GHOSTS OF THE PACIFIC: IMAGINED MASCULINITIES IN BRITISH VOYAGE LITERATURE, 1697-1818

BY

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DISSEPTION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

_Ghosts of the Pacific: Imagined Masculinities in British Voyage Literature, 1697-1817_ argues that Pacific novels and travelogues redefine the parameters of eighteenth-century masculinity. By the end of the century, Pacific voyagers like James Cook were celebrated as national heroes and were popularly thought to embody Enlightenment ideals of reason and civility. Less than fifty years before, however, Pacific mariners were viewed as threatening figures whose transgressive identities flouted the traditional signifiers of polite masculinity like land ownership, marriage, and heredity privilege. Commercial and imperial expansion into the Pacific revealed, I argue, the profound _instability_ of British masculinity, thus rendering the Pacific a site of both anxiety and celebration. The “empty” Pacific represented a laboratory of national and self-identification where Britons critiqued their empire even as they reified the new forms of masculinity necessary to expand and maintain it.

By addressing how masculinities were fashioned in relation to Pacific travel, I reframe the “Pacific” as a literary problem. Scholars have discussed how bestselling Pacific novels and travelogues mobilized emerging scientific and economic discourses to rewrite the transgressive actions of voyagers as normative, gentlemanly pursuits, thereby weaving these discourses into the fabric of eighteenth-century social order. I recast this historicist approach, arguing that texts by authors like Daniel Defoe and Jane Austen imagine the Pacific as a rich, discursive field for representing both commercial and domestic subjectivities. Celebrated by polite readers, the novels and narratives of Pacific voyagers were an important means for questioning and reaffirming the unstable conditions of nation and selfhood.
For Jill
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project could not have been completed without the generous help and support of many different people and institutions. I owe my greatest debt to Bob Markley, whose guidance and patience as a dissertation advisor is surpassed only by his prolific knowledge. Bob makes me rethink my understanding of the eighteenth century after every conversation we have, and I can only imagine he will continue to do so. Most importantly, Bob has been a kind and loyal mentor generous with his time, for which I will be forever grateful.

I am also grateful to the members of my dissertation committee for their many contributions and corrections. Tony Pollock has listened patiently and helped to steer even the most errant ideas to more fruitful paths. Gillen Wood and Dana Rabin have provided invaluable insights for this project as it continues to develop. I am also deeply indebted to past teachers: John Dodd, who taught me how to read, Tam Carlson, who taught me why we read, and Misty Anderson, Jennifer Michael, and Dale Richardson, each of whom illuminated even the most obscure recesses of eighteenth-century literature with wit and grace.

I also want to thank the various institutions that provided me with the financial means to conduct my research. I am grateful to the Graduate College at the University of Illinois for providing a final year of teaching releases so this project could be completed, and to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, UK, for providing funding to attend its 2012 Navy and Nation conference, which continues to pay dividends in its influence on my work.

A wonderful group of friends and colleagues from Sewanee, the University of Tennessee, and Illinois has gracefully listened to the evolution of this project over the years. Mike Behrens and Neil Norman are not only two great friends, but two swift(ian) minds at home in the eighteenth century. Jess Mercado, Carla Rosell, Adam Prince, Ryan Sheets, and Dan Colson
made life in Champaign fun. Fred Larabee and Charlie Nelson provided much of the intellectual energy in Annapolis, where this dissertation was completed.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. My parents Boyce and DeLayne taught me that the setbacks are often more important than the successes. Justin and Edie provided good cheer and restored the soul, while Peyton and Henry serve as a constant reminder of what is really important. Last, but not least, I want to thank Jill. She has been a constant source of inspiration, and has taught me more than any book ever could about the happy life.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation offers an account of the profound influences the Pacific Ocean had on the literature and culture of the eighteenth century, and how that ocean served as an imaginative space where the contested nature of self and nation was explored in the nascent age of empire. As a supplement to scholarship that looks at the Pacific through a postcolonial lens, my work examines how Britons used the Pacific as a site of self-identification, imagining both their cultural ancestors (Tahiti’s “island race”) and their imperial future (Terra Australis Incognita, for example) to lie in Pacific waters. Thus, this dissertation shows how eighteenth-century notions of nation and selfhood are conceived of by identifying with Pacific islands and peoples, or by imagining a national future based upon a conjectural Pacific space. While the Orientalist discourse of “us” and “other” eventually comes to hold sway in the nineteenth century, Pacific literature reveals a much more fluid paradigm where identity was in flux, even as Orientalism’s ideological underpinnings begin to come into clearer focus. Britain held no colonial possessions in the Pacific until very late in the eighteenth century, and while Orientalism is undoubtedly one of the defining binaries of Britain’s later empire, the marginalized position the British held in the Pacific and in relation to Pacific Rim nations like China, Japan, and the sultanates of Southeast Asia, as well as Spain’s American empire, reveal a much more fraught, less self-assured view of self and other. Given Britain’s marginal position in the intra-regional trade networks of these

