis, or, Australia
Competition, Conflict, and Science of the Early Nineteenth Century

The water was very clear, ... and the beauty of the corals growing there was indeed admirable. There were six or eight varieties of species, differing considerably in shape and magnitude; some we likened to stags horns, others to wheat sheafs, to mushrooms, cabbage leaves ... each species had a different shade of colour between green, purple, brown and white, equalling in beauty and excelling in grandeur the most favourite parterre of the most curious florist; but in contemplating this rich scene, we could not forget that we were probably admiring what might, even very soon, be the destruction of our poor ship, of ourselves, and all our hopes.¹⁵⁸

- *A Voyage Round Australia*, Matthew Flinders (1814)

... we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phænomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes.¹⁵⁹

- *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, Marry Shelley (1818)

At the turn of the nineteenth century, there was renewed interest in the possibilities offered by the vast and relatively unknown resources of New South Wales and, by extension, New Holland. The Port Jackson colony had grown significantly in its first decade of existence. Its governors increasingly saw it prudent to furnish minor expeditions, sending them ever further afield to judge what the territory may hold. In this period of expansion, coastal exploration was central to the development of the colony on a local scale and profoundly influenced the future exploration of the Australian continent.

Though Europe itself was embroiled in conflict once more, its learned societies and centres of knowledge sought to continue their investigation into the physical features of the globe. Planning greater, more expansive exploratory endeavours, it was hoped that information could be brought back from those few stretches of Pacific coastline yet to be charted. Half a world away an

¹⁵⁸ Matthew Flinders in *Australia Circumnavigated: The Voyage of Matthew Flinders in HMS Investigator, 1801-1803*, Volume II, ed. Kenneth Morgan (London: Published by Ashgate for The Hakluyt Society, 2015), 113-114.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818 text)*, ed. Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.

unspoken competition developed, one that would pit agents of Britain and France against one another in a race to discover the last remaining unknown coasts. Both expeditions promised extensive scientific investigation into every facet of the land which would serve as their goal, and accolades to those who would ultimately succeed.

One influencing the other, the expeditions of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders represented quintessential examples of science and its imperial application. From nearly the first instant, Flinders and the crew of the *Investigator* found their plans taking form in response to their French counterparts. As such, the voyage of the *Investigator* was designed with a program of survey and study that would, in theory, place British efforts at the forefront of discovery and description among the productions of New Holland. From its coastal features to its mineral deposits, its flora and fauna to its potential for colonization and industry, the southern continent was to be evaluated for its possible benefits to an emerging British Pacific empire. In many ways, the *Investigator*'s voyage echoed the sentiments of the *Endeavour* voyage thirty years prior but on a more fully realized scale. Again competing with French interests for honours both individual and national, as well as seeking economic possibilities and colonial opportunities, agents of Britain's empire had now the support the state and scientific societies across Europe to carry out their inquiries unhindered by the political suspicions that fell on earlier expeditions.¹⁶⁰

Flinders and his crew engaged in the last major cooperative effort of its kind in the South Pacific, a final push as scientific exploration increasingly focused on what lay inland. The final collaboration between the Royal Navy and scientific Britain, centered around Royal Society President Sir Joseph Banks, this pursuit of knowledge would see the single largest retinue of scientific personnel employed by Britain since the *Endeavour*. Like the voyages of Cook and

¹⁶⁰ For a complete copy of the *Investigator*'s sailing orders, see Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 126-131. For the *Investigator*'s French Passport of Safe Conduct, see Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 133.

Vancouver in the North Pacific, one of the *Investigator*'s main goals was to prove or disprove the existence of a geographic spectre, a supposed strait leading to the interior of the southern continent. As a result of the voyage, the *Investigator* expanded the diversity of botanic gardens and specimen collections of Europe, set and corrected the observations made by a centuries worth of past observers, and provided information enough to aid the burgeoning colony in its future expansion. The voyage brought to a close the era of naval exploration, the last of the large scale, publically funded affairs that were cast aside in favour of privately funded endeavours that saw explorers push ever further into the continental interiors. Though planned in response to a similar, French, expedition, the voyage of the *Investigator* serves to highlight what could be achieved, both good and bad, when the resources of science and the imperial state were brought together.¹⁶¹

Sheerness to King George the Third's Sound

As Vancouver plied the northern Pacific coast, France had mounted an expedition South, searching for news of the ill fated voyage of La Pérouse. While Bruni d'Entrecasteaux failed to find La Pérouse, his brief encounter with the southern coast of New Holland started a new path for French discovery that would be followed in 1800 by Nicolas Baudin. Though the ambitious French captain had approached the First Consul with a plan of discovery more ambitious by far than that of even La Pérouse, what was ultimately approved was equally ambitious in scale if not in scope. A directed investigation into the geography and natural history of the unknown portions of New Holland, during a time of war with Britain, required a delicate and cautious approach for support across the Channel. It required Sir Joseph Banks.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ MacKay, *In the Wake of Cook*, 3-5.

¹⁶² Baudin's original plan of discovery saw him touching the coasts of the Americas, of Tonga and Hawaii, Africa and Australia before returning home. For more on this and the eventual change in plan see Nicole Starbuck, *Baudin, Napoleon and the Exploration of Australia* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 1-5.

As President of the Royal Society, Banks had made numerous connections within governments and learned societies throughout Europe. A key figure in British imperial science, and of European science and exploration more broadly, he was approached by the Institut National to aid in securing British passports of safe conduct for the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*.¹⁶³ Though he had once stated that the “science of two nations may be at peace while their politics are at war,” in his response to the Institute Banks noted that “necessary precautions” would nevertheless be taken “for the security of their Colonies and the consequent prosperity of the Realm.”¹⁶⁴ France’s interest in the coastlines of New Holland had, then, opened a new front against their British rivals, a front that could not go undefended.

By the time the French expedition sailed out of port in mid-October, the idea of a corresponding British endeavour had taken hold. Having spent the past five years charting the bays and inlets around Port Jackson and along the Bass Strait, Matthew Flinders was among the first to broach the subject to Banks when he returned to England in 1800, arguing that the “interests of geography and natural history in general, and of the British nation in particular, seem to require, that this only remaining considerable part of the globe should be thoroughly explored.”¹⁶⁵ By year’s end, Britain was preparing to do just that. With Banks questioning Baudin’s true orders, a route was devised to preempt his arrival at New Holland. Keen to take part in the endeavour and practiced in the surveying of New South Wales, Flinders was placed in charge of the newly

¹⁶³ Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 158-159.

¹⁶⁴ F. Horner, *Looking for La Pérouse: D’Entrecasteaux in Australia and the South Pacific, 1792-1793* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 241; Sir Joseph Banks to Louis Guillaume Otto, 13 June 1800 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1768-1820*, Vol. 5, ed. Neil Chambers (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 184.

¹⁶⁵ Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 6 September 1800 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 5, 199.

christened *Investigator*, and began preparations for the voyage. All that was left was to select those who would join as supernumeraries.¹⁶⁶

In contrast to the extravagant cohort twenty two naturalists, painters, and astronomers that sailed with the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*, the *Investigator* took with it a more modest six. Chosen and assembled by Banks, their number included two painters for landscapes (William Westall) and botanic illustrations (Ferdinand Bauer), a gardener from Kew (Peter Good), and a miner (John Allen) along with John Crosley, astronomer, and the naturalist Robert Brown. Cognisant of earlier difficulties and seeking to forestall any conflict, an outline of expectations was drawn up to maintain order and civility onboard to “best promote the success of the public service in which they are jointly engaged, and [to] unite their individual endeavours into one general result.”¹⁶⁷ Everything from the structure of command to the manner in which a published account of the voyage may use the sketches and finished works of the draughtsmen, the outline of expectations laid out a framework of collaboration for the benefit of the voyage and its scientific goals. Their cooperation committed to paper, each of the supernumeraries readied himself for the forthcoming endeavour.

