

Hawkesworth's 'lamentable error' in invalidating 'some of the most comfortable parts of the creed of his countrymen', adding sententiously, 'but who can wonder at what was written, when a Sandwich was the patron?'³⁹ (The Earl of Sandwich was a notable libertine.)

Instead Knox reaffirmed the commonsensical Johnsonian norms for travel writing:

the style of voyages and travels should be plain, simple, perspicuous, and unaffected. I think they seldom appear to great advantage, but when written in the words of the traveller or voyager, at the very time at which the circumstances which he relates occurred.⁴⁰

Knox here underscores the conventions of 'naïve empiricism', autoptic witness, and 'writing to the moment' expected of travel writing in the eighteenth century. When purged of superfluous adulterations, as well as anything 'injurious to the morals or the political principles of one's own country', Knox knew 'of no books of amusement whatever so well adapted to young people . . . They interest the mind as much as a novel; but, instead of rendering it effeminate and debauched, they make it usefully inquisitive, and furnish it with matter for reflection'.⁴¹ (Knox felt that travel books made improving reading for young women as well as men; his presupposition that most writers in the genre were men is reflected in the relative scarcity of eighteenth-century travelogues by women, in comparison to their high nineteenth-century profile.) As we shall see in Chapter 1, the educative and moralizing qualities of 'novelty and curiosity' were frequently taken to be more problematic than appears to be the case in Knox's account. Like the eighteenth-century novel, travel writing could transgress social norms, but inasmuch as it represented a 'literature of fact'—and of heroic endeavour—it was considered to be at least potentially improving in a way that no purely fictional narrative could be.

³⁹ Vicesimus Knox, i., p. 114.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, i., p. 117.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, i., p. 118.

I

Cycles of Accumulation, Aesthetics of Curiosity, and Temporal Exchange

The eighteenth-century popularity of books of voyages and travels reflected the rise of European commercial and colonial expansion. It is appropriate that the contemporary wave of scholarly interest in travel writing should follow in the wake of Edward Said's pathbreaking *Orientalism* (1978) and the interest in the discourses of colonialism which it stirred up, especially in literary studies. Ironically, as Steve Clark points out, 'because of post-colonial scholarship, travel writing . . . has become interesting for us again; but usually as a kind of love that dare not speak its name'.¹ Said's constructivist notion of 'orientalism' is acknowledged in the present study to the extent to which the voices and descriptions of indigenous peoples reported by travellers are read as mirrors of their own cultures, and their insistence on 'objectivity' is understood as being at least partly rhetorical in function. Michel de Certeau warns of the futility of 'set[ting] off in quest of this voice that has been simultaneously colonised and mythified by recent Western history. There is . . . no "pure" voice, because it is always determined by a system . . . and codified by a way of receiving it'.²

Nevertheless, I am wary of underestimating the degree to which eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century travellers were bound by empirical protocols which demanded rigorous practices of description and notation, however distorted these reports now seem to us. In this respect Edward Said is only partially correct in describing travel writing as 'a textual attitude'.³ Representations that appeared to be merely 'textual' stereotypes were refused credit, just as representations that—to quote Vicesimus Knox again—were 'injurious to the morals or political principles of one's own country' (that is, were *inadequately*

¹ 'Introduction' to *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. by Steve Clark (London and NY: Zed Books, 1999), p. 3. See John Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995) for a historian's critique of Said.

² *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 132, 134. See also Gayatri Spivak 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 294.

³ Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp. 92–3.

textual inasmuch as they threatened ethical and literary norms) were equally unacceptable. The following chapters are written in the spirit of Anthony Pagden's subtle point that 'the process by which this "other" is constructed is not, as has so often been claimed, a rather simple act of political appropriation . . . For however much we may . . . fabricate rather than find our counter-image, we do not fabricate it out of nothing. We cannot think counter-factually about less than whole worlds.'⁴

In this chapter I seek to provide some theoretical orientation for the more empirical readings that follow. In the first section I examine the (by no means inevitable, or uncontested) dynamics of Europe's appropriation of distant peoples, knowledges, and objects, which provides the material context for the travel narratives and exotic displays studied in this book. In the second I consider the aesthetics of curiosity as a phenomenology of distant travel, troubling to many enlightenment commentators to the extent that it seemed to undermine a rational and 'philosophical' appropriation of the foreign. In the final section, I turn (with specific reference to the 'antique lands' of my title) to the temporalizing metaphor which interpreted geographical in terms of historical distance, but which also came increasingly under attack from 'modernizing' critics who sought to replace a hermeneutic with a scientific framework for representing distant places and peoples. How did 'modern' European travellers represent their own relation to 'antique lands', I ask, and to what extent was the 'temporal exchange' (whereby European modernity was exchanged for the archaic, the curious, and the picturesque) constitutive of travel writing in this period?

I take as my starting point, however, the *vulnerability* rather than self-sufficiency of European travellers, in relation to the lands and peoples in which they travelled, and the instability rather than authority of their published narratives, in the eyes of metropolitan readerships. (One might note here Felix Driver's remark that even in a later era of high imperialism, 'attitudes towards both exploration and empire were far more diverse than has often been recognised'.⁵) Rather than represent Europe's encounter with its 'others' as a manichaean opposition of power and innocence, a uniform global plot resulting in 'fatal impact', I follow Nicholas Thomas in stressing the contingency (and often confusion) which determined the 'cultural entanglements' of European travellers in diverse times and places.⁶ Particularly in the light of the pressing global inequalities of our own time, there is an urgent political need to contest

⁴ Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World, From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 184.

⁵ Felix Driver, 'H. M. Stanley and his Critics: Geography, Exploration and Empire', *Past and Present*, 133 (November 1991), 134-66, 136.

⁶ Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Harvard University Press, 1991) and *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). See also the editors' introduction to *Voyages and*

the tendency (ironically enough, often manifested by post-colonial critics themselves) to exaggerate the historical and geographical reach of European hegemony, and its power over different cultures.

Notwithstanding the barbarities of the eighteenth-century Atlantic slave triangle, and the subsequent historical record of European imperialism, the relative weakness of Europe's global power in the period addressed in this book will perhaps surprise modern readers. The 1770s and 1780s, for instance, saw the defeat of British forces by well-equipped modern Maratha and Mysorean armies in India, as well as by her colonists in America. Of the other regions studied in this book, Abyssinia remained independent of colonial rule until the twentieth century, destroying an invading European army as late as 1895,⁷ whilst both Egypt and Mexico actually rid themselves of European colonial rule by military means (if not an increasing dependence upon European *capital*) in the early decades of the nineteenth century. If European power on a global scale was considerably weaker around 1800 than it was to be a century later, then concomitantly Asian and African societies beyond the boundaries of European rule were much stronger.⁸ If the narratives studied in this book are to make any historical sense, it is this global balance of power which must be acknowledged as a context for European travel, rather than a projection back in time of the *modern* globalized world-order.

One major achievement of Mary Louise Pratt's seminal *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, beyond its scrupulous attention to the literary conventions of European travel writing,⁹ has been to question the notion of colonial discourse as a 'closed system' which efficiently suppressed (or merely ventriloquized) indigenous voices, thereby granting European colonialism a retrospective authority which in effect it never possessed. Pratt's use of notions like 'transculturation' and 'autoethnology' permit a more nuanced account of 'the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of conquest and domination'. Although acknowledging that these encounters were often characterized by

Beaches: Pacific Encounters, 1769-1840, ed. by Alex Calder, Jonathan Lamb, and Bridget Orr (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), pp. 1-25.

⁷ The Italians lost 70 per cent of their army to the Emperor Menilek at the Battle of Adwa. See George Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 98-9.

⁸ As C. A. Bayly has indicated, this fact has tended to be overlooked partly because powerful indigenous states like Ranjit Singh's Punjab or Muhammad Ali's Egypt *did* lose their independence in later decades, between 1830 and 1880. See C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), p. 234.

⁹ Generic questions are deliberately put aside in two influential recent studies, Denis Porter's *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), and Tim Youngs' *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850-1900* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).

'radically asymmetrical relations of power',¹⁰ Pratt commendably side-steps a totalizing neo-imperialist teleology. In so doing she punctures the myth of an unassailable history of European global supremacy and acknowledges the historical agency of those peoples who were in constant (and often effective) struggle against the imposition of colonial subalternity.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that Pratt does not go far enough in breaking up and discriminating the grand historical narrative of European global dominance. Discourses of eighteenth-century travel are still to some extent read retrospectively in terms of the hawkish imperatives of Victorian high imperialism. Although she derives her notion of the 'contact zone' from the linguistic study of 'contact languages' such as pidgin and creole, it is hard to avoid the semantic resonance of the imperialist 'combat zone' (intentionally?) underlying her nomenclature.¹¹ By the same token, scientific travel writing in the eighteenth century is denominated 'anti-conquest' in order to evoke 'the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony'.¹² But until eighteenth-century travellers exchanged cultural disguise for military uniform (a transition studied in Chapters 3 and 4 of the present book) they were often more concerned with survival than with rationalizing their curiosity as a form of 'anti-conquest'. If they were lucky enough to return home (many were not) to publish their travel accounts, they were perhaps more concerned to convince sceptical readers of the truth of their claims than to feed a triumphalist discourse of empire. Even in an age of sensibility, the rhetoric of vulnerability in travel writing was not merely feigned.

How can we gain a purchase on the historical particularity of the traveller's encounter with foreign cultures without subscribing to an essentializing binary model of 'otherness'? How might one theorize the material relations between Europe's 'centre' and 'peripheries' whilst relativizing the epistemology of travel writing in relation to those non-European knowledges upon which it was often dependent? In tackling these questions, I have found a useful resource in Bruno Latour's actor/network model of exploration as a 'cycle of accumulation', out-

¹⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel-Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge 1992), p. 7.

¹¹ James Clifford has since deployed Pratt's term to theorize the 'overlapping, discrepant histories' of the post-colonial museum, in which, given the tempo of recent debates about repatriation, the sense of cultural contact as combat seems perfectly appropriate. See 'Museums as Contact Zones', in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late-20th Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), chapter 7, p. 208.