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1 Consider Jonathan Lamb’s assessment, who argues for “no metaphysical distinction division between the European self and its so-called other. There is not on one side an “I” capable of writing a history into which the subaltern “I” on the other side is speechlessly incorporated as its predicate … Europeans … were engaged as exigently as the Polynesians in the struggle to preserve the self.” Lamb, Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001): 5. Robert Markley argues, “The confrontation of English writers with China and Japan became a catalyst for their recognition that the discourse of European empire was an ideological construct—part self-conscious propaganda, part wish fulfillment, and part econometric extrapolation to sustain fantasies of commercial prosperity, if not imperial conquest.” Markley, The Far East and the English Imagination (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 9.
countries and European ignorance of the Pacific itself, literature like the Pacific novels of Daniel
Defoe and the voyage narratives of William Dampier and George Anson further reveals the
Pacific to be an imaginative construction, whereby voyagers and novelists narrate the conditions
that would banish the grim imperial realities of scarcity, ecological degradation, and slavery.
These texts also imagine how the figures defined by empire—explorer, pirate, and merchant (to
name a few)—fundamentally alter codified understandings of “home.”

The “empty” Pacific functions rhetorically as blank canvas on which Dampier, Defoe,
and Anson, and later James Cook’s naturalist Johann Reinhold Forster and Jane Austen, paint
their own commercial speculations and imperial ideologies. By the mid-eighteenth century, this
blank space on the map had become a laboratory to explore British identity, much like it was for
earlier buccaneers, where discussions of commerce, gender, race, nation, and empire could be
theorized and mediated. Before Cook’s voyages and John Hawkesworth’s narratives codified
Tahiti in the English imagination as a sort of male, adolescent fantasy land of free love and
natural abundance, the hopes of accessing tightly-controlled Far Eastern markets dominated the
thought and intention of European captains who sailed in the Pacific. Economic historians have
debunked the myth of a monolithic eighteenth-century West at the center of a Eurocentric
economy, pointing instead to the dominant role China played in world markets. Kenneth
Pomeranz argues against the notion of a Eurocentric world trade, writing “only after nineteenth-
century industrialization was well advanced does it make sense to see a single, hegemonic
European ‘core’.”2 Andre Gunder Frank emphatically agrees, writing, “Europe was not
hegemonic structurally, nor functionally, nor in terms of economic weight, or of production,
technology or productivity, nor in per capita consumption … In no way [was] eighteenth-century

Britain ‘hegemonic’ in world economic terms. Nor in political ones … In all these respects, the economies of Asia were far more ‘advanced’.”³ Holden Furber simply states, “Our view of the West as ‘rich’ and ‘developed’ and most of Asia as ‘poor’ and ‘underdeveloped’ would have been incomprehensible to [an eighteenth-century English person].”⁴ While the East India Company maintained a rather precarious position at Canton, the British were otherwise largely excluded from the riches of the China trade, and, further afield, the Dutch-controlled spice trade in the East Indies.