Even before the *Investigator* left England however, Flinders had opportunity to distinguish himself from his famous predecessors. As work progressed in anticipation of the expedition’s July departure, Flinders wrote to the Navy Board requesting adjustments be made to the captain's cabin. The reasoning, Flinders informed Banks, was that it provided “too much room for the commander,” space better suited “for the naturalists and mineralogists specimens.”¹⁶⁸ While the

¹⁶⁶ Sir Joseph Banks to George John Spencer, 2nd Earl Spencer, December 1800 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 5, 232-235.

¹⁶⁷ BL - Add MS 32439/031; John Dunmore, *French Explorers in the Pacific, Volume II: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), 13.

¹⁶⁸ Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 24 January 1801 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence, Volume 5*, 256.

Investigator was shaping into a project rivaling that of the *Endeavour*, Flinders nevertheless sought to bring its scientific duties to the fore. For Flinders, ingratiating himself with the Royal Society's president was a necessary step in securing his role as one of Britain's famed explorers, a place he sought, and one that would inform much of his decision making moving forwards.¹⁶⁹

Surgeon's mate with the Fifeshire Fencibles since 1795, Robert Brown was requested for the position by Sir Joseph Banks himself. Having been formerly considered for a similar position on an expedition that was never realized, the naturalist readily accepted the position. Spending the intervening six and a half months studying Banks's extensive collection at his Soho Square residence, Brown continued this preparation well into the outward leg of the voyage. Between the libraries of Flinders and Brown, Banks' specimens, and the talents of its scientific supernumeraries, Britain's largest naval survey project since 1768 left Spithead on July 18th, 1801 bound for the southern coast of New Holland.¹⁷⁰

Before the *Investigator* could begin that survey however, the crew suffered several setbacks that marred their endeavours. The first of these occurred at the end of a three day stay at Madeira, when the surf swamped a boat carrying Westall's paintings and a small number of specimens to the *Investigator*, destroying much of the work. This was however a minor setback in comparison to what awaited them at the Cape of Good Hope. Ill for most of the journey, the astronomer John Crosley chose to remain at the colony rather than proceed to New Holland. Though he had wished to better his own understanding of the field under Crosley's tutelage, Flinders knew that "[with]

¹⁶⁹ David Mackay, "In the Shadow of Cook: The Ambition of Matthew Flinders," in *European Voyaging Towards Australia*, ed. John Hardy and Alan Frost (Canberra: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1990), 102, 106-107; Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 6 September 1800 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence, Volume 5*, 197-200.

¹⁷⁰ Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks*, 364-368; T.G. Vallance, D.T. Moore & E.W. Groves, eds, *Nature's Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801-1805* (Canberra: Australian Biological Resources Study, 2001), 1-2, 7; Robert Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, eds Vallance, Moore & Groves, 45-51

respect to the voyage and the expectations that general science may entertain from it, the effect of this loss will be of more extensive import.”¹⁷¹

Already a year behind the Baudin expedition, the *Investigator* could not wait for another astronomer, nor could they wait for instruction from the Board of Longitude. Flinders was forced to devise an alternative. Over the course of their stay, Flinders and the second lieutenant, his brother Samuel, learned the particulars of Crosley’s profession and of his instruments. While aware that observations moving forward “will want much of the accuracy that might have been obtained,” Flinders felt that with some assistance “the most material part of the instructions from the Board of Longitude to the astronomer would be executed.”¹⁷² In taking responsibility for the expedition’s astronomical survey, Flinders and his brother took control of the instruments by which Britain solidified the amorphous boundaries of the sea. From the chronometers to the theodolite, logarithmic tables and navigation guides, the *Investigator*’s captain found himself, like Cook, the Board’s observer in the South Pacific.¹⁷³

While Flinders and his brother spent their time learning all they could about astronomy and longitudinal calculation, the remaining scientific gentlemen occupied themselves with the productions of the Cape, the proving ground of English botany. A place where a naturalist’s skills could be tested against known but unfamiliar flora, the Cape had become a waypoint in the burgeoning program of acclimatization and study throughout Europe’s royal gardens. Though the naturalists were perfectly delighted to “find the richest treasures of the English hot-house properly scattered upon the sides and summits” of Table Mountain, the run to the “untrodden and not less

¹⁷¹ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated: The Voyage of Matthew Flinders in HMS Investigator, 1801-1803*, Volume I, ed. Kenneth Morgan (London: Published by Ashgate for The Hakluyt Society, 2015), 159, 208.

¹⁷² Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 208.

¹⁷³ Flinders, ‘Memoir’ in *Australia Circumnavigated*, Volume II, 421-422, 439.

fertile region of botany” that was King George the Third’s Sound lay ahead of them.¹⁷⁴ Despite losing the favourable portion of the season as a result of their extended stay, the southwestern coast of New Holland would provide the *Investigator*’s crew a first glimpse of what the continent held.

With nearly a month spent in King George the Third’s Sound, from early December to mid January 1802, the crew of the *Investigator* was granted ample time to prepare for the forthcoming survey. For Flinders, this meant a review of the charts of the Sound, those of Vancouver and D’Entrecasteaux both, confirming and correcting their descriptions as needed. As for Brown and the draughtsmen, it provided them with an opportunity to study the continent, its natural history and its physical features, in situ.

The Investigator and Le Géographe

As the *Investigator* began its survey of the southern coast, hope of discovery, both scientific and geographic, was high. Upon passing Nuyts Archipelago, the voyage began to reveal an unknown coast, a coast that was thought to hold minerals and materials, even vast arable plains useful to a growing empire. Moreover, this run from King George the Third’s Sound to the colony town of Sydney would serve to prove or dispel rumors of a strait or river bisecting the continent and providing access to the interior. Having presented this theory to Banks a year and a half earlier, Flinders was anxious to see it tested. At a time of ill defined and contested territorial boundaries, the *Investigator* helped to provide a basis of fact for the colony’s future development. The “different parts of the coast in this neighbourhood so much [resembling] each other” on the way to the Bight however would cause difficulties for all involved.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 216.

¹⁷⁵ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 292; Mackay, “In the Shadow of Cook,” 105; For more on the boundary disputes of early New South Wales, see Bill Gammage, “Early Boundaries of New South Wales,” *Australian Historical Studies* 19, no. 77 (1981), 524-531

While the barren coast appeared to provide little opportunity for new flora and fauna, the possibility of finding an inroad to the continent was thought to be high. During the survey there was close cooperation between Flinders and Brown, with the captain doing what he could to provide every opportunity for studies of the land's productions, its features and its resources.¹⁷⁶ By spending additional time at anchor, the two goals of the voyage were served better than had been previously seen, one group examining the country's productions while the other inscribed the coast in detail. It was just this method of investigation that Banks praised, who wrote to Brown

Your Commander deserves in my opinion great credit from the Public for the pains he must have taken to give you a variety of opportunities of Landing & Botanising. [Had] Cooke paid the same attention to the Naturalists as he seems to have done we should have done much more at that time however the bias of the Public Mind had not so decidedly markd Natural History for a favorite pursuit as it now has Cook might have met with reproof for sacrificing a days fair wind to the accommodation of the Naturalists....¹⁷⁷

While perhaps critical of his own, earlier, endeavours in the South Pacific, Banks's remarks highlight what he perceived as the rise of the sciences in the public eye. This rise in profile, the result of years of exploration, communication, and collection organized by Banks and others, served to inform the *Investigator's* voyage irrespective of its international context. Nevertheless, while the scientific particulars of the expedition were well-attended, this international component soon came to the fore.¹⁷⁸

Changing scenery as the *Investigator* sailed further into the Bight allowed the officers and scientific personnel an opportunity to speculate what might be found, with "large rivers, deep inlets, inland seas, and passages to the Gulph of Carpentaria" increasingly discussed.¹⁷⁹ Here however, the expedition met with the first of its many tragedies and setbacks. While searching for

¹⁷⁶ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 297-298; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 129-134.

¹⁷⁷ Sir Joseph Banks to Robert Brown, 8 April 1803 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 160.

¹⁷⁸ Anthony J. Brown, "Friends of Humanity: The Scientific Origins, Objectives and Outcomes of the Voyages of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders," *South Australian Geographical Journal*, vol. 98 (1999), 52-53.