¹² Pratt, pp. 7, 39. Although Pratt claims that her coinage 'anti-conquest' seeks to disassociate enlightened exploration from 'older imperial rhetorics of conquest associated with the absolutist era' (p. 7), it might just as well serve to define 18th-century travel *by negation* as precursor of the grand narrative of later 19th-century imperial conquest.

lined in his 1987 *Science in Action*.¹³ Although like all sociological models it has its limitations for the purposes of literary analysis, Latour's understanding of 'science in action' as the progressive mobilization and accumulation of distance makes it extremely suggestive for thinking about the relations between eighteenth-century travel accounts, the worlds they describe, and the metropolitan institutions and readerships which determined their reception. The economic allusion which resonates in Latour's use of the term 'accumulation' also indicates the manner in which exploration networks stood in an asymptotic relationship with those of European commerce and capital. Complementary, of course, but not identical: eighteenth-century travel was required to be *both* curious and useful.

Latour's chapter 'Centres of Calculation' begins by considering the exemplary case of the French explorer La Pérouse, who, in July 1787, landed in a little-known region of the north-west Pacific coast called Sakhalin. Like most eighteenth-century sea-borne explorers, La Pérouse was primarily concerned with collecting latitudinal and longitudinal measurements and coastal profiles in order to map unknown regions of the world. La Pérouse wanted to know whether Sakhalin was an island or a peninsula, but, because he had no time to find out for himself, he engaged some Sakhalinese Ainu people (Latour erroneously calls them 'Chinese savages')¹⁴ to draw him a map of the area on the sand of the beach. On the evidence of a map sketched by one obliging old man, La Pérouse understood that Sakhalin was indeed an island: the map revealed its spatial position *vis-à-vis* the Chinese mainland, although it was of limited use in other respects and was of course washed away by the next tide. Bad weather prevented La Pérouse from verifying this information, but nevertheless the old man's cartography was taken to be correct. At Kamchatka, La Pérouse sent one of his officers, De Lesseps, overland back to France carrying the maps, notebooks, and bearings gathered over two years of exploration, including the information about Sakhalin. The next year, 1788, La Pérouse's two ships disappeared in the Pacific and none of the crew was ever seen again. The only trace ever found was a piece of the ship's stern bearing the image of a fleur-de-lis that had become the door of a native hut, and the hilt of a sword, found on the island of Vanikoro in the Santa Cruz group in 1826.

Latour elicits from this episode the mechanism by which the implicit geography of the inhabitants of Sakhalin was made explicit by European

¹³ Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987). See also Michael Bravo's essay 'Ethnographic Navigation and the Geographic Gift' in *Geography and the Enlightenment*, ed. by David N. Livingstone and Charles W. J. Withers (pp. 199–235), which finds some problems with Latour's model, not least his historical grasp of what was at stake in La Pérouse's encounter with the natives of Sakhalin.

¹⁴ See Bravo, p. 228.

geographers, as local knowledge was translated into the universal grid of European cartographers. Unlike Pratt, however, Latour denies that this transition from ethnogeography to geography reflects anything more than a difference of degree (not a difference of kind) between European and native knowledges. In fact, when La Pérouse's ship *L'Astrolabe* first arrived on the coast of Sakhalin, La Pérouse's knowledge is described as being 'weaker' than that of the natives whom he met, given his ignorance of the lie of the land and his dependence upon indigenous information.¹⁵ Latour does not need to interpret the vulnerability claims of early travellers as merely rhetorical statements which mask imperatives of imperial conquest. If the traveller disappears, or more importantly, if he fails to gather information (publication may itself be seen in this light as a kind of rite of passage), then his enterprise will have been completely unproductive, except in so far as his failure might serve to stimulate other explorers. Latour insists that the traveller

will always be weaker than any one of the peoples, of the lands, of the climates, of the reefs, he meets around the world, always at their mercy. Those who go away from the lands in which they are born and who cross the paths of other people [can] disappear without trace.¹⁶

However, the traveller *will* gain an advantage over the native peoples he meets if he is able to bring back information and objects which will allow them to be seen for the first time 'so that others might be sent back again to bring other things back. How to be familiar with things, peoples and events, which are *distant*?¹⁷ Had La Pérouse not dispatched De Lesseps on his long overland journey with the notebooks, his disappearance in the Pacific would have meant that European knowledge would have remained in a weaker position than that of the Sakhalinese in the Western Pacific region. The power of the centre to act at a distance upon unfamiliar events, places, and peoples lies in its prior ability to bring them back home. Distant places, events, and objects must be rendered *mobile, stable* (so that they can be moved back and forth without decay or distortion resulting from decontextualization), and *combinable*, 'so that whatever stuff they are made of, they can be cumulated, aggregated, or shuffled like a pack of cards'.¹⁸ Whilst the morphology of land masses has to be translated into cartographic symbols in order to be rendered mobile, material objects such as rocks, birds, plants, and artefacts can be directly extracted from their contexts, preserved (stabilized), dispatched (mobilized), and combined in European

¹⁵ This is especially likely to be the case if, in an eventuality not adequately developed by Latour, native knowledge is already inscribed within the networks of another powerful, non-European cycle of accumulation, such as Mogul India, Ottoman Western Asia, or Manchu China.

¹⁶ Latour, p. 219.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

museums, libraries, and universities. Transverse relations can then be established between them and objects collected and accumulated from other points on the network so that a representation of the distant world can be constructed in the metropolis. The same can be said, of course, for the experience of the travellers themselves as narrated in the travel account, with the proviso, as Anthony Pagden points out, that 'the traveller's narrative is . . . the most complex and least stable thing which he can bring back with him. Taken from their contexts, words, too, lose their certainty just as objects do.'¹⁹

Accordingly, when the English ship *Neptune* landed in the same bay of Sakhalin a decade later, in 1797, the European navigators were now 'stronger' than the natives because they were in possession of the 'mobiles' gathered by La Pérouse and conveyed overland to the Parisian 'centre of calculation' by De Lesseps. The epistemological asymmetry which had developed between the inhabitants of Sakhalin (orientated—*for Europeans*—'on the periphery'), and European geographers and cartographers at the 'centre of calculation' is a consequence of the latter's accumulation of mobiles 'bearings, clocks, diaries, labels, dictionaries, specimens, herbaries', many of which translated indigenous knowledge.²⁰ Latour is at pains to emphasize that this asymmetry is not constituted by a qualitative opposition of 'knowledge' to 'ignorance', or even 'oral' to 'written', but rather needs to be considered in relation to the whole cycle of accumulation which historically favours the Europeans as natives of a 'centre of calculation . . . act[ing] at a distance on many other points'.²¹ Rejecting a binary opposition between Western scientific realism versus Sakhalinese 'local knowledge', Latour posits instead 'two local knowledges, one of them having the shape of a network transporting back and forth immutable mobiles to act at a distance'.²² To illustrate this, he makes the challenging assertion that 'botany is the *local knowledge* generated inside gathering institutions like the Jardin des Plantes or Kew gardens'.²³

Latour's model should not be interpreted as a celebration of the inexorable advance of Western exploration networks over global space. Rather than enjoying uncontested movement, he insists, Europeans and their mobiles 'travel[ed] inside narrow and fragile networks, resembling the galleries termites build to link their nests to their feeding sites'.²⁴ (This is especially true of land-travellers like Bruce, Mungo Park, or Burckhardt, entirely dependent upon indigenous routes and caravans, compared to sea-horne explorers.) There were frequent opportunities for leakage along the way, and the networks of accumulation were far from being entirely dependable, even by sea. Mobilization—the collection of objects and information—could fail due to linguistic incompre-

¹⁹ Pagden, p. 48.

²⁰ Latour, p. 218.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 229.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

hension, incompetent selection on the part of ill-prepared travellers, or resistance on the part of indigenous peoples (interference by the networks of other cultures).²⁵

In relation to the texts studied in this book, however, Latour's notion of 'combination' pays insufficient attention to the problem of credit facing eighteenth-century travel writers, although (as I shall argue in Chapters 2 and 3) the early nineteenth-century stabilization and disciplining of traveller's subjectivity, combined with the rise of the 'museum order' as a means of organizing physical mobiles, made this less of a problem in the later decades. Thus travellers describing unknown regions faced the problem that, in the words of William Browne (the first European to visit the Sudanese kingdom of Dar-fur in the 1790s): 'the praise of fidelity, the only one to which the writer lays claim, cannot be received until another shall have traced his footsteps'.²⁶ Objects collected by travellers, as well as journal entries recorded 'to the minute', could too easily lose their 'original' meaning when removed from their original context and redacted in travelogue form, and this fragility of credit partly explains the currency of epistolary or journal-based travelogues based on the convention of 'writing to the moment'. Questions of literary form and style (including the vexed question of plagiarism and intertextuality) were key factors here, problematizing the reception of travel narratives and their efficacy as 'combinables' in the accumulation cycle.

The starting point for all the chapters in the present book is the manner in which mobiles were returned to the centre (hence my title 'from an antique land')²⁷ rather than the 'primary' experience of the traveller on the periphery. It might not be an exaggeration to claim that the accumulation of knowledge in the travel narrative (usually based on the redaction of field journals) was seen to provide the sole philosophical justification for the moral and physical risks of distant travel. Whatever the romantic appeal of the heroic traveller/explorer in an imperial culture, the contribution made 'to visions of empire and to imperial expansion depended crucially on seemingly mundane tasks undertaken in

²⁵ Latour's model is apposite for the travellers discussed in the present book. But, as Steve Clark indicates, travellers do not always move along Latourian networks: 'in principle travel may be from the periphery to a stronger, if none the less exotic culture . . . and in a more contemporary guise, to the metropolitan centre: the post-war immigrant to London . . . the European to New York . . . the American to Tokyo', *Travel Writing and Empire*, p. 5. For an account of 'reverse travels' in the 18th century, see Michael Harbsmeier, 'Early Travels to Europe: Some Remarks on the Magic of Writing', in *Europe and its Others*, ed. by Francis Barker et al., 2 vols. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), i, 72–88.