Despite this marginalization, however, Britons continued to imagine their empire extending beyond the Atlantic sphere. Many British citizens were troubled by slavery and what it represented, and institutions like the slave trade made them suspicious of conquest and the imposition of imperial rule, which they associated with the “Black Legend” of the Spanish empire.⁵ Crops from the Americas and the Caribbean, notably tobacco and sugar, while profitable, also necessitated Britain’s ignominious expansion of the slave trade. Anthony Pagden argues that these problems galvanized a strand of reactionary thinking in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that “the future of empires lay not in territorial acquisition but in trade, and trade relied not upon acquisition of territory, but upon control of the seas.”⁶ In this shift from a more Lockean, *res nullius* vision of empire to one based on *mare liberum*, the Pacific represented Britain’s future. This new imperial thinking envisioned the discovery of new lands with plentiful resources, native populations with a desire for British trade goods, and cheap labor that could be exploited, not enslaved, and which was “based not upon settlement but upon the

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⁶ Pagden, 115.
enjoyment of a ‘surplus’ produced by a willing, if lowly paid, native population.” The Pacific functions as a logical, evolutionary step in Britain’s imperial imagination, where fantasies of a commercial, seaborne empire occur free from the moral taint of conquest and the vast expenditures of men and money associated with it.

Jane Austen provides a succinct literary expression of this problem: *Emma’s* (1815) Augusta Suckling, later Mrs. Elton, is the daughter of a Bristol merchant, and her bad manners and nouveau riche imitation of what she thinks constitutes the customs of landed society reveal how commercial wealth has undermined once firmly entrenched class hierarchies. As Britain’s main slave-trading port, Bristol, and the connotations of the wealth concentrated there, paints Mrs. Elton’s money not just as gauche, but as morally tainted. In *Mansfield Park* (1814), Thomas Bertram suddenly leaves his estate in England for his sugar plantations in Antigua. Although earlier critics like Edward Said suggest this episode represents Austen’s tacit approval of the slave trade, Bertram’s absence has come to be read by other critics as a critique of slavery because all of the disorder in the novel springs from his absence. Although many prominent Englishmen, like Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson, saw the West Indies as the crown jewel of England’s empire, there were many novelists and voyagers who were not as comfortable with the brutal trade-off England’s Atlantic colonies often required: wealth from slavery. The “empty” Pacific represented a convenient, if ultimately illusory, solution to this problem.

Understanding English fears that they might reenact their own Spanish “Black Legend,” coupled with the fact that China and, to a lesser extent, India anchored the world economy, makes clear why such a prevalent fascination with the Pacific existed. Its vast, open seas were

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Pagden, 8. British India functioned as the locus of many of these imperialist theories, although the new “Indian” model was obviously not without its own unique brutality. However, this new style of British rule self-consciously tried to avoid the physical and cultural destruction typified by the subjugation of the Amerindians and the institution of slavery, and did not devolve into “belligerent militarism” and “Roman imperial imagery,” Pagden argues, until the mid-nineteenth century.
thought to hold undiscovered islands sinking under their weight in gold, including one of the most prevailing geo-political fantasies since medieval times—the mythical southern continent Terra Australis Incognita. Thought by enterprising projectors and cartographers to lie southeast of New Zealand, Terra Australis Incognita functioned (or was imagined to function), for voyagers from William Dampier to James Cook and for authors like Daniel Defoe, as the linchpin of a new British global trade network. Spanish merchantmen were able to exploit a logical Pacific trade network, sailing to the New World with European manufactures, selling them for silver from the mines there, sailing west across the Pacific to their trade entrepot in Manila to purchase luxury goods, returning to New Spain to sell china, silk, and spices for even greater quantities of silver, and then finally returning to Europe, having reaped enormous profits. There was little the English had to offer in these foreign markets aside from silver. Terra Australis Incognita’s existence, however, would have meant merchants could sail from England with holds full of Britain’s most politically sensitive and economically valuable export—wool—and trade it for gold and spices with socially tractable natives, circumventing Spanish and Dutch monopolies altogether.⁸ Terra Australis Incognita allows Great Britain to imagine itself as a self-sufficient nation with a self-perpetuating source of wealth and luxury goods. The Pacific’s promise of fantastic wealth fundamentally rewrites conceptions of national identity that are predicated on an ethos of economic expansionism, dependent upon the fantasy that personal profit and national benefit seamlessly coincide.