¹⁷⁹ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 313.

a place to anchor, the cutter, under the command of the *Investigator*'s master, John Thistle, overturned in the surf with all hands lost. The incident prompted Flinders to, uncharacteristically, name the cape on his charts as Cape Catastrophe.¹⁸⁰

While he would go on to directly name several other features over the course of the voyage, Cape Catastrophe was among the first. For Flinders, naming features was something best left to the Admiralty, those officials who helped plan and promote voyages such as his. This restraint on the part of Flinders to name the landscape placed him counter to those navigators before him, moreover it served to place the practice of name ascription into the hands of the government. Since the act of naming is one that helps to reshape the way in which the coast is perceived, as with Vancouver's charts in the Pacific Northwest, the maps drawn up by Flinders helped not only to inform the European public of this new space but to order and shape how that space was thought of. This policy, which he deemed not only of right propriety but a necessary mechanism to quell "the baptizing mania of some navigators . . . , to prevent so many repetitions of names" throughout the newly described coasts of the Pacific, held at its core a tremendous opportunity to impress a degree of imperial control over the southern continent.¹⁸¹ In turning over that authority to the offices of the Admiralty and Hydrography, the British government was given a direct means to craft the meaning of the new coast. Physically removed from the continent they were defining, those place names left blank by Flinders grew increasingly less descriptive and more eponymous, focusing less on crew members and more on officials of the state. In doing so the coast, as conceived by the British, reflected less the realities of the continent and more a blank canvas dotted with the familiars of home, from the Cunningham Islands to Port Bowen. Moreover, those few

¹⁸⁰ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 313-316.

¹⁸¹ Matthew Flinders in *Australia Circumnavigated: The Voyage of Matthew Flinders in HMS Investigator, 1801-1803*, Volume II, ed. Kenneth Morgan, (London: Published by Ashgate for The Hakluyt Society, 2015), 414

features which Flinders named personally are emphasized, often reflecting an air of importance or sentimentality akin to Vancouver's Island of Quadra and Vancouver. Indeed, another such opportunity would present itself soon after Cape Catastrophe.¹⁸²

Moving on from the unfortunate loss, the *Investigator* continued its coastal survey, a survey which provided ample time for both discovery and reflection. Between their time at King George the Third's Sound and the brief encounters with the southern country, Flinders and Brown both had time to assess the coast and its productions. While the Spencer Gulf had provided some promise, it did not prove to be the great river that was hoped. At Kangaroo Island, however, the voyage returned to the business of useful discovery and collection. Though they remained there two days only, the discovery of an island replete with wood, water, and a plentiful supply of kangaroo meat would make the place a point of note for future water traffic. The expedition's first major geographic find, Kangaroo Island was among the last for the *Investigator* along the southern coast.¹⁸³

Quickly coming to the entrance of the Bass Strait, and thus the end of the unknown coast, the *Investigator* was again detained on the 8th of April, 1802. They saw a ship in the distance with French colours, Baudin and *Le Géographe*. Both vessels having left Europe during wartime, Flinders had the *Investigator* remain at the ready, broadside facing the French, while he and Brown went on board. Though peace had been made in Europe only a few weeks earlier, in Encounter Bay tensions initially ran high, the explorers would not learn of the Peace of Amiens until word reached the colony in June. While the French expedition had provided Flinders and his officers a source of conversation, their first meeting provided little in the way of peaceful, useful discussion

¹⁸² Clayton, "On the Colonial Genealogy of George Vancouver's Chart of the North-West Coast of North America," 375-383; Jan Tent and Hellen Slatyer, "Naming Places on the 'Southland': European Place-Naming Practices from 1606-1803," *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2009): 5-6, 9-11, 18-24.

¹⁸³ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 330, 343-346; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 163-167.

between the two captains. Their meeting the following day, however, brought an exchange of information in the spirit of the European academies of learning, one which allowed the captains to frame their efforts in relation to the other and judge one another's efforts in turn.¹⁸⁴

The following morning, “having learned from the boats crew that our business was discovery” Flinders writes, “Captain Baudin was much more inquisitive ... concerning the *Investigator* and her destination.”¹⁸⁵ With Brown serving as occasional translator, the two explorers exchanged knowledge of their discoveries thus far, shared charts and discussed future surveys. In this second meeting, the British first learned of the difficulties that had befallen their French rivals in the past nineteen months, including delays to disputes and deaths that reduced the number of scientific personnel from twenty four to eight by the time of their chance encounter. Between this news, Brown’s assessment of the French collections, and Baudin’s apparent disappointment at losing the southern coast to Flinders, the captain and the botanist had developed an image of the expedition that was far less favourable to their own. This unexpected meeting helped colour Flinders future encounter at Port Jackson, and was be critical in directing the *Investigator*’s next surveying season.¹⁸⁶

The southern coast of New Holland was no longer wholly unknown. In their discussions, however, Flinders found several bays and islands he knew to exist missing from Baudin’s charts of the Bass Strait. This discrepancy provided reason enough for the *Investigator*’s continued survey of the coast, however, with the season changing for the worse and dwindling provisions putting the feasibility of such a task into question. The gamble appeared to pay off, however, with

¹⁸⁴ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 362; Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 177-178; Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance*, 74-76.

¹⁸⁵ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 365.

¹⁸⁶ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 365; Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 178-179; Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby, “A Cordial Encounter? The Meeting off Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin (8-9, April, 1802),” *French History and Civilisation*, (2005); 59-61.

the discovery of an extensive bay, at first thought to be the Western Port of Bass, was a new discovery somehow missed by Baudin. Though Flinders had hoped to use the *Investigator* to survey the whole of the port, and thereby better assess its potential for colonization, impracticality left the task to the cutter, leaving the naturalists to study the shore on their own. While the discovery may be seen as evidence of Baudin's poor ability, Flinders made a point to excuse the French captain for missing the Bay's obscured entrance. Rather, by proving error with the Frenchman's work, he helped raise his own profile in pursuit of the unknown in much the same vein as Cook.¹⁸⁷

The *Investigator*'s corrections were not limited to French errors alone along on the final run to Port Jackson. With additional equipment from the Board of Longitude, Flinders aimed to correct and fix the discoveries he had made with George Bass between 1796 and 1798. These corrections served a dual purpose, both accurately delineating the boundaries of the Bass Strait and providing an opportunity to fix the rates of the timekeepers which had begun to vary considerably from the mean. Negligent care of the remaining timekeepers served to slow, and at times stop, their rates, placing into question the accuracy of the *Investigator*'s longitude calculations. While these shifts were well documented, it called into question the whole of the charted coast until the errors could be calculated out. A result both of Crosley's departure and the inexperience of Samuel Flinders with his inherited duties, similar problems would plague the voyage for years to follow.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Unknown to Flinders, Port Phillip, as it is now known, was discovered two months prior by John Murray in the *Lady Nelson*. Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 374-376, 387-390; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 189-196; Ralph Kingston, "A Not So Pacific Voyage: The 'Floating Laboratory' of Nicolas Baudin," *Endeavour* Vol. 31, No. 4 (2007), 145; Mackay, "In the Shadow of Cook," 107-108.

¹⁸⁸ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 357, 396-397; James D. Mack, *Matthew Flinders, 1774-1814* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1966), 222-223.

As the *Investigator* completed its southern run Flinders reflected on the matter of discovery and its role in establishing claims over the continent, something he would discuss again with his French rivals, Baudin and Jacques Hamelin, captain of the *Naturaliste*, while at Port Jackson. Aided undoubtedly by the *Investigator*'s library, Flinders laid out the boundaries of earlier Dutch discoveries to establish the western edge of his discoveries, 135° East. From there to Encounter bay, 139° 10', lay the *Investigator*'s undisputed claim of discovery and "to her and the British Admiralty only [did that] right belong, so far as [it] relates to European nations."¹⁸⁹ While Flinders asserted Britain's claim to just a few degrees of coastline, in writing to Banks from Port Jackson he assured Banks that "the most interesting part of the south coast ... had undergone the examination of the *Investigator*" before their French encounter.¹⁹⁰ This form of competition would distinguish the British's interactions with the Baudin expedition, but for Flinders it was a game of one-upmanship as much as it was a race to discover. Whereas Flinders sought friendly competition with his French counterparts, under Philip Gidley King the colonial government took up a different approach with the foreign navigators.