²⁶ William G. Browne, *Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria, from the year 1792 to 1798* (London, 1799), p. viii.

²⁷ In contrast, Amitav Ghosh's marvellous travelogue/novel *In an Antique Land* (London: Granta Books, 1992) appropriately misquotes Shelley's line to evoke the experiences of an Indian anthropologist doing field work in Egypt.

centres of calculation';²⁸ including the travel writer's rhetorical success in encompassing distance in the published travel account.

Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Distance

Curiosity is seldom so powerfully excited, or so amply gratified, as by faithful Relations of Voyages and Travels. The different Appearances of Nature, and the various Customs of Men, the gradual Discovery of the World, and the Accidents and Hardships of a naval Life, all concur to fill the Mind with Expectation and with Wonder. (Samuel Johnson, Advertisement to John Newbery's *The World Displayed*, 1759)²⁹

Whilst Bruno Latour's sociological theory of 'the mobile' offers an excellent purchase on the spatial dynamics of travel writing, it ignores the aesthetics of distance—the traveller's *desire* for the distant—which is crucial to the literary interest of travel writing.³⁰ Fortunately, such an aesthetic theory was well developed in the eighteenth century in terms of the notion of 'curiosity', and its cognate terms 'novelty', 'singularity', and 'wonder'.³¹ Samuel Johnson's linkage of curiosity, travel, and wonder illustrates this configuration, highlighting the fact, remarked upon above, that the term 'curiosity' is coterminous with the practices and representations of travel throughout the whole period. 'Curiosity' was, of course, by no means limited to travel: as Hans Blumenberg and (more recently) Krzysztof Pomian have demonstrated, the term has a long and ambivalent history in European culture as the disposition of mind which desires knowledge of the world, but one which easily oversteps the boundaries set by God in a Faustian show of intellectual pride.³² Assailed by Aquinas and the

²⁸ David Miller, 'Joseph Banks, Empire, and "Centers of calculation" in late-Hanoverian London', in *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature*, ed. by David Miller and Peter Reill (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 33. See this endorsed by Dr Johnson's remarks in the *Idler* no. 97, quoted in Thomas Curley, *Samuel Johnson and the Age of Travel* (Athens, Georgia: Georgia University Press, 1976), p. 73.

²⁹ Newbery's was a collection of travels and voyages; quoted by Curley, p. 50.

³⁰ Denis Porter offers a psychoanalytical explanation of the desire for distance in *Haunted Journeys*, interpreting travel as an Oedipal 'flight from repressive paternal power' (p. 149). However, he seems to admit a problem with this approach in acknowledging the danger of being 'both ahistorical and apolitical' (p. 14). See also Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (London: Edwin Arnold, 1977), chapter 5.

³¹ For an illuminating study of these and other cognates, and the semantic fluctuations of the term 'curiosity' itself, see Neil Kenny, *Curiosity in Early Modern Word Histories*, Wolfenbütteler Forschungen, Band 81 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998).

³² Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (1966), (English trans. by R. Wallace, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983); Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800* (1987), trans. by Elizabeth Wiles-Porter, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). Blumenberg's grand narrative of the triumph of 'theoretische Neugierde' (theoretical curiosity) in the modern age is contradicted by more recent, historically localized work on curiosity by Pomian, Benedict, Daston and Park, and Kenny. As Kenny indicates, this is because Blumenberg's 'theoretische Neugierde' sometimes

Church Fathers, 'blind' curiosity again came under censure with the rise of the scientific revolution, condemned by Descartes in favour of 'research carried out in accordance with the rules of method'.³³ But, as Pomian writes, from the early seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries at least, curiosity as 'a science of miracles, exuberant, incoherent, muddled, assailed by contradictions, and pulling in all sorts of different directions, enjoyed a temporary spell in power, an interim rule between those of theology and science'.³⁴

The role of wonder in Renaissance travel writing has been the focus of attention in some of the best recent scholarship, exemplified by De Certeau, Pagden, and Greenblatt's discussions of Jean de Léry's narrative of his wonder-struck reaction to the singing of the Brazilian Tupinamba Indians in his *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre de Bresil* (1578).³⁵ In an important recent study (although one not primarily concerned with travel literature), Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park have described how wonder briefly allied itself with curiosity in the early modern period, so that whilst wonder (as it were) caught the attention of the inquirer, curiosity riveted it. The alliance was however short-lived: in the eighteenth century, they argue, curiosity and the knowledge that it provoked were more often conceived as a *cure* for 'vulgar' wonder than its product.³⁶

On the evidence of the texts studied in this book, it would seem, however, that concepts of wonder and curiosity survived longer in the discourse of distant travel than in many other fields. Arguably a general overemphasis on the enlightenment rhetoric of *enargeia*, and a narrowly epistemological understanding of eighteenth-century empiricism, have obscured the continuing importance of curiosity and wonder in later travel accounts. As Pinkerton's slighting remark about the mere 'curiosity' of pre-1768 travelogues (cited in the Preface) indicates, by 1814 the term had assumed a highly ambivalent meaning for British geographers at least. On the other hand, its currency in contemporary travelogues and exhibition culture suggests that the 'official' critique of curiosity was unrepresentative. Coleridge's arch apology for publishing his exotic fragment 'Kuhla Khan' 'rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the grounds of any supposed poetic merits' (in the poem's 1816 Preface) suggests *both* the distance of curiosity from polite aesthetics *and* the extent to which romantic poets

coincides with historical uses of the word 'curiosity' and its cognates, but 'does not do so systematically or necessarily' (Kenny p. 47).

³³ Pomian, p. 62.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³⁵ Michel de Certeau, 'Ethno-Graphy: Speech, or the Space of the Other: Jean de Léry', in *The Writing of History*, trans. by Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 209-43; Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (pp. 42-7); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 16-17.

³⁶ L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonder and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), pp. 305, 311, 321.

sought to recuperate the discredited discourse of curiosity in justifying exotic and orientalist literature.³⁷

Henry Home's, Lord Kames's, extended treatment of the aesthetics of curiosity in his influential *Elements of Criticism* (1762) reveals not only the semantic complexity which the term had come to bear in the second half of the eighteenth century but also illustrates the bifurcation in its meaning observed by Daston and Park. Because Kames's treatment is at once typical of, and yet more extensive than, those of his near-contemporaries (like David Hume, Edmund Burke, Samuel Johnson, Adam Smith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, or Richard Payne Knight, not to mention French commentators like Furetière, La Bruyère, Diderot, or Grimm discussed by Pomian), I shall limit my analysis to it alone.³⁸ Kames formulated the aesthetics of distance in terms of a rhetorical question which illustrates the dynamic relationship between curiosity and its cognates such as novelty, singularity, and wonder:

men tear themselves from their native country in search of things rare and new; and novelty converts into a pleasure the fatigues and even perils of travelling. To what cause shall we ascribe these singular appearances? To curiosity undoubtedly, a principle implanted in human nature for a purpose extremely beneficial, that of acquiring knowledge; and the emotion of wonder, raised by new and strange objects, inflames our curiosity to know more about them.³⁹

Kames here posits a sequential relationship between novelty, curiosity, and wonder: novelty 'invariably raises' wonder, which in turn 'inflames' curiosity to know more; this affective chain converts the pains into the pleasures of travel as otiose wonder is converted into a desire for knowledge. But wonder/novelty, the motivating impulse of travel (like surprise, from which it differs in other respects)⁴⁰ is marked by the 'shortness of [its] duration' as novelty 'degenerates' into familiarity.⁴¹ In this respect wonder differs from the sublime (discussed in

³⁷ S. T. Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. by E. H. Coleridge (Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 295. The distinction between romantic 'retro' curiosity and the vestiges of 18th-century patrician curiosity is exemplified in William Hazlitt's essay 'Fonthill Abbey', which contrasts William Beckford's effeminate and patrician curiosity as a collector of tacky *chinoiserie*, with a more appealing version of orientalism set in 'the marble baths of the Moorish Alhambra, or amidst the ruins of Tadmor, or in barbaric places, where Bruce encountered Abyssinian queens!' *Complete Works of Hazlitt*, ed. by P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London and Toronto: Dent, 1930-4), xviii., pp. 173-80.

³⁸ Stafford misreads Kames's account of wonder as the equivalent of enlightenment empiricism, ignoring his subsequent critique of its primitivism and puerility. *Voyage into Substance*, p. 409.

³⁹ Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, (1762), 11th edition with the author's last corrections and additions (London, 1839), p. 112.

⁴⁰ Kames, p. 113.

⁴¹ The most celebrated 18th-century account of the somatic disturbance wrought by wonder is Adam Smith's 1774 (?) essay 'The Principles which lead and direct Philosophical Enquiries; illustrated by the History of Astronomy'. Smith concludes that '[the subject] must find out some resemblance or other, before he can get rid of that Wonder, that uncertainty and anxious curiosity excited by its

the preceding chapter of Kames's *Elements*), which, although sharing wonder's effect of 'transport', is not dependent upon novelty but can also be elicited by familiar objects.⁴² The discourse of wonder/novelty is likewise distinct from the rhetoric of sublime inarticulacy ('words cannot describe . . .') in that it generates precise and paratactic description, the attempt to articulate verbally or visually *exactly* what was singular and remarkable about an object, motivated by desire but often issuing in pedantry.⁴³

For Kames the 'curious', fast-burning desire for novelty, by an association of ideas, can be attached to persons or objects encountered at home, as well as stimulating the desire to brave the hazards of travel. Distance in space can also substitute for distance in time (a substitution which will be further explored in the next section), so that 'a friend . . . after a short absence in a remote country, has the same air of novelty as if he had returned after a longer interval from a place near home: the mind forms a connection between him and the remote country, and bestows upon him the singularity of the objects he has seen'.⁴⁴ For Kames, distance itself becomes a scale for measuring value in the appetitive economy of wonder: if two 'new and singular objects' are offered to the spectator, he equivocates; but 'when told that one of them is the product of a distant quarter of the world, he no longer hesitates, but clings to it as the most singular'.⁴⁵

Kames's association of novelty and wonder with woman's fashions⁴⁶ and 'foreign luxuries' as well as 'foreign curiosities, which appear rare in proportion to their original distance',⁴⁷ suggests a link between curiosity and the rise of eighteenth-century consumer culture in the mercantilist economy of imported 'luxuries'. Nicholas Thomas argues that 'curiosity was deeply, almost causally, linked with commerce—the desire for novelties being postulated as the stimulus to trade—and with the moral ambiguities and latent corruption of commer-

singular appearance . . . Philosophy, by representing the invisible chains which bind together all these disjointed objects, endeavours to introduce order into this chaos of jarring and discordant appearances, to allay the tumult of imagination' (*The Essential Adam Smith*, ed. by Robert L. Héilbroner and Lawrence J. Malone (Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 31). Daston and Park point out that wonder was entirely absent from Hume's analysis of the passions in the *Treatise*, and that Smith was almost unique among 18th-century theorists in treating it at such length (*Wonders*, p. 327). As we shall see, this should not be taken to mean that it was insignificant in contemporary travel accounts.