The conflation of public and private interest that Terra Australis Incognita and, more generally, the Pacific represents also troubles settled understandings of eighteenth-century masculinity. Jonathan Lamb argues that the travel and exploration demanded by a market

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economy, driven in no small part by goods from the Pacific Rim like tea, china, silk, and spices, created “a new sort of ignorance, productive of a keen anxiety about the tendency of events and the constitution of the self. Instead of relying on Providence for a sense of history, people confronted an engine for social development that they had constructed themselves, but that they could neither govern nor understand.” In other words, the Pacific helped create the market conditions by which Britain had to confront “a new sort of ignorance,” which manifested itself in voyagers as a profound yearning to recreate the conditions of “home” in the vast regions of the Pacific while simultaneously reveling in freedom from social strictures. Pacific voyages, to a far greater extent than Atlantic passages, subjected sailors to overwhelming cultural disorientation and psychological and physical stress; lasting three or four years, they posed a host of dangers largely absent from comparatively short Atlantic crossings. Scurvy and its litany of physical and psychological symptoms embodied this threat by exposing the physical decay and fragility of the body, calling into question the viability of a national identity based on traditional signifiers of masculinity like land ownership, marriage as defined by proper heterosexual desire and domesticity, and hereditary privilege. By the end of the century, Pacific voyagers like Cook were celebrated as national heroes and were popularly thought to embody Enlightenment ideals of reason and civility. Before 1750, however, Pacific mariners were viewed as threatening figures whose transgressive identities flouted these traditional signifiers of polite masculinity. Commercial and imperial expansion into the Pacific revealed, I argue, the profound instability of British masculinity.

The development of the Pacific mariner as a literary character, from its early iterations in pirates like Dampier and Bob Singleton to naval officers like Captain Frederick Wentworth, shows how this fundamentally transgressive figure comes to be rewritten as the very model of

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9 Lamb, 4.
gentlemanly identity. The reality of the Pacific mariner’s life, both as an inhabitant of the all-male wooden world and, at times, as a violent agent of empire, exemplify what Hans Turley calls the “piratical subject,” a figure who destabilizes codified understandings of eighteenth-century masculinity by revealing how the male subject of voyage literature often is “not comfortably suited to conventional sexual and economic depictions of desire.”\(^\text{10}\) This non-normative desire includes, as Erin Mackie illustrates, “the negative refusals of heterosociality, of privacy, of domesticity, [and] masculinity as an expression of sexuality.”\(^\text{11}\) Such difference not only marks the voyager with a non-normative definition of masculinity, but exemplifies how he functions as a threat to representations of civil society, particularly since the “gentleman” and his attendant taste, civility, and virtue are often represented as the cultural embodiment of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Whig settlement of 1689. The qualities of the “gentleman,” then, represent an English national identity associated with an aristocratic class (or at least landed gentry) who defied the political and religious absolutism associated with the Catholic courts of France and Spain.

Mariners generally, but Pacific figures specifically, thus represent masculine forms not easily assimilated into prevailing teleologies of the social contract, even as their non-normative behavior reifies the powerful patrilineal stereotypes they would upset. Pacific masculinities, like those represented in *A Voyage Round the World by George Anson* (1748), represent the most extreme, but logical, outcome of a cultural shift contingent upon the political crisis of 1688, where “personal worth gravitates from the contingencies of wealth and status inward to an


ethical-aesthetic realm.” Even naval officers like Anson and Cook, despite their public status as celebrities, still represented a fundamentally different conception of masculinity than the “gentlemanly” identity that defined the upper classes. This description is not to suggest that the transgressive figure of the Pacific mariner somehow wrests a gendered, cultural authority from “gentlemen” on land, but that his qualities—social mobility (linked to mobile, commercial wealth), homosocial, fraternal bonds that supercede the heterosexual, and proto-middle-class professionalism—altered the conditions of the gentleman’s legitimacy. All of these traits loosely coalesce under the rubric “autonomy.” The autonomous individual of the voyager functions as a threatening figure who allows readers to make investments in fantastical notions of self and society free from everyday strictures, even as the discursive reintegration of the mariner secures normative senses of self and society. Consequently, reading these texts forces us to redefine the parameters of eighteenth-century masculinity, or at least offer an alternative tradition to a narrowly defined archetype of masculinity tied to notions of “domesticity” most often associated with the eighteenth-century “rise of the novel.”