Though the French instructions made no mention of Sydney, when the *Naturaliste* entered Port Jackson in April of 1802 it did little to surprise the governor, Philip Gidley King. Rather, Hamelin's arrival stirred questions of motive on the part of the French captain, and his government's keen interest in the continent. King himself suspected a plan of settlement on the western coast was their aim. Nevertheless the colony, yet to learn of the peace, accommodated the scientific voyagers as best they could. A nod to the international character of science as much as

¹⁸⁹ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 399.

¹⁹⁰ Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 20 May 1802 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 57. Italics are mine.

it was a recognition of the rivalry between two nations, the peaceful time spent by the French at port played a key role in shaping the remainder of the *Investigator*'s voyage.¹⁹¹

While Flinders consulted with King as to how best advance the *Investigator*'s survey of the continent, Brown was at work preparing the vessel for future botanical discoveries. Cognisant of the specimens collected by the French botanists, and his lack of live examples, the *Investigator*'s greenhouse was unpacked and installed on the quarterdeck while additional plant boxes were built to accommodate other specimens. In the ten weeks spent in Sydney, Brown and Bauer, along with Peter Good, took every opportunity to survey the settlements of New South Wales and their surrounding wilderness. Joining the *Naturaliste*'s botanist, Jean-Baptiste Leschenault, in the field provided Brown the opportunity to learn of the expedition's troubles at Île de France, assess the state of their collections, and discuss the situation of Van Diemen's Land as was seen by Leschenault. Indeed, the time spent by Flinders and Brown in the company of their French counterparts led the pair to evaluate their competition, both in terms of natural history and geography. Their assessments, and their own progress, were relayed to Banks ahead of the next leg of their voyage.¹⁹²

Neither Brown nor Flinders were particularly impressed with the quality of Baudin's efforts. Flinders was lucky to discover a portion of the southern coast ahead of the French, who instead focused on Van Diemen's Land and the western coast of New Holland. More pragmatic than Flinders, Brown's focus lay in the loss of a greater part of that expedition's scientific retinue and the troubles faced by Baudin in filling those gaps. Each man, however, stressed the work of the others among their own party in furthering their own discoveries, Flinders argued to the

¹⁹¹ Philip Gidley King to Sir Joseph Banks, 5 June 1802 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 81; Starbuck, *Baudin, Napoleon and the Exploration of Australia*, 4, 66, 79; Robert Tiley, *Australian Navigators: Picking up Shells and Catching Butterflies in an Age of Revolution* (Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 2002), 137-140.

¹⁹² Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 415; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 204-206.

benefits for science offered by Brown and Bauer, their abilities “beyond what [he had] been accustomed to see.”¹⁹³ In these letters, then, is an air of confidence in all explorers’ abilities and the capability of their crews in spite of the less than ideal coast that had been examined thus far. Moreover, their requests for additional supplies and concern over future appointments reinforced this confidence in their efforts and capabilities as the expedition entered its second year.

The First Circumnavigation

Though the *Investigator*’s instructions suggested a southern survey following their arrival at Port Jackson, the efforts of Flinders earlier in the year made much of this unnecessary. While the charts produced would be, like many coastal surveys, an outline of the continent, the inclusion of Brown and Bauer’s discoveries would help to validate the coast in much the same way as Banks and Solander had while aboard the *Endeavour*. Faced with a direct rival in Baudin, the *Investigator* then was on hand to at once protect and expand upon the work of that first voyage, using what was gained at Botany Bay to evaluate the coast once more. In consultation with King, he decided to run to the north through the Torres Strait and into the Gulf of Carpentaria ahead of Baudin in the hope of forestalling any major French discoveries. The route would take the *Investigator* along the same stretch of coast seen by the *Endeavour* in 1770, providing Flinders an opportunity beyond any he had thus far to review, correct, and comment on the discoveries of Cook. Cook’s voyage thirty years past was still the standard by which Flinders would be judged, both by himself and the public at large, and while following the *Endeavour*’s path along the eastern coast of New South Wales that reputation was always at the fore.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 20 May 1802 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 58-59; Robert Brown to Sir Joseph Banks, 30 May 1802 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 69-71.

¹⁹⁴ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 5-7, 11-15; Wilson, *The Island Race*, 90-91.

As the *Investigator* was being prepared for the second leg of the expedition, Flinders made use of the colony's population to supplement the losses incurred at Cape Catastrophe. Taking on nine convicts to serve as crew and two aborigines to serve as supernumeraries in the hope that they would facilitate peaceful communication with those aborigines they might encounter along the northern coast, the voyage resumed on 22 July, 1802. Joining the *Investigator* was the brig *Lady Nelson*. Acting as a supporting vessel, under John Murray the *Lady Nelson* was to aid in the survey as per the Admiralty's orders. From the start, Flinders was cautious of pressing too quickly along the coast, portions of which may have been missed by Cook during the night. Though the *Lady Nelson* quickly fell behind, Flinders carefully pressed forwards along this explored section of coast, a pattern of investigation that soon produced results.¹⁹⁵

In the course of the survey, the *Investigator*'s discovery of an opening along the coast provided Flinders "sufficient inducement to stop and examine it ... not the less so because no harbour ... in this situation had been noticed by captain Cook."¹⁹⁶ Though originally wanting to briefly survey the harbour, its considerable appearance suggested to Flinders an importance worthy of a thorough examination, and the opportunity to provide a substantive addition to Cook's charts. In the ten days that followed, Brown and Bauer collected samples and specimens from what would become Port Curtis and Keppel Bay while Flinders and Murray investigated the multitude of arms and inlets of the region. "The task of pursuing these to minuteness and precision was not likely to be a very useful labour" however, and finding the area to be wholly unsuited for a colony, the expedition pressed on lest they detract from the main aims of the voyage.¹⁹⁷ While this discovery

¹⁹⁵ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 407-408, Vol. II, 5-8, 14; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 226-229.

¹⁹⁶ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 30.

¹⁹⁷ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 45-48; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 237-249.

may not have been as beneficial as Flinders might have hoped, it served to open the discoveries of Cook to scrutiny and help begin the process of humanizing the navigator.

As the *Investigator* began to navigate the dangers of the reef, its focus shifted from scientific discovery to discoveries of particular benefit to the colony. The first of these was the examination of Broad Sound, ideally located for “cotton, sugar, coffee, [and] tobacco” to be grown and exported, through established routes from Port Jackson to the south, or directly to China in the north. Between Flinders’ report on the region’s possible economic future and later his three day run through the Torres Straits, it is clear how he saw his role as a British navigator. Arguing that one of “the most advantageous thing[s] ... done for navigation” over the course of the *Investigator*’s voyage was “to have ascertained by experiment the possibility of sailing with safety through Torres’ Strait in three days,” Flinders recognised the usefulness of the route and that “some use may perhaps be made of our discovery” even before a full survey could be complete.¹⁹⁸ Where Cook’s voyages were in search of the theoretical, discovering the edges of the globe, Flinders and the *Investigator* were to find a way to use those discoveries for the improvement of the colony and of the empire. Through survey and study the continent was examined, new, faster, routes to the markets at Canton and India charted, and arable lands marked for future agriculture and industry.

Through Flinders comprehensive form of survey, the remote coasts of New Holland were increasingly coming into clear, precise focus for the benefit of future navigators and geographers. Though aided by the *Lady Nelson*, setbacks incurred in the barrier reef sent the tender limping back to Port Jackson after three months of survey. The *Investigator* now began to follow in the steps of the *Endeavour* in earnest as they continued their survey northward along the coast.

¹⁹⁸ Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 28 March 1803, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 150; Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 253, 259-261; Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 310-311.