⁴² This may explain why the sublime tends to assume less importance than curiosity and wonder in exotic travel accounts. Chloe Chard, writing of the hyperbolic language of the Grand Tour narrative, suggests that the sublime invests the topography with a wonder that is not dependent upon novelty: 'this topography of the not-so distant foreign is, in some ways, at a disadvantage, when compared with more exotic regions . . . by invoking the sublime, the traveller is able to insist that the Alps and Italy offer an effect of strangeness that is undiminished by familiarity', *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 113.

⁴³ Katie Whitaker, 'The Culture of Curiosity', in *Cultures of Natural History*, ed. by N. Jardine, J. A. Secord, and E. C. Spary (Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 82. Whitaker writes that in the late 17th century 'This accurate reporting of wonders formed a new style of natural history' (*ibid.*).

⁴⁴ Kames, p. 116.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

cial society'.⁴⁸ Selling off 'curiosities' collected *en route* (as well as publishing a travel narrative) could, of course, help the traveller to recoup some of the expenses of the voyage.⁴⁹ At the same time we need to remember that, despite their 'unconsecrated' aesthetic status, objects of curiosity were still in Pomian's term 'semiophores',⁵⁰ that is to say, their value as collectibles depended upon their removal from the economic circuit, so that their link with the 'invisible' and distant endowed their possessors with symbolic capital. The distinction is extremely fragile, however: eighteenth-century travels are frequently described as being 'both curious and useful', distinguishing between a disinterested and an interested (commercial, colonial) motivation which qualifies their complementarity in respect to the 'cycle of accumulation', but the two types of motivation easily collapse into one another.⁵¹ One thread of the present book reveals an increasing commodification and popularization of curiosity as it was exorcized from scholarly and scientific discourse and associated with popular wonder and the commercial profit deriveable from it, illustrated in my concluding comparison between Humboldt and William Bullock. At the same time, by an apparent contradiction, curiosity continued throughout the period to describe the traveller's 'disinterested' motive for braving the hazards of travel, as well as frequently providing an ethnological *cordón sanitaire* dividing him from the 'native', who, although maybe possessing a sense of wonder, appeared *incapable* of curiosity.⁵²

Kames's linkage of the effect of wonder/novelty with verbs like 'inflare' and 'swell'⁵³ prepares the reader for the critical tone introduced later in his chapter, supporting Thomas's contention that the eighteenth-century discourse of curiosity (be it discussing responses to ethnographic objects) was 'not fixed but morally slippery . . . the legitimacy of curious inquiry is uncertain'.⁵⁴ This is perfectly demonstrated in Kames's rhetorical question:

the love of novelty . . . prevails in children, in idlers, and in men of shallow understanding; and yet, after all, why should one be ashamed of indulging a natural propensity? A distinction will afford a satisfactory answer. No man is ashamed of curiosity when it is indulged in order to acquire knowledge. But to prefer any thing merely

⁴⁸ 'Licenced Curiosity: Cook's Pacific Voyages', in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.), *The Culture of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), p. 123.

⁴⁹ See Dolan, *Exploring European Frontiers*, pp. 153–88.

⁵⁰ *Collectors and Curiosities*, p. 30.

⁵¹ As Simon Schaffer writes in his afterword to *Visions of Empire*, 18th-century commentators 'were able and willing to discriminate between philosophical curiosity and commercial or imperial purposes' (p. 338).

⁵² Hawkesworth's *Account of the Voyages* famously describes the episode when a group of Tierra del Fuegians boarded the *Endeavour*, commenting 'curiosity seems to be one of the few passions which distinguish men from brutes; and of this our guests appeared to have very little' (ii. 45).

⁵³ Kames, p. 114.

⁵⁴ Thomas, p. 122.

because it is new, shows a mean taste, which one ought to be ashamed of: vanity is commonly at the bottom, which leads those who are deficient in taste to prefer things odd, rare, or singular, in order to distinguish themselves from others. And, in fact, that appetite . . . reigns chiefly among persons of a mean taste, who are ignorant of refined and elegant pleasures.⁵⁵

Kames's distinction will be extremely useful in distinguishing positive and negative, rational and vulgar, valences for 'curiosity' as they occur throughout this book, as well as locating the yawning gulf between curiosity and polite taste.⁵⁶ As a discourse of connoisseurship and collection, it is clearly cognate with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century practices of virtuosity (and, as we shall see, antiquarianism)⁵⁷ but quite distinct from gentlemanly discourses of taste in the Shaftesburyan tradition. Like Adam Smith, Kames sought to salvage a rational, philosophical, and progressive sense for curiosity, whilst reserving an archaic, negative, and merely vulgar definition for the term inasmuch as it applied to novelty, wonder, singularity, or rarity. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'curiosity' was often used in a positive sense meaning 'careful', precise empirical investigation (actually its etymological sense, from the Latin *cura* meaning 'attention'), as in Robert Boyle's 1691 treatise *Curiosities in Chemistry: Being New Experiments and Observations Concerning the Principles of Natural Bodies*.⁵⁸ But curiosity in Kames's 'vulgar' sense is arrested in a vain, exclusive, and infantile desire to possess the irreducible, decontextualized, 'distant' object. As Daston and Park observe, like Aesop's Ant and Grasshop-

⁵⁵ Kames, p. 117. See Harriet Guest 'Curiously Marked: Tattooing, Masculinity, and Nationality in 18th-century British Perceptions of the South Pacific', in *Painting and the Politics of Culture. New Essays on British Art, 1700-1850*, ed. by John Barrell (Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 313. The terms of Kames's critique survive in Hazlitt's remarks on Beckford's collection at Fonthill: 'The motive for the production of such toys is mercenary, and the admiration of them childish or servile. That which pleases merely from its novelty . . . cannot be expected to please twice' *Complete Works*, xviii, 175.

⁵⁶ Barbara Benedict in her essay 'The "Curious Attitude" in 18th-Century Britain: Observing and Owning' (*Eighteenth-Century Life*, 14 (1990), 3, 59-98) also draws attention to the moral and aesthetic ambivalence attached to 'curiosity', from Alexander Pope's attack on 'Criticks, of less Judgement than Caprice, | Curious, not Knowing, not exact but nice' in the *Essay on Criticism*, to Dr Johnson's laudatory remark in *Rambler* 103 that 'Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous mind' (p. 59). Benedict notes that in the *Dictionary*, Johnson none the less distinguishes the 'inclination to enquiry' from an 'act of curiosity', or 'nice experiment', and from 'an object of curiosity', a 'rarity'; yet cites nine varied definitions of 'curious', including 'accurate', 'artful', and 'rigid' [*ibid.*].

⁵⁷ Johnson's *Dictionary* allows for both definitions of a 'virtuoso' as 'A man skilled in antique or natural curiosities; a man studious of painting, statuary, or architecture'. In the Augustan quarrel of the ancients and the moderns, antiquarians were paradoxically on the side of (pedantic) moderns rather than 'tasteful' classics, given that the figure of the antiquarian had no equivalent in classical culture.

⁵⁸ Michael Bravo points out that 'curiosity' and 'precision', although often combined in 18th-century scientific discourse, also marked a difference of social register, curiosity being considered a gentlemanly virtue, whilst precision belonged more squarely to the world of instrument-makers, engineers, architects, artisans, and astronomers. 'Precision and Curiosity in Scientific Travel', in *Voyages and Visions*, p. 164.

per, 'noble curiosity worked hard and shunned enticing novelties [whilst] vulgar wonder wallowed in the pleasures of novelty and obstinately refused to remedy the ignorance that aroused it'.⁵⁹ For curiosity in this 'noble' and rational sense, Kames went on to argue in his next chapter, was 'a vigorous propensity, which never is at rest . . . [it] attaches us to every new object; and incites us to compare objects, in order to discover their differences and resemblances'.⁶⁰ Kames's own polygeneticist *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774) demonstrated this kind of philosophical curiosity in relation to the 'four stages' theory of social development axiomatic to eighteenth-century Scottish enlightenment sociology.⁶¹

The Scottish 'conjectural historians' discovered in the synchronic comparison of cultures and the stadial model of historical progress a methodological improvement upon the unsystematic absorptiveness of mere wonder or vulgar curiosity. But although Kames, William Robertson, Adam Ferguson, and John Millar drew heavily on travel accounts in comparing diverse cultures, in the end their systematic mapping of the world on the axes of 'absolute' time-space coordinates, and their construction of an ascending scale of civilizations ('from savages to Scotsmen')⁶² made the existential and aesthetic discourse of 'curious' travel narrative—in the 'vulgar' sense—seem utterly redundant. Edward Casey argues in *The Fate of Place* that enlightenment philosophers 'assume that places are merely momentary subdivisions of a universal space quantitatively determined in its neutral homogeneity. Places are at best convenient and expedient pockets in the vast intact fabric of what Newton called "absolute space" in 1687'.⁶³ This neutralization of locality implies the erasure of an 'aesthetics of distance' as a phenomenology of proximity and remoteness. The very 'emplacement' and temporal specificity of travel writing, with its narrative of the traveller's personal travail and interaction with foreign peoples, and its reliance on superficial 'first impressions', always risked a damaging proximity to curiosity in Kames's negative sense. The unshackling of wonder from 'rational' curiosity

⁵⁹ Daston and Park, p. 328.