In this respect, Kathleen Wilson calls attention to the way imperial endeavors were “conceptualized as an antidote to perceived national effeminacy and corruption … [where] an austere, forceful, disciplined and martial manliness could restore national spirit and power.” If the joint projects of exploration, territorial acquisition, and economic imperialism combatted “national effeminacy,” they also, as Antoinette Burton and Tony Ballantyne have argued, “were frequently believed to throw white male bodies into crisis.” This dialectic—the masculine body serves as a site of both celebration and anxiety—also typifies voyage literature: the

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12 Mackie, 7.
protagonists’ extreme individualism similarly manifests itself as both heroic action and a profound threat to the social order. Consequently, voyage literature, mostly ghostwritten or heavily edited from sailors’ journals and ships’ logs, had to perform the cultural work of reintegrating even the heroic voyager within the bounds of polite society to compensate for the crises effected by the physical and cultural stresses of Pacific travel.

Part of my project, then, is exploring this always-contingent construction of eighteenth-century masculinity in light of new commercial and scientific technologies, and investigating how voyagers then reconcile their new realities to a divinely sanctioned, Protestant universe. The “new ignorance” that Lamb outlines and the unsettling social and gendered changes created by exploration, however, also created the opportunity for new ideological representations of the very providential system that ostensibly was being undermined. In other words, voyagers exploited new scientific discourses to shore up their own identities as reliable state actors by rehearsing prevailing notions of a voluntarist universe perfectly ordered by God. Locke, for example, links concerns of private property and the consent of the governed to the inexhaustibility of natural resources. While Locke’s Second Treatise (1689) theorizes this relationship between the civil contract and a Golden Age where “All the world was America,” his later introduction to Awnsham and John Churchill’s A Collection of Voyages and Travels (1704) explicitly connects infinite resources to God’s divine will as revealed through exploration. Locke opens by praising the art of navigation itself: “Of all the inventions and improvement the wit and industry of man has discovered and brought to perfection, none seems to be so universally useful, profitable and necessary, as the art of navigation.”

15 Locke, “A General Preface, Giving an Account of the Progress of Navigation from its First Beginning to the Perfection It Is Now,” in A Collection of Voyage and Travels, ed. by Awnsham and John Churchill (London, 1704): ix. All references are to this edition and will be cited in the text.
execution of the Direction given by Almighty God” (ix). Celebrating the invention of the compass, Locke assigns a totemic value to this seemingly magical navigational instrument: a guide for “blind sailors,” that “has open’d ways in the unknown ocean, and made them as plain and easy in the blackest night as in the brightest day” (xv). By describing early technological breakthroughs in navigation in these terms, Locke places sailors in a passive role, guided by the “occult” powers of the compass (xvi). Navigation, and the commerce implicitly linked to it, are revealed as a providential injunction that God slowly reveals.

Moreover, Locke directly links navigation and infinite resources in ways that anticipate Defoe and the entire Pacific project—divinely sanctioned commercial wealth free from scarcity, competition, and exploitation. Although Locke writes that seafaring nations “ventur’d sometimes far from home, either to rob, conquer, or trade,” his treatise emphasizes trade much more than exploration or violent subjugation (xv). Defoe’s descriptions of the East Indies and the South Seas directly echo Locke’s description of the region, given that Locke describes “the inexhaustible treasures of the silver mines of Peru and Mexico and of the gold mines of Chile” (xxxvi). The East Indies are described as “the fountain-head” of trade, wherein “if some have encroached upon others and confined them to a narrower trade in those parts, yet the returns from thence are yearly so great, that all those goods may be purchased here at the second hand infinitely cheaper than they could when one nation had the supplying of all the rest” (xxxv). Just as Defoe later energizes speculations about the Northwest Passage, Locke’s introduction recounts no less than nine attempts to discover the imaginary seaway. The Northwest Passage is described as a gateway to the infinite resources imaginarily represented by China. The end goal of all navigation and exploration, Locke asserts, is “the mighty kingdom of Cathay, and a passage to China, Japan, and all other eastern regions” (xx). Locke’