However, while Flinders situation was reminiscent of Cook's, his recorded positions did not reflect that same familiarity.¹⁹⁹

Although Flinders calculations had differed from Cook's charted positions before, as the expedition prepared to enter the Gulf of Carpentaria the discrepancy in longitude had increased by an order of magnitude. The timekeepers showing the longitude of the Prince of Wales Islands considerably east of the positions provided by both William Bligh and Cook was a great source of confusion on the *Investigator*. Upon reflection, the error was found to be Cook's. In his 'Memoir,' Flinders best explains the root cause of the uncertainty

I confess my judgement to have been altogether confounded by such unexpected differences; and considering myself to be a mere tyro in nautical science, in comparison of captain Cook, was inclined to believe, that our log, compasses, time-keepers, sextants and myself were all in the wrong, rather than that such errors should have been made by him.²⁰⁰

While he, like Vancouver before him, worked to correct and adjust the discoveries of Cook, Flinders was incredulous to think the famed navigator could make so great an error as was found among the Prince of Wales Islands. Though he had considered himself a student of Cook by way of his former captain, Bligh, the status of James Cook after his death through poem and theatre became mythic. The progress of three decades had raised the navigator's profile, and the progress of three decades of navigation had begun to demystify, ever so slightly, the legend of James Cook.²⁰¹

While the *Investigator* began to correct the positions first laid down by Cook, their troubles only increased as they began their survey of the Gulf. Having quelled rumours of the continent's bisection, focus had shifted to the existence of a large river or rivers leading to the interior, perhaps

¹⁹⁹ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 125-127.

²⁰⁰ Flinders, 'Memoir' in *Australia Circumnavigated*, Volume II, 479.

²⁰¹ Matthew Flinders, quoted in Anne Salmond, *Bligh: William Bligh in the South Seas* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 225; Wilson, *The Island Race*, 88-91.

to an inland sea. Though their southern survey had largely been one of an unknown coast, the charts of the original explorers posed a different type of challenge for the northern survey. Set down between 1623 and 1644, a copy of these maps and their rivers was difficult to relate to the features of Carpentaria. Threat of the approaching monsoon season and the “tediously uniform coast” provided opportunity for little more than a running survey.²⁰² Ill described and poorly documented, the old Dutch charts provided little more benefit than simple conjecture, limiting the *Investigator*’s reliance upon them in favour of more practical means. The results of this necessary survey produced a detailed outline of the Gulf, one that significantly improved upon Europe’s prior knowledge of the region.²⁰³

Writing plainly to Banks on the state of the northern coast, Brown describes New Holland as a land “not ... so rich in plants as [he] expected,” encountering a “scarce 800 species excluding Grasses” over the ten month journey between Port Jackson and Cape Arnhem.²⁰⁴ Already alone on the coast, Brown and Bauer’s specimens, once catalogued, became wholly removed from the contexts in which it was found and instead ordered according to the rules of Linnaeus. In working with Flinders, Brown and company were able to produce a comprehensive picture of the physical coastline and its productions, leaving the interior and its inhabitants as much a mystery as before. Botanic successes notwithstanding, not all of the crew felt their efforts along the Gulf worthy of note, with William Westall bemoaning the “hazardous voyage” undertaken with “little opportunity of employing [his] pencil with any advantage to [himself] or [his] employers.”²⁰⁵ In spite of this seemingly deflated view of their endeavour, the scientific retinue produced some of the voyage’s more interesting discoveries during this first circumnavigation. Though botanic and zoologic

²⁰² Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 162.

²⁰³ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 95, 153-154, 177.

²⁰⁴ Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 302-321, 388.

²⁰⁵ William Westall to Sir Joseph Banks, 31 January 1804, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 310.

discoveries along the northern coast failed to match expectation, their efforts brought back some of the earliest anthropologic and ethnographic evidence from the continent's north.

While productive, Flinders and Brown's cooperation took a form not yet seen among Britain's scientific voyages. While Cook's endeavours centered around a cooperation that was encouraged by the captain's curiosity, his interest in the discoveries of his scientific shipmates, Captain Vancouver did little to engage with the naturalist Archibald Menzies and his work. Bound by their agreement of cooperation, signed at the beginning of the voyage, Flinders and Brown's partnership was characterized by Flinders as, "not altogether cordial, but ... [a] mutual anxiety to forward the complete success of the voyage [being there] bond of union."²⁰⁶ For Brown that anxiety centered around preserving the collections, and Flinders inexperience in storing them while at sea. For Flinders however, that anxiety was focused on the safety of the *Investigator* itself. The discovery of rotten timbers while at the base of the Gulf necessitated a full inspection of the vessel, the results of which were troublesome for the voyage's future efforts. The carpenter's assessment gave the *Investigator* a window of six months afloat in calm waters, and so the survey continued for the next five months along the western coast of Carpentaria. With the crew's health deteriorating on that barren coast and faced with the impending threat of heavy winds, Flinders was forced to abandon his survey, seeking brief respite at Timor before turning west, around New Holland and towards Port Jackson.²⁰⁷

The deliberation leading up to the port at Kupang demonstrated far better than his letters to Banks between 1800 and 1801 the captain's goals for his voyage of discovery. Upon learning of the vessel's precarious nature in November 1802, Flinders was at a loss, his method of minute

²⁰⁶ Matthew Flinders to Ann Flinders, 25 June 1803, Quoted in T.G. Vallance, D.T. Moore & E.W. Groves, eds, *Nature's Investigator*, fn. 1, 25 June 1804, 413.

²⁰⁷ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 179-183, 311-312, 324-325; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 420.

surveying seemingly incompatible with the *Investigator*'s fragile nature. The decision was instead made to head around the western coast of New Holland, sparing the *Investigator* a return through the barrier reef, and to "act as the rising circumstances shall ... seem to require."²⁰⁸ Such circumstances ultimately included a diminishing water supply and more outbreaks of scurvy, of which Flinders also suffered. Unable to produce a survey with any reasonable degree of accuracy, Flinders made the difficult decision to proceed as quickly and safely as possible to Port Jackson. In doing so, he was forced to concede not only the possibility of return to this coast but his place among the famed navigators to whom he aspired, writing that

It may be well said that to leave such a coast as this without exploring it, when there is a possibility, nay perhaps a probability, that I may never again return to accomplish it, shews but very little of that genuine spirit of discovery which contains all danger and inconvenience when put in competition with its gratification! Upon the score of duty I might ... be forgiven, but must never boast of a single spark of that ethereal fire with which the souls of Columbus and of Cook were wont to burn! I am not indeed such a Quixote in discovery as this....²⁰⁹

Seemingly unable to place his name alongside Britain's famous discoverers, Flinders instead spent what time he could developing a course of action that would return the *Investigator*, or at the least her crew, to New Holland's northern coast to complete their original survey.

By the time the *Investigator* had returned to Port Jackson in June of 1803, Flinders' plan was clear: to petition the governor for the use of a colony ship. In a flurry of exchanges with Governor King, Flinders outlined his desire to complete his survey, a two and a half year affair using a suitable vessel. Though King was fully invested in the endeavour, limited choice and lengthy modifications forced Flinders to concede the governor's suggestion and return to England to locate an appropriate ship. Though the thought of "appearing in England before the complete accomplishment" of the survey was difficult for Flinders, he was aware that it was the only way

²⁰⁸ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 184.

²⁰⁹ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 311-312.

to ensure the “pursuits of the scientific gentlemen would [not] be in a great measure stopped.”²¹⁰

When Flinders departed Port Jackson in August, he left behind Robert Brown and Ferdinand Bauer, the naturalist and natural history painter hoping to continue their work until Flinders returned to continue the survey. In their place was sent specimens and samples, the very best of Brown’s collections bound for Banks’ network of natural historians and centers of learning throughout Europe. Though the *Investigator*’s primary survey was, by Flinders estimation, only half complete, England was to soon receive its first glimpses of New Holland’s diverse natural productions.²¹¹

Île de France

After Flinders departure, the roles of Brown and Bauer changed dramatically. No longer tied to the *Investigator*, they began to take on increasingly longer, larger endeavours, collecting and describing from Van Diemen’s Land to Norfolk Island. In continuing their efforts, the pair hoped to take advantage of the season and, in Flinders words, to “greatly advance one of the principal objects of the voyage,” and a testament to their “zeal in prosecuting the service [they] have undertaken.”²¹² Brown’s decision to continue the natural history portion of the voyage provided a great deal of insight into the early growth of Britain’s South Pacific colonial enterprise. The development from a small penal colony to an emerging presence in the southern Pacific, was hinted at as Brown traversed New South Wales, collecting and studying for the benefit of British science, from grasses and trees to herons and even sandstone. This extended period of collecting would prove crucial for Brown, as Flinders returned to Port Jackson in September with news of disaster, 80 men stranded on a sandbar and Brown’s garden and specimens destined for Banks lost

²¹⁰ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 397.