⁶⁰ Kames, p. 120. In this respect, Kames's 'rational' sense of curiosity foreshadows Blumenberg's 'theoretische Neugierde'.

⁶¹ See Ronald Meek, *Social Science and the Ignoble Savage* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 155-60. Meek points out that interest in the four-stage theory peaked in the final two decades of the 18th century (p. 177).

⁶² Walter Bagehot, quoted by John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 168. See also Andrew Sharp, 'Scots, Savages and Barbarians: Humphry Clinker and the Scots Philosophy', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 18 (November 1994), 65-79.

⁶³ Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, p. 134. Casey's 'place' is closely related to my phenomenological notion of 'distance'. In discussing the Scots philosophers' reading of travel narrative, Andrew Sharp writes 'it was not the detail of savage and barbarian lives that mattered . . . but rather the situation of those lives in a narrative illustrating the progress of society through its various stages'. 'Scots, Savages, and Barbarians', p. 70.

may for this reason have contributed to the demotion of travel writing from the status of 'philosophical' discourse to the realm of *belles-lettres* in the period under consideration.

One major site for the display of 'curiosity' in eighteenth-century culture was the pre-modern museum, or 'cabinet of curiosities', descendant of the renaissance *Kunst- und Wunderkammer*.⁶⁴ Since Stephen Bann's pathbreaking work on the 'poetics of the museum' in *The Clothing of Clío*, it has become easier to discern the syntagmatic parallels between museums and literary texts.⁶⁵ The present book proposes an affinity between museology and travel accounts, focused on travel writer/collectors like Giovanni Belzoni in Chapter 3, Colin Mackenzie in Chapter 4, Fanny Parks in Chapter 5, and William Bullock in the Conclusion. (Belzoni's and Bullock's travel accounts served as commercial plugs for their popular exhibitions, and vice versa.) Museums, and to a greater extent popular exhibitions, shared with travel narratives the aspiration to make distant lands present; given that 'spatial and temporal distance are forms of absence, for which the presentness of the artifact [or narrative] itself must compensate'.⁶⁶ I shall argue that the relationship between elite and popular travel writing thus has its equivalent in the difference between the imperial 'museum order' and the popular exoticism of the 'shows of London' during the nineteenth century.⁶⁷

In the pre-modern museum 'curiosities' were displayed without much consideration of whether they were 'natural' (objects of natural history) or 'artificial' (objects of antiquarian, aesthetic, or ethnological provenance). In contrast to nineteenth- and twentieth-century display practices, they were exhibited (often in the closed drawers of custom-built cabinets rather than open display cases) with the purpose of eliciting wonder at their rarity, singularity, or ingenuity as objects, rather than for any quality of typicality which might lend them

⁶⁴ Pomian argues that in the 17th century such cabinets 'were sufficiently numerous . . . to constitute in themselves an important socio-cultural phenomenon . . . by the 18th century, they were already on the wane . . . and after the 1750s they became very few and far between indeed' (*Collectors*, p. 48). On the evidence of many of the museums and collections discussed in this book, this terminal date seems premature, at least in Britain. Fanny Parks's 'amateur' cabinet (dating from the 1840s–50s) discussed in Chapter 5 essentially conforms to the principles of Pierre Borel's collection described in ch. 2 of *Collectors and Curiosity*, rather than to the taxonomic principles of the 'new' British Museum.

⁶⁵ *The Clothing of Clío: A Study of the Representation of History in 19th-century Britain and France* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), ch. 4 'The Poetics of the Museum: Lenoir and Du Sommerard'. See also Kenny, p. 169 on the metaphorical transfer from cabinets of curiosities to texts.

⁶⁶ Frederick N. Bohrer, 'The Times and Spaces of History: Representation, Assyria, and the British Museum', in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, ed. by Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (London: Routledge 1994), p. 199.

⁶⁷ For the related question of colonial museums, see Gyan Prakash's discussion of Victorian India in *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), ch. 2, 'Staging Science'. Prakash discusses how for indigenous elites at least (and contrary to the intentions of imperial hegemony), the exhibition of the European 'sciences of classification and function instituted themselves in curiosity and wonder', creating an 'ambivalent zone of power and agency' (p. 47).

pedagogic meaning.⁶⁸ In Stephen Greenblatt's terms, the 'wonder' of such objects was more significant than their 'resonance'.⁶⁹ Until its nineteenth-century modernization, the British Museum (founded in 1757) was still a cabinet of rarities in this sense, based on the donation of Sir Hans Sloane's collection in 1753. In the 1760s, a visitor described how

the [visiting] party was conducted into a handsome salon, furnished with a curious selection of miscellaneous objects, for the most part the Egyptian antiquities presented by the Lethieullier family, including the first of the Museum's famous collection of mummies, various specimens of coral, a vulture's head in spirits, and the stuffed flamingo.

Juxtaposed with these antiquarian and natural objects were the *lusus naturae*, like the one-eyed 'cyclops pig' or a horu that grew out of the head of the unfortunate Mary Davies, whose portrait, complete with the obtruding horn, hung on the wall above.⁷⁰ Little attempt was made to label specimens, given the frequent presence of guides or 'docents' who conducted eighteenth-century visitors around the collection, seeking to elicit wonder rather than instruction, an attitude antithetical to that of the Victorian curator who described the ideal museum as 'a collection of labels illustrated by well-selected specimens'.⁷¹ In Latourian terms, the pre-modern museum represented an inadequate realization of the 'centre of calculation'. Its curiosities were indeed mobilized and stabilized, but were not combinable in any systematic sense, representing merely anecdotal glimpses of incommensurable worlds, as philosophically insignificant as the freaks of nature with which they shared cabinet space.

Wonder responded to the superficiality rather than to the intrinsic or contextual meaning of the curiosities on display, either (when 'artificial') to their 'elegant, neat, laboured, finished' qualities,⁷² or (when 'natural') to frivolous, rococo resemblance with works of art, a sort of visual punning between nature and culture.⁷³ Despite the similarities between such museums and the popular

⁶⁸ See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.

⁶⁹ 'Resonance and Wonder', in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 161–83.

⁷⁰ Edward Miller, *That Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), pp. 65–6.

⁷¹ Bennett, p. 42.

⁷² Definition number 8 of 'curiosity' in Johnson's *Dictionary*. James Bunn describes curious collections as the expression of 18th-century mercantilist accumulation, in which artificial or natural curiosities exist as singularities, irrevocably removed from their original context, 'The Aesthetics of British Mercantilism', *NLH*, 11, 2 (Winter 1980), 303–21, 304.

⁷³ See Barbara Benedict, 'The Curious Attitude', p. 78. Cf. the 17th-century collector John Bargrave's description of a piece of rock crystal from the Rhaetian Alps 'One would wonder that nature should so counterfeit [*sic*] art. There is no man but [that] seeth it but would verily believe that by tools and art it had binn put into that figure.' Quoted in Stephen Bann, *Under the Sign: John Bargrave as Collector, Traveler, and Witness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 90.

exhibition order in a common dedication to wonder and rarity rather than 'resonance', private collections and public museums (such as the British Museum or the Napoleonic Louvre) were associated with the social power of private or state ownership which dared to collect the heterogeneous meanings of the world within the enclosing and totalizing walls of the cabinet.⁷⁴ Although the state's appropriation of the 'museum order' in the romantic period brought with it a new form of legitimacy (as well as a new, systematic form of display), private collecting practices often continued to embody the values of elite curiosity or virtuosity of the kind attacked by Kames, values mimicked and transculturated in the popular, commercialist exhibition order. After the purchase of an expensive collection of minerals in 1809, Sir Joseph Banks (a trustee of the British Museum) suggested that two different displays be created 'the one for the man of science, and the other for the stupid gaze of the visiting vulgar'.⁷⁵ Despite the durability of this kind of intellectual snobbery, the boundaries between virtuosity, scientific display, and commercial exhibitions were perhaps more permeable than they seem at first glance.

A risible incongruity between the totalizing ambition and a perceived entanglement in minor detail, resulting in '[an absolute ignorance] of all facts and principles'⁷⁶ determined the common eighteenth-century caricature of the virtuoso, the antiquary, or the curioso. He is represented (as in Gillray's caricature of Sir William Hamilton) (Ill. 1) as a wealthy, licentious, yet impotent old man bent over an object of curiosity (often symbolized as a scantily-clad female bust of antique provenance), which he scrutinizes with the aid of a magnifying glass, the very negative of polite 'distanced' viewing practices in the period. Diderot's definition of a '*curieux*' in the *Encyclopédie* exemplifies the dominant style of such satire: 'Not every one who indulges in [curiosity] is a connoisseur; and this is why enthusiasts are so often figures of fun . . . However, curiosity, this desire for possession, which is almost always without limits, is almost always deleterious to one's pocket.'⁷⁷

It is beyond the scope of the present study to chart the neglected discourse of curiosity in the wider literary field (as championed, for example, in Isaac Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature* (1792) and *Dissertation on Anecdotes* (1793))

⁷⁴ The British Museum, like Sir Ashton Lever's museum, the Duchess of Portland's cabinet, and the India Museum, restricted public access by the sale of tickets, thereby maintaining the 'secretive and cultic' nature of earlier princely cabinets. As late as the 1810s, when attendance had risen from 13,406 visitors in 1807-8 to 27,479 in 1833, Cobbett denounced the British Museum in the House of Commons as a place 'intended only for the amusement of the curious and the rich, and not for the benefit or for the instruction of the poor' (quoted in Miller, p. 136). Tony Bennett argues that the birth of the modern museum was in part based upon a desire to differentiate its principle of display from the popular exhibition order.

⁷⁵ Dolan, *Exploring European Frontiers*, p. 155.

⁷⁶ Pomian, *Collectors*, p. 62. The quotation is from La Bruyère.

⁷⁷ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 132.



1. 'A Cognoscenti contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique', by James Gillray, c.1801. The 'curioso' satirized, Sir William Hamilton, is peering at a cracked bust of his wife Emma, labelled 'Lais' after a celebrated Greek courtesan.

and the conflict between curiosity and what Coleridge called 'method'.⁷⁸ However, the miscellaneous, anecdotal structure of travel writing in this period exemplifies a tension between 'curious' aesthetics and an antithetical project of reordering the world according to a philosophical systematics of time and space. The critique of patrician curiosity common in the later enlightenment tended to target it either on the grounds of *pedantry* or *licentiousness*, or both together, as in Gillray's cartoon. In the remainder of this section I shall briefly illustrate the rationale of such charges in two exemplary eighteenth-century travel texts, in order to provide a context for my discussion of James Bruce in Chapter 2. I discuss the charge of 'curious pedantry' in relation to the antiquarian Richard Pococke's 1743 travelogue *A Description of the East*, and 'licentious curiosity' with reference to the Pacific travel account of the naturalist Joseph Banks, as redacted by John Hawkesworth. I conclude by considering George Forster's reformist and modernizing *Voyage Round the World* by way of contrast with the 'curious' travel account.

Pococke's *Description of the East* still in many respects conforms to the seventeenth-century idiom of John Bargrave's catalogue of curiosities, described by Stephen Bann in *Under the Sign*: '[it] itemizes, in the literal sense of the word, and exposes the object to a relentless view . . . desire follows the logic not of a greater whole completed by the imagination, but, rather, of an intricate structure revealed by intensive study'.⁷⁹ Based on the extended 'architectural' Grand Tour which Pococke made to Egypt, Syria, and Greece in the late 1730s, the *Description* is partly modelled on Joseph Addison's influential travel book *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705).⁸⁰ Pococke's lavishly illustrated folio, true to the aims of the Royal Society (of which he was a member) with its motto '*nullius in verba*', was largely concerned with the business of classical topography, checking classical descriptions of Egyptian antiquities by means of careful empirical observation. Pococke measured the Sphinx in order to assess the accuracy of Pliny's measurements:

I found by the quadrant that it is about 27 feet high, the neck and head only being above ground; the lower part of the neck, or the beginning of the breast is 33 feet wide, and it is 20 feet from the fore part of the neck to the back, and thence to the hole in the back it is 75 feet, the hole being 5 feet long, from which to the tail, if I

⁷⁸ See Phil Connell, 'Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain', *Representations*, 71 (Summer 2000), 24–47, for a suggestive starting point.

⁷⁹ Bann, *Under the Sign*, pp. 102–3. Cf. also Chard, *Pleasure and Guilt*, pp. 26–30.

⁸⁰ Batten points out that later readers had lost the key to Addison's generic conventions, Dr Johnson in 1773 considering it 'tedious' (p. 19). Pococke, a Whig clergyman and future Bishop of Ossory, was a friend of the Earl of Sandwich and Edward Wortley Montagu, both of whom had visited Egypt, and with them a co-founder of the short-lived Egyptian Society in 1741 dedicated to the Freemasonic project of promoting and preserving 'Egyptian and other ancient learning'. See John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p. 128.

mistake not, it is 30 feet long; which something exceeds Pliny's account, who says that it is 113 feet long.⁸¹

The omission of any iconographic interpretation, affective or emotional response to the Sphinx is particularly striking when compared with A. W. Kinglake's description in *Eothen*, written a century later: 'comely the creature is, but the comeliness is not of this world . . . those lips, so thick and heavy, were fashioned according to some ancient mould of beauty'.⁸²

Pococke (like James Bruce, who visited the Nile thirty-odd years later) exemplifies 'curiosity' in the sense of nice or 'careful' empirical examination of singular phenomena, without any attempt at aesthetic evaluation or contextualization. The *Description of the East*, predominately concerned with ancient monuments and architecture, is itself organized like an arrangement of singular objects in the cabinet of curiosities. The fact that it is published as a travel account at all is a result of 'the persuasion of some friends, to give an account of his travels, and of several accidents, that might give an insight into the customs and manners of people so different from our own, in order to render the work more acceptable to the generality of readers'.⁸³ Pococke is here forced to acknowledge that he is writing for two audiences: one private, learned, antiquarian, and 'curious'; the other public, unlearned, in search of personal narrative and entertaining descriptions of 'men and manners' rather than dry architectural description. Such personal narrative as there is is sparsely distributed throughout the book as a whole, confined to the last paragraph or two at the end of each chapter. One feels that personal adventures, including Pococke's grudging account of his transactions with native Egyptians, are represented as so many obstructions to the fulfilment of his 'curious' antiquarian project. Dr Johnson placed Pococke's *Description* low on the scale of travel writing 'because of its poor style and emphasis upon ancient architecture, a subject that he considered less important than the manners of foreign people'.⁸⁴

In many respects British exploration and travel writing in the period with which this book is concerned is inextricably connected with the figure of Sir Joseph Banks.⁸⁵ Although principally celebrated for his role as the leading

⁸¹ Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and Some Other Countries*, 2 vols. (London, 1743), i. 46.

⁸² A. W. Kinglake, *Eothen; or, The Traces of Travel, brought home from the East* (London, 1844), p. 323.

⁸³ Pococke, p. iii.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Curley, p. 76. By contrast Johnson thought very highly of Patrick Brydone's *Tour through Sicily* (*ibid.*, pp. 77–8) with its rejection of 'pedantic' antiquarian measurement and lively account of the author's transactions with local peoples.

⁸⁵ Banks, a wealthy Lincolnshire landowner, was a pivotal figure in the clubbable, gentlemanly 'culture of curiosity' of late 18th-century London: a member and later president of the Royal Society from 1778 until his death in 1820, a member of the council of the Society of Antiquaries 1785–7, and

impresario of British (and European) natural history, pioneering Linnaeus's botanical taxonomy in England, Banks was also a committed antiquarian, comparative linguist, and anthropologist, a highly significant congeries of interests upon which I shall touch again in the next section. Banks was himself also a famous traveller, having accompanied Captain Cook on his first, *Endeavour* voyage of 1768–72. 'Every blockhead [travels to Italy]' he is reported as saying; 'my Grand Tour shall be one round the whole globe'.⁸⁶ Upon his return from the Pacific in 1773 Banks's travel journals—along with half a dozen others by Cook and other members of the expedition—were 'ghosted' by John Hawkesworth in his *Account of the Voyages*, although the work was apparently overseen by Banks himself, who had paid Hawkesworth 1,000 pounds for the inclusion of his journal.⁸⁷ Banks was himself reticent about venturing into print, preferring the gentlemanly role of collector and impresario, but he would pay a high price for this reticence in more than just a financial sense.

Despite his earlier criticism of travel writing in which 'no passion is stongly excited except wonder', in which the traveller 'is rarely discovered to have any excellencies but daring curiosity',⁸⁸ Hawkesworth's attempt (writing in the character of a polite essayist) to refine his sources had severely backfired. Jonathan Lamb attributes his inability to universalize the singularities and wonders described by the voyagers to a

failure to locate a principle of relation between events . . . the unmediated and unprecedented encounter with the [particular] incline[s] him, who is impersonating it, to concentrate not upon the needs of the reader but on the agitations of the adventurer. The stress of shocks and miracles induce a non-justifying, particularizing, egoistic language of the moment that Hawkesworth had defined as savage, but which he is increasingly willing to elaborate and inhabit.⁸⁹

Curiosity in Kames's negative sense is exemplified by Hawkesworth's nine-page discussion of the 'Patagonian giants' recorded in Commander Byron's nar-

again 1813–20, founder of the African Association in 1788, as well as a member of the Royal Academy, the Dilettanti Society, the Athenian Club, and Dr Johnson's famous literary circle (Gascoigne, p. 121).

⁸⁶ Quoted in Gascoigne, p. 61. Banks dignifies the artisanal practice of nautical exploration by affording it the patrician dignity of the Tour, at the same time as implying that Grand Tourists following the Italian 'beaten track' are lacking in curiosity and enterprise.

⁸⁷ For Hawkesworth's 'raw material', see *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks*, ed. by J. C. Beaglehole, 2 vols., (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1962): 'it was true that Banks had handed [his *Endeavour* journal] over to Hawkesworth to use as he thought fit; but if Banks had wished to put it into shape and publish it as a separate entity, there was nothing to stop him' (p. 121). See also W. H. Pearson, 'Hawkesworth's Voyage', in *Studies in the 18th Century*, ed. by R. F. Brissenden, p. 240 *et passim*.

⁸⁸ *Adventurer*, No. 16, 30 Dec. 1752 and No. 4, 18 Nov. 1752, quoted in W. H. Pearson, *Hawkesworth's Voyages*, p. 253.