²¹¹ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 392-401; David Philip Miller, “Joseph Bank, empire, and ‘centers of calculation’ in late Hanoverian London,” *Visions of Empire*, 31-32.

²¹² Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. II, 398.

within the reef.²¹³ While it proved a setback for Brown, for Flinders the wreck served as an omen for what would to come.

By the time Flinders had set off once more for Britain, war had returned to Europe. Though word had yet to reach New South Wales, it had found its way to a small French colony in the Indian Ocean, Île de France. Having taken the *Cumberland* through the Torres Strait, Flinders turned to the colony for repairs, believing the peace, and the promise of all “necessary safe passage and protection” afforded by his French passport enough to ensure aid.²¹⁴ News from the explorer was slow to reach Port Jackson, in a letter that Governor King wrote to Banks in April of 1804 on the state of the colony mentioned Flinders’ voyage to Britain, the governor hoping that “this [attempt to] return in the little *Cumberland* . . . will be more successful than that in the porpoise.”²¹⁵ In reality, Flinders arrival at Mauritius in mid December of 1803 was met with considerable suspicion on the part of the governor, General Decaen, and led to the captain’s arrest. Already struggling to reach the achievements of his predecessors, the arrest and subsequent seizure of his charts and journals was an injury which threatened the whole of the expedition’s achievements.

The disparity between Flinders’ treatment on Mauritius and Baudin’s at Sydney was one that, for Flinders, defied comprehension. While he would, eventually, see the return of many of his papers, he nevertheless was detained by a man “for whom science has no charms, - who [would] sacrifice national faith to an unfounded suspicion, - whom humanity cannot soften, nor good offices done to ships of his nation at the port from whence we came.”²¹⁶ Able to do little else while confined to the island, Flinders set about organizing his journals and charts, filling in missing

²¹³ Brown, *Nature’s Investigator*, 417-421, 436-439; For an example of Brown’s extensive program of collection see *Nature’s investigator*, 445-447, for a list of his efforts at Georges River over a four day period in September 1803.

²¹⁴ Flinders, *Australia Circumnavigated*, Vol. I, 133-134, Vol. II, Appendix 2, 511.

²¹⁵ Philip Gidley King to Sir Joseph Banks, April 1804, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 327.

²¹⁶ Flinders, ‘Memoir’ in *Australia Circumnavigated*, Volume II, 404.

information and expanding the more engaging portions of the voyage. In short, Flinders began preparing his notes for publication. As his imprisonment lengthened however, Flinders grew increasingly wary of his captor and his motives. Worried that the “violent hands of the French captain-general may [in] the next hour deprive [him] of the whole fruits of [his] labours,” Flinders concern centered on the *Investigator*’s extensive work “being either wholly lost or appearing, unacknowledged, in the works of a rival navigator and nation.”²¹⁷ Wary that French navigators may adopt his efforts for their own ends while he remained away from notice and promotion, Flinders great concern was borne of his ambition. This threat to the reputation of the British Navy and her navigator was a concern shared by the great authority of British imperial science, Joseph Banks.

It is over the course of Flinders’ imprisonment that the role of Sir Joseph as the center of British, and to some extent European, scientific exploration and collection was at its zenith. Banks lobbied France’s literary elite to plead on Flinders behalf to Napoleon, worked closely with his avatars of collection around the globe, and even advised the governors of New South Wales. Banks’s influence both scientific and political demonstrates the extent to which the two spheres had developed a common ground by the early nineteenth century. By employing collectors throughout the British empire, applying the unique program of acclimatization to their discoveries, Banks and others had globalized the science of botany and utilized those findings for the improvement of colonial industry. Through one of those avatars, Robert Brown, the level of interest held in New South Wales to expand Britain’s control over the coast of New Holland was visible, as was the role of science in establishing that control.²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Flinders, ‘Memoir’ in *Australia Circumnavigated*, Volume II, 404.

²¹⁸ Sir Joseph Banks to Matthew Flinders, 18 June 1805, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 7, 44-45; David Mackay, “Agents of Empire: The Banksian Collectors and Evaluation of New Lands,” in *Visions of Empire*:

From the time of their departure from the *Investigator* until their return to England, Robert Brown and Ferdinand Bauer absorbed themselves with the natural history of New South Wales from the colonial centers out into the adjoining countryside. Going their separate ways, the pair reviewed and evaluated the productions of the country and its potential for British settlement. Each site brought under their scrutiny provided a benefit for the emerging colony, from strategic regional control to necessary resources such as wood and arable land, all of which held the potential to become nodes in Banks's program of natural history collection and distribution. Beyond the original scope of their orders, Brown and Bauer's decision to remain says as much to their conviction as it does that of Flinders, each trying to continue the *Investigator*'s objectives in the face of numerous challenges. In spreading their efforts, Brown and Bauer pursued a policy of study and collection over their eighteen months, producing the largest and most complete evaluation of the continent's flora and fauna. Each of these locations, from Port Phillip to the River Derwent and out to Norfolk Island, were chosen as points of collection not for their unique productions but for their apparent value as potential sites of settlement. Through Brown and Bauer, the vanguard of Britain's imperial project, a British presence in New South Wales was solidified under the growing shadow of a colonial French empire.²¹⁹

While Flinders' continued imprisonment provided a significant hindrance to further exploration, his time spent on Mauritius was not altogether wasted. With Banks appealing for his release, Flinders set to work editing his papers and correcting his charts, preparing the collection for a narrative of exploration and discovery, the tale of the *Investigator*. In describing his efforts

Voyages, Botany, and Representations of Nature, ed. David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 38-42, 46-49.

²¹⁹ Ferdinand Bauer to Sir Joseph Banks, 27 August 1804 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 6, 368; Starbuck, *Baudin, Napoleon and the Exploration of Australia*, 66; Brown, *Nature's Investigator*, 487-488; Rachel Stanfield, *Race and Identity in the Tasman World, 1769-1840* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), 83-88.

first hand, Flinders was following once more in the wake of Cook, presenting his scientific expedition, his discoveries, in a form that would legitimize his achievements to the public. For all his effort however, Flinders came up short in the race to publish his work. Though his release had been approved by Napoleon in 1804, Flinders departure was repeatedly stalled by Governor Decaen, fostering a sense of paranoia surrounding not only his eventual freedom but for his findings as well. These suspicions were confirmed in early 1809 when, entering the sixth year of his imprisonment, he was shown a letter from the first lieutenant of *Le Géographe*, Louis de Freycinet, which ascribed many, if not all, of the *Investigator*'s discoveries to the French effort. In reviewing the maps drawn up by both Flinders (Figure III) and Freycinet (Figure IV), Flinders' fear of French superimposition is clearly realized.²²⁰

From the naming of Gulphe Bonaparte and Gulphe Joséphine along the coast of Terre Napoleon, the endeavour was perceived as a conspiracy of the highest order. Through their chance meeting at Encounter Bay, Flinders believed that neither Freycinet nor the naturalist Péron were responsible for this appropriation. Arguing instead that “they search at Paris to deprive [him] of the little honour with the scientific world” and his “imprisonment [being] connected with this invasion of the maritime reputation of England,” Flinders awaited a saviour to “vindicate [England's] reputation and that of her navigators.”²²¹ Rooted in the contentious period of Pacific rivalry between Britain and France, coming to a head during the Napoleonic era, nearly seven years imprisoned on Mauritius only added to the speculation. Such skepticism and paranoia remained well beyond Flinders eventual release and return to England.

²²⁰ Roy Bridges, “Exploration and Travel Outside Europe (1720-1914),” in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 56-57; Mack, *Matthew Flinders*, 197-200; Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 24 January 1808 in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence*, Vol. 7, 316-318.

²²¹ Matthew Flinders to Sir Joseph Banks, 28 February 1809, BL - Add MS 32439/281a-282a.



Figure III: Matthew Flinders, Chart of Terra Australis, 1802
<http://gutenberg.net.au/MapsAndCharts-sea-images/SA2-t573-e.jpg>

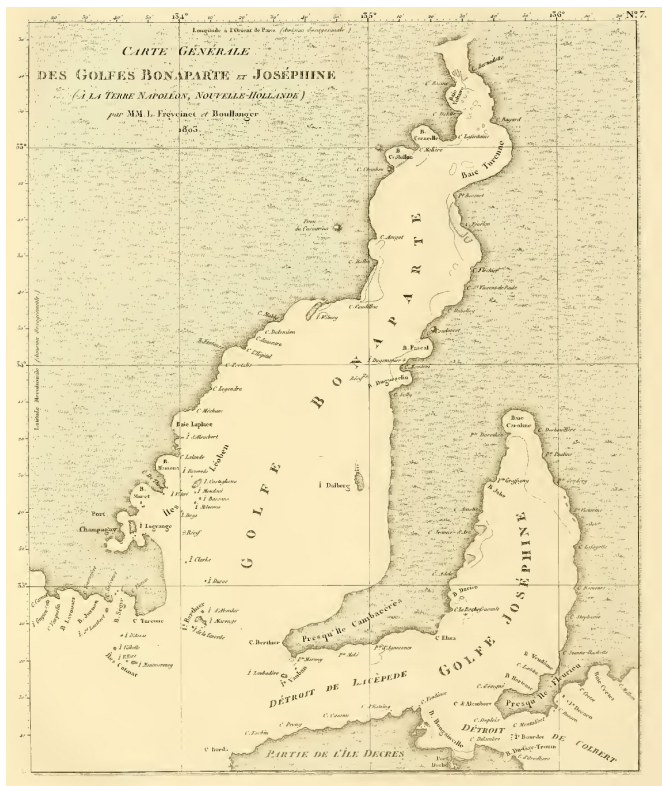


Figure IV: Freycinet and Boullanger, Carte Générale des Golfs Bonaparte et Joséphine, 1803
http://gutenberg.net.au/MapsAndCharts-sea-images/SA1-nsw46_a1340046h.jpg

Returning to England in October of 1810, Flinders came upon the *Investigator*'s collections already catalogued and organized for the Navy Board under the supervision of Bauer and Brown. All that was left was for the record of discovery to be corrected, to undo the published claims of the Baudin expedition, and Flinders began to write his narrative. More than a revised journal, Flinders used his original remarks as a starting point to help shape what would be his public legacy. Confirming his discoveries and challenging the Freycinet map, marking an end to the *Investigator*'s expedition, *A Voyage to Terra Australis* sought to set straight the record of discovery and place Flinders among Britain's celebrated navigators. Though never receiving the acclaim of Cook, Matthew Flinders and the *Investigator* provided an end to nearly a half decade of Pacific exploration that would leave the Antarctic as the last great mystery.²²²

²²² Mack, *Matthew Flinders*, 229-234, 237-238.

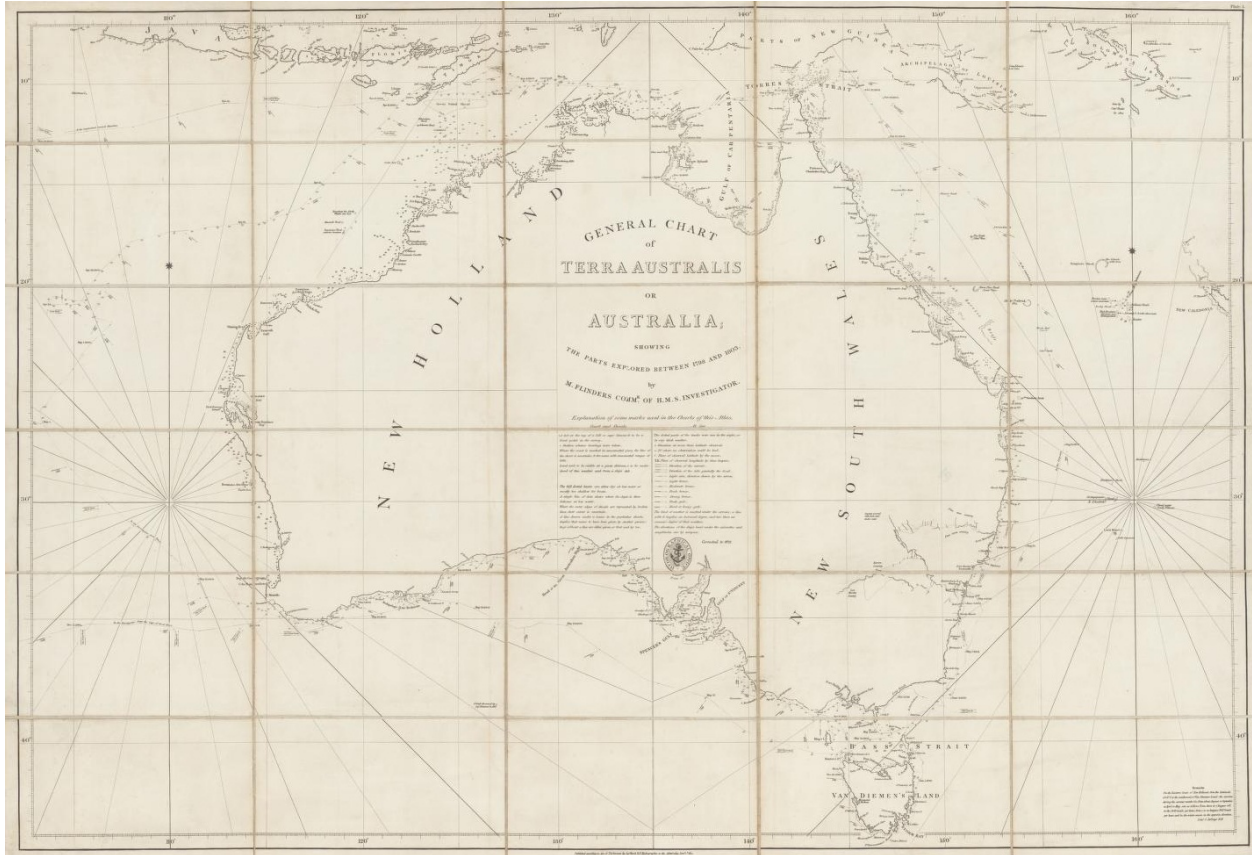


Figure V: Matthew Flinders, General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia, 1814
http://gutenberg.net.au/MapsAndCharts-sea-images/14_Flinders.jpg

Chapter Five
From Coastlines to Continents
Exploration and Scientific Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century

What Power inspir'd his dauntless breast to brave
The scorch'd Equator, and th' Antarctic wave?
Climes, where fierce Suns in cloudless ardors shine,
And pour the dazzling deluge round the Line;
The realms of frost, where icy mountains rise,
'Mid the pale summer of the polar skies?---
It was HUMANITY !---on coasts unknown²²³

- *Elegy on Captain Cook*, Anna Seward (1780)

Perhaps whilst discoveries by sea are thus dwelt upon, encouragement should be given to travellers by land, for procuring better information with regard to the central parts of Asia, Africa, and America. In short, let us endeavour to know as much as we may of our globe; nor should this be considered as a vain and trifling curiosity, though no benefits to commerce may result from these inquiries.²²⁴

- *Miscellanies by the Honourable Daines Barrington*, Daines Barrington (1781)

Interest in the scientific expedition, by the early nineteenth century, had begun to wane. Between the previous half century of progress and developing continental politics, the allure of the unknown Pacific was gone. The disjointed, barren southern continent of Vaugondy (Figure I) had given way to the comprehensive detail of Flinders' Australia (Figure V). The period that followed was one of introversion and reflection, organizing the findings of the Pacific for study in a way that failed to engage the public as the voyages once had. While published narratives remained, the scientific gravitas of those voyages was replaced by the idealized perceptions put forth by both theatre and poetry. Though this decline had been granted several reprieves since the voyage of the *Endeavour*, the state sponsored expedition was necessarily tied to national interests be they pride or politics. By 1815, with national interests increasingly focused on the European

²²³ Anna Seward, "Elegy on Captain Cook," in *Empire and Identity: An Eighteenth-Century Sourcebook*, ed. Stephen H. Gregg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 216.