⁸⁹ 'Circumstances Surrounding the Death of John Hawkesworth', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 18 (November 1994), 97.

ative, excused on the grounds that they were objects 'both of popular and philosophical curiosity'.⁹⁰ Despite the novelty of its lavish ethnographic illustrations and painstaking translation of previously unknown flora and fauna into the language of Linnaean genus and species, Hawkesworth's *Account* is in many respects a 'curious' rather than a philosophical travel narrative in Kames's pejorative sense, a 'relation of little circumstances' (i., p. vii) which did nothing to justify the voyages in a providential or patriotic fashion. His landscape descriptions (in contrast, say, to Patrick Brydone's immensely popular *Travels in Sicily and Malta*, published the following year in 1774, replete with 'affective realism' and landscape aesthetics) are generally more concerned with topographical and botanical singularities than with conveying typicalities of exotic nature. When a landscape feature is detailed, it is often because it represents 'a very extraordinary natural curiosity', like the rock on the coast of New Zealand which, 'perforated through its whole substance, so as to form a rude but stupendous arch or cavern . . . produced an effect far superior to any of the contrivances of art' (ii., pp. 317–18).⁹¹ Barbara Maria Stafford has argued that this sort of description represents an emergent 'romantic' landscape vision 'bound up with a sentient earth that finds expression in specific vital forms, in singularities'.⁹² On the contrary, it seems to me more representative of a residual discourse of 'curious' perception in which the singular landscape feature is privileged for its superficial analogical qualities (nature copying art, as in the rococo visual pun) rather than for any 'typical' relationship to its geographical context. As Bernard Smith argues in discussing the work of William Hodges, artist on Cook's second, *Resolution* voyage, it is the emergence of the 'typical landscape' as a dialogue between scientific and aesthetic interpretations of exotic nature (topographical versus picturesque) which marks the real challenge of the Pacific voyages to traditional European modes of seeing and representing.⁹³

⁹⁰ Hawkesworth, i., p. xvi. It is noteworthy that Banks's *Journal* actually denied that the Tierra del Fuegians were giants (*Endeavour Journal*, i. 227). Percy Adams goes so far as to argue that 'much of the popularity of travel literature [in the 1770s] can be attributed to the universal interest in the South American giants', *Travellers and Travel Liars 1660–1800* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), pp. 28, 38. Swift had already satirized this popular interest with his Brobdingnagians in *Gulliver's Travels*. Gigantism, as well as other distortions in the dynamics of scale, was a common feature of pre-modern travel accounts, the hyperbole which figured distance. It had been a serious concern of the early 18th-century culture of curiosity. (See Frederik N. Smith, 'Science, Imagination, and Swift's Brobdingnagians' in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 14 (1990), 1, 100–14). As I shall argue in Chapter 3, there is a fine irony in the fact that G. B. Belzoni began his career as a fairground strongman whose stage name was the 'Patagonian Sampson'.

⁹¹ See Smith's discussion of this in *European Vision*, pp. 28–34, which somewhat overstates the 'empiricism' of such views, rather than linking them to a tradition of 'curious' representation.

⁹² Barbara Maria Stafford, 'Toward Romantic Landscape Perception: Illustrated Travels and the Rise of "Singularity" as an Aesthetic Category', in *Art Quarterly*, (1977), 89–124, n.s. i, p. 112.

⁹³ Smith, *European Vision*, p. 4. Although the Pacific travelogues differ from those concerned with 'antique lands' on account of the lack of specifically antiquarian interests, there are exceptions, such as

Jonathan Lamb has described how in redacting the *Endeavour* journals Hawkesworth 'oriented his first person [voice] towards Banks rather than Cook' in order to gild the plain sailor's narratives with the 'much more full and particular' (ii., p. xiv) record of Banks's patrician curiosity. Although Hawkesworth may have attempted to tone down Banks's 'soft primitivism' and cultural relativism⁹⁴ his 'indelicate' account of Tahitian sexual habits (and Banks's keen interest in them) led to Banks's public stigmatization as the 'Macaroni of the South Pacific', a botanizing, foppish *curioso* who had spent more time making love to Tahitian women than in scientific exploration and collection. The fact that the *Endeavour* had set out with the intention of observing the Transit of Venus from the South Pacific was grist to the satirist's mill. In his account of the licentious 'Spectacle at Point Venus', which caused a particular *furor* among English readers,⁹⁵ Hawkesworth wrote 'this incident is not mentioned as an object of idle curiosity, but as it deserves consideration in determining a question which has been long debated in philosophy; whether the shame attending certain actions . . . is implanted in Nature, or superinduced by custom' (ii., p. 128). The pseudo-philosophical gloss of course rendered this all the *more* curious 'in the idle sense'.⁹⁶ Banks's flirtations with Purea ('Queen Oberea') and other Tahitian women, his 'effeminate' botanizing, and his 'creolized' fascination with Tahitian culture led him dangerously near the brink of decorous behaviour. For example, after he was robbed of his clothes while asleep, Purea dressed him in 'some of her country clothes' so that 'when he came to us he made a most motley appearance, half Indian and half English' (ii., p. 134). Commenting on Banks's 'great curiosity' to see a Tahitian funeral, Hawkesworth also described how he was

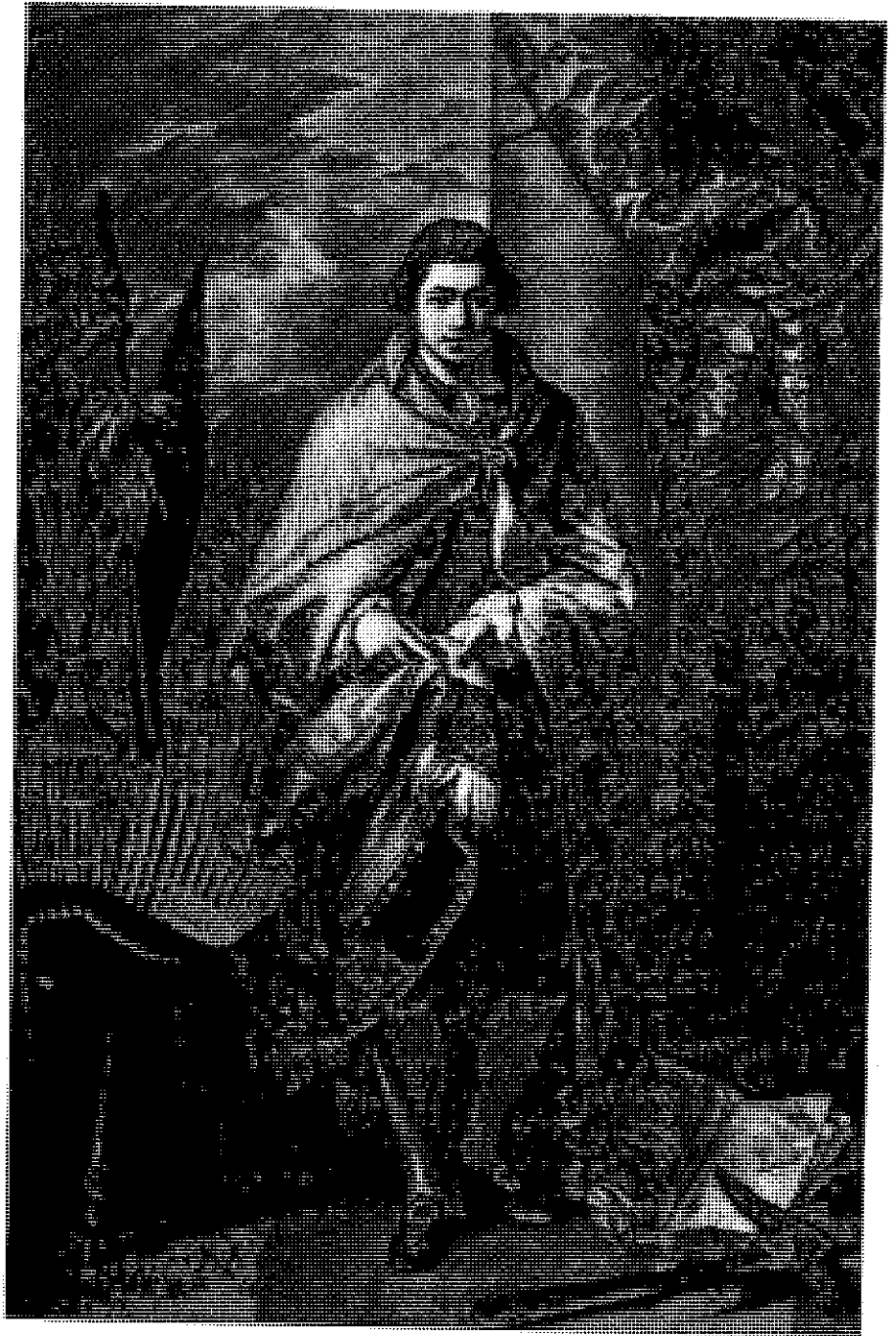
stripped of his European clothes, and a small piece of cloth being tied round his middle, his body was smeared with charcoal and water . . . till it was as black as that of a negroe: the same operation was performed upon several others, among whom

Hawkesworth's interest in Tahitian 'Morais' and the 'singular curiosity' of the 'Manioe' (giant basket-work human figure described at ii. 165). Cf. also George Forster's description of the Easter Island statues, which he compares with Egyptian antiquities in *A Voyage Round the World*, 2 vols. (London, 1777), i. 567.

⁹⁴ W. H. Pearson, 'Hawkesworth's Voyages', 242-7. Bridget Orr argues that Hawkesworth's account of Tahitian infanticide further qualified Banks's 'Arcadian' view of Tahiti; 'Stifling Pity in a Parent's Breast: Infanticide and Savagery in late 18th-Century Travel Writing', in *Travel Writing and Empire*, ed. by Steve Clark, pp. 140-1.

⁹⁵ This passage was actually based on Cook's rather than Banks's account. See J. C. Beaglehole, *The Endeavour Journal of Captain Cook* (Sydney, 1962), i. 93-4; and Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 99.

⁹⁶ The episode was excerpted in *The Covent Garden Magazine; or, Amorous Repository* and other semi-pornographic journals, lending some credibility to the commentator who complained 'Our Women may find in Dr Hawkesworth's Book stronger excitement to vicious Indulgences than the most intriguing French novel could present to their Imaginations'. Cited in Rennie, p. 101.