²²⁴ Daines Barrington, *Miscellanies by the Honourable Daines Barrington* (London: J. Nichols, 1781), viii.

continent, the scientific expedition became an afterthought, something to be utilized in a capacity more private than public moving forward.²²⁵

This shift became a hallmark of a new, colonial, science at the turn of the century. Though European centers of collection remained, the colonies developed into centers of experimentation themselves, adapting to the new resources moving through every corner of the empire. Be it Tahitian breadfruit in the West Indies or Chinese tea in India, Britain's program of acclimatization was focused around the insight of a single individual, Sir Joseph Banks. As President of the Royal Society he had advised on the voyages of Vancouver and Flinders, and played a crucial role in the sustained interest of exploration. Following his example, private groups such as his Association for the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa were established. Pushing for further discovery, these associations maintained the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Endeavour* voyage well into the nineteenth century.²²⁶

As a key node of consolidation in Banks' expanding scientific network, the Royal Gardens at Kew moved the imperial project away from the realm of text and illustration and into the physical world. By experimenting with this form of acclimatization, the gardens at Kew served a dual purpose, at once promoting the natural sciences while engaging the public with the larger empire, removing the barrier distance once presented. This source of inspiration helped to further the romantic perception of the Pacific and those who explored it, shaping the popular identity of men such as Cook into an idealized caricature. This hagiographic style of artistic memorial held great sway in the years following his death, placing Cook's near mythic status central in the public

²²⁵ Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*, 162-165, 175-178.

²²⁶ Osborne, "Acclimatizing the World: A History of Paradigmatic Colonial Science," 135-137; Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 29-32.

eye. For those who followed in the wake of Cook, this perceived identity formed the basis of their endeavours, a model of conduct for these agents of science and empire.²²⁷

As far as these perceptions influenced the likes of George Vancouver and Matthew Flinders, its legacy can be seen in the work of later inland adventurers. Be it Mungo Park's exploration of the Niger or Alexander von Humboldt's inquiries in Spanish America, their works, from printed journals to codified maps, specimen collections and scientific descriptions, echo the methods of the Pacific, a tangible link from coastlines to continents. This continuity helps to both understand and contextualise the impact of scientific exploration and discovery in the public identity ascribed to such explorers as the voyages transitioned from official, state backed missions to inland expeditions, from public ventures to private endeavours. From recorded anecdotes to those tales omitted from an explorer's narrative, each helped to shape the image of the enlightened British explorer, an image that would be known to their audience and reinforced by the popularized representations in fiction.²²⁸

As expeditions took on a more imperial tone, the perception of these endeavours too changed. From scientific curiosity and national pride to territorial claims and wartime competition, the voyages were shaped by the shifting political climate of Europe as much, if not more than, the realities of the Pacific. When tensions ran high between Britain and Spain or France, the orders of an expedition advocated cooperation and comradery. The voyages of Cook became a recognizable endeavour, one whose successes benefitted not only his home country but all nations. Though shaped by politics, each voyage reflected the scientific attitudes of the Royal Society and later its head, Sir Joseph Banks, in pursuing the program of acclimatization and accumulation that made

²²⁷ Philip J. Stern, "Exploration and Enlightenment," 59-61; Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, 124-130.

²²⁸ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 39-49; Fulford, Lee, Kitson, *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era*, 34-39; Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, 54-58, 74-76.

Kew the centre of natural history during the Romantic era. Moreover, in this increasingly global eighteenth century, Banks's program of acclimatization saw the spread of European knowledge and knowledge systems out into the colonies themselves, be they gardeners, governors, or explorers. Spreading knowledge throughout the globe, returning with goods, theories, and methods previously unknown in Europe, this process helped to expand the world while at the same time shrinking the divide between colonies and the European centre.²²⁹

The science of exploration, then, became the science of empires. By building upon the foundations of navigation, the South Sea was transformed from a *mare incognitum* to a navigable thoroughfare. By the same token the productions of the globe, its diverse flora and fauna, were co-opted for study and experimentation to be used to fuel emerging industry and colonial expansion. This imperial science, aided by the opposing views of pragmatism and romanticism that surrounded the *Endeavour* and later voyages, took root both within and without the halls of Europe's academies and bureaucratic institutions. Fostering a sense of unity among Europe's scientific communities while at the same time serving as a tool for international pressure and competition, imperial science became a method through which control over the far flung reaches of the globe could be achieved by way of a more complete understanding of the world. The tools of empire, then, came in the form of ink and pen, chronometer and sextant.²³⁰

While scientific imperialism produced results that were, at the outset, confined to the scientific communities, the more accessible products of these voyages provided a sense of place, not only for the individual but for the nation. Deserved or not, the veneration of James Cook served

²²⁹ Brian W. Richardson, *Longitude and Empire: How Captain Cook's Voyages Changed the World* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2010), 79-82; Miller, "Joseph Banks, Empire, and 'Centers of Calculation' in Late Hanoverian London," 25-33; Gascoigne, "The Ordering of Nature and the Ordering of Empire," 108-113; Glen M. Rodgers, "Benjamin Franklin and the Universality of Science," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 85.1 (1961): 50-52.

²³⁰ Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, 54-56; Mackay, "Agents of Empire," 38-40, 45-47.

to produce an ideal in much the way that has been argued by Mary Louise Pratt and others. He was the prototypic enlightened explorer, the standard to which all who followed would be judged, be it by themselves or others. The presence of Cook's *Voyages* among ships libraries served not only as an early guide to the South Pacific but as a template by which everything from survey to contact should take place. From Cook, then, began a legacy of the enlightened explorer, one who carried out the role of impassive observer of everything he encountered.²³¹

Through the languages and methods of Linnaean classification and European cartography, British explorers impressed upon the Pacific a number of uniquely foreign concepts to order what they found in terms they could relate and understand. As argued by Donaldson and Donaldson, scientific observation and description exercises a form of power which, while at times subtle, is nevertheless a significant tool of control. In crafting the South Seas, through compass and chronometer, pen and paint, these voyages of discovery fostered an idea of the Pacific that took root and held fast with the aid of published journals. This idea, the untouched Pacific, created by Europe's explorers, persisted, overrode, and replaced the realities they encountered.²³²

This, then, can be said to be the legacy of Britain's imperial, empirical, project of discovery. Beyond the achievements to natural history and navigation, of colonial expansion and the development of new industries and new markets, the policy produced an ideal model, the quintessential expedition. While future discovery relied less and less on coastal survey and more on terrestrial navigation, it nevertheless was inspired by the models and methods of that earlier period of exploration. Through Linnaean classification and European cartography, Mungo Park

²³¹ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 37-40, 75-77; Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, 201-205; Gillian Russell, "An 'Entertainment of Oddities': Fashionable Sociability and the Pacific in the 1770s," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48-54.

²³² Donaldson and Donaldson, "First Sight," 15-17.

and those that followed him brought the spirit, if not the resources, of a naval voyage of discovery into the African continent while Alexander von Humboldt followed suit in the Amazon. In the same vein, the project of imperial gardens, stocked with collections from around the world, relied on the networks of colonial governments and botanical agents to expand and improve the productions of the land around them. Borne out of the act of discovery, this reciprocal relationship between the European hub and the colonial periphery began to shrink the globe, for better or for worse, and unify disparate corners to a common centre. What began as a plea for support from the Royal Society developed into an institution of science and discovery, a self sufficient network of clubs and societies that expanded Europe's understanding of the globe and rewrote the globe's understanding of its self.²³³

²³³ Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces*, 256-263; Alan Frost, "The Antipodean Exchange: European Horticulture and Imperial Designs," in *Visions of Empire*, 59-67; Philip J. Stern, "'Rescuing the Age From a Charge of Ignorance': Gentility, Knowledge, and the British Exploration of Africa in the Later Eighteenth Century," in *A New Imperial History*, 132-135.

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