2. 'Joseph Banks', c.1772, by Benjamin West.

were some women, who were reduced to a state as near to nakedness as himself. (ii., p. 146)⁹⁷

Benjamin West's 1772 portrait of Banks appears at first glance perfectly to illustrate Banks's 'amphibious' nature as both a systematic, Linnaean naturalist and an effeminized, creolized 'curioso' (Ill. 2). Nicholas Thomas writes that the portrait of an exotically costumed Banks suggests 'vanity and personal acquisitiveness with respect to the curiosities that surround the subject', but this 'implication is counterbalanced by the presence of the strictly scientific image of the plant [in the folio of botanical drawings at Banks's feet], which is obviously a specimen, not an ornament'.⁹⁸ The ambivalent relationship between the 'curious' and the 'useful' touched on above is perfectly exemplified here by the fact that in his portrait Banks is conspicuously fingering the flax from which the New Zealand cloak is woven, as if to indicate its utility as a material to provide much-needed sail-cloth for Britain's ships. It is no coincidence that the book of botanical drawings at his feet is open at the flax plant.⁹⁹ It was the 'useful' botanical specimen rather than the 'curious' Tahitian curios which won out in the end in the career of Joseph Banks, as in British natural history over the next half-century. As John Gascoigne comments,

Banks's work represented a transformation of the collecting mentality of the gentlemanly virtuoso in that he ordered collections along systematic lines. To foreshadow the public/private issue, it was significant too, that Banks made such collections publicly available—again moving away from the private-collecting mentality of the virtuoso.¹⁰⁰

In the years after 1780 Banks became the hub of what David Miller has termed a 'learned empire', based on his own 'centre of calculation', his house at 32 Soho Square, although he also exercised a profound influence on the public domain of knowledge as represented by the Royal Society, the Board of Longitude, Kew Gardens, and the British Museum, of which he became a trustee in 1813.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ On the sexual connotations of curiosity, see Kenny, pp. 167–8; and Benedict, 86–92.

⁹⁸ 'Licensed Curiosity', p. 130. See also Harriet Guest's account of the West portrait in 'The Great Distinction: Figures of the Exotic in the Work of William Hodges', *New Feminist Discourses: Critical Essays on Theories and Texts*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 308–9; and 'Curiously Marked', pp. 101–34.

⁹⁹ I am grateful to Dr Patricia Fara for this point. See her 'Images of Men of Science', in *History Today* (October 1998), 42–9. In a longer, unpublished version, Fara also indicates Banks's effeminization in this portrait, as well as the fact that it was becoming more common for women than for men to be portrayed in costume . . . 'like a woman, Banks has been transformed into a seductive allegorical image'.

¹⁰⁰ John Gascoigne, "'The Ordering of Nature and the Ordering of Empire": A Commentary', *Visions of Empire*, p. 109.

¹⁰¹ David Miller, in 'Joseph Banks, Empire, and "Centers of Calculation"', *Visions of Empire*, pp. 30–3. But see Gascoigne's doubts about the applicability of the Latourian model to the early, 'curious' Banks, *ibid.*, p. 108.

In the preface to his 1777 *Voyage Round the World*, the young German naturalist George Forster commented on the 'universal censure, I had almost said contempt' with which Hawkesworth's *Account* had been received. What Forster called the 'ill-success' of the work had been attributed to the 'frivolous observations, the uninteresting digressions, and sophistical principles' of Hawkesworth himself, although he was not entirely sure that the compiler, rather than the authors of the journals (like Banks) upon which he had based his narrative, deserved to take all the blame.¹⁰² George Forster's *Voyage, Observations Made During the Voyage Round the World*, is in many ways a milestone for romantic period travel writing, establishing the principles which would increasingly be demanded from scientific travel writers over the next half-century. It is also a sustained attack on the type of 'vulgar' curiosity underpinning Hawkesworth's narrative. Forster—like his compatriot Immanuel Kant—attacked the requirement that the traveller be merely a collector of facts.¹⁰³ (Kant, needless to say, had only contempt for the *Wunderkammern*; 'a taste for all that is rare, little though its inherent worth otherwise might be . . . a spirit of minutiae [is] the opposite of the sublime', he wrote dismissively.)¹⁰⁴ Contesting the notion of the purely empirical observer, Forster believed that 'two travellers seldom saw the same object in the same manner, and each reported the fact differently, according to his sensations, and his peculiar mode of thinking'.¹⁰⁵ 'It was therefore necessary', he continued, 'to be acquainted with the observer, before any use could be made of his observations'.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² George Forster, *A Voyage Round the World, in his Brit. Majesty's Sloop Resolution, commanded by Capt. Cook, during the years 1772, 1773, 1774, and 1775*, 2 vols. (London, 1777), i., p. ix. George's father, J. R. Forster, the cantankerous German naturalist aboard Cook's *Resolution*, the next year published his strictly philosophical account *Observations made during the Voyage round the World, on Physical Geography, Natural History, and Ethic Philosophy* (London, 1778). Because of a dispute between Forster and the Admiralty, the work was published without any of its plates. Much aggrieved, Forster had decided that the original agreement limiting the nature of his travel account was binding only upon him, but that it need not prevent his son George from publishing a narrative of the voyage under his own name. Thus the very conception of *A Voyage Round the World* was linked to the Forster's disaffection with the official monopoly on travel writing. See the editors' introductory essays in the new edition of *Observations*, ed. by N. Thomas, H. Guest, and M. Dettelbach (University of Hawaii Press, 1996).

¹⁰³ As an organicist and a follower of Herder, George Forster nevertheless disagreed with Kant's anthropological theories, which he attacked in the Oct.–Nov. 1786 issue of the *Teutsche Merkur*, in an article entitled 'Noch etwas über die Menschenrassen'. See Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason. German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1987), 154–7. Kant's reply to Forster's article became the preparatory sketch for his critique of teleological judgement in the *Critique of Judgement* (1790).

¹⁰⁴ *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1764), trans. by John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 71.

¹⁰⁵ Forster, i., pp. xi–xii. See also Margarita Bowen, *Empiricism and Geographical Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 211–12.

¹⁰⁶ Forster, i., p. xii.

Forster insisted that new discoveries should not be made happenstance, but rather be deduced from transcendental inquiry in such a way that might indicate a disciplined programme for future research. At the same time, his privileging of the traveller's affective response to nature appears more akin to Rousseau's cult of sensibility than to Kant's stoic rationality:

I have sometimes obeyed the powerful dictates of my heart, and given voice to my feelings; for, as I do not pretend to be free from the weaknesses common to my fellow-creatures, it was necessary for every reader to know the colour of the glass through which I looked.¹⁰⁷

The new importance of 'affective realism' in prose narrative—most fully developed in the literature of sensibility—had been recognized by Adam Smith under the rubric of 'indirect discourse' in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1751–63). This involved not 'direct' objective description but rather 'the passion or affection [the speaker] is poss(ess)ed of and intends, by sympathy, to communicate to the reader'.¹⁰⁸ As Ian Duncan comments, 'the author places a figure within the scene as the reader's mirror or proxy, serving to situate and integrate the rhetorical effect'.¹⁰⁹

Smith's desideratum is exemplified in the the new style of 'personal narratives' by travellers like Patrick Brydone and George Forster, although conspicuously absent from Hawkesworth's *Account*, despite the latter's adoption of a first-person narrative voice. In the chapters that follow I shall chart the uneven deployment of 'affective realism' in the travel writing of James Bruce and Giovanni Belzoni, and its stabilization in the discourse of picturesque travel writing, where 'curious' singularities are *objectively* organized within 'typical landscape', and *subjectively* disciplined in relation to the traveller's associative sensibility. Thus, for Uvedale Price writing in 1794 (in a significant reformulation of curiosity), 'the effect of the picturesque is curiosity', the latter propensity now described as an affective *via media* which 'gives play to the mind', mediating between the 'violent stretch' of the Burkean sublime and the lassitude of beauty.¹¹⁰

It is likely that Forster's remarks on the traveller's sensibility in the *Voyage* influenced Mary Wollstonecraft when she wrote in her *Short Residence in Sweden* (1796) 'I perceived that I could not give a just description of what I saw, but by relating the effect different objects had produced on my mind and feel-

¹⁰⁷ Forster, i., pp. xii–xiii.

¹⁰⁸ Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed. by J. Bryce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Ian Duncan, 'Adam Smith, Samuel Johnson and the Institutions of English', in Robert Crawford (ed.), *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 46–7.

¹¹⁰ Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful*, new edn. (London, 1796), pp. 105–6.

ings, whilst the impression was still fresh'.¹¹¹ Although it is by no means predictable from Wollstonecraft's remarkable travelogue, the link between 'affective realism' and a sensibility regulated in the direction of nostalgic *amor patriae* and the domestic affections ensured that the picturesque became the approved (although not uncontested), idiom for women travel writers, the subject of Chapter 5. My sixth chapter discusses Alexander von Humboldt's representation of the traveller's 'transcendental self' as a critique of curiosity (George Forster, we should remember, was the young Humboldt's tutor and intellectual mentor), paradoxically leading to the failure of 'personal narrative'.

Although, as I shall argue, Humboldt's failure was symptomatic of a nineteenth-century division between scientific and literary travel writing, it would be a historical oversimplification to say that 'affective realism' as discussed here represented any simple shift from 'objective' to 'subjective' travel writing. According to Forster's transcendental principle, the aesthetic sensibility of the traveller must unify the manifold of sense experience which is his (or her) 'objective' task to describe, with the proviso that the traveller's affective reactions to phenomena are a part of their 'objective' description. This sensibility is communal, disciplined, and morally self-conscious,¹¹² in contrast to the 'curious attitude' with its indiscriminate passion for superficialities and singularities. On this account, the increased 'inwardness' of romantic travel writing (at least as anticipated in Forster's text) was not conceived, *pace* Charles Batten and Barbara Stafford, as the eclipse of the *utile* by the *dulce* foreshadowing a trivialization of the genre, but rather an attempt at their synthesis. Following Forster's lead, travel writers increasingly sought to express a holistic relationship between social and natural factors in diverse geographical environments, while parading sensibility as the marker of a 'modern' Western self, capable of at once empathizing with and transcending the 'antique land' and its inhabitants.

Temporalization and the Comparison of Cultures

Suppose Greek literature to be known in modern Greece only, and there to be in the hands of priests and philosophers; and suppose them still to be worshippers of Jupiter and Apollo; suppose Greece to have been

¹¹¹ *A Short Residence in Sweden*, ed. with introduction and notes by Richard Homes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 62. Wollstonecraft cites J. R. Forster's *Observations* in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1794).

¹¹² George Forster's attitude to the 'sexual curiosities' of Polynesian cultures was far less indulgent than Banks's or Hawkesworth's, whose lubricious description of native women is transformed into sexual disgust (i. 211–13). Forster's philosophical attitude to Cook's 'confirmation' of cannibalism among the Maoris also contrasts with Hawkesworth's macabre 'curiosity' (see i. 517–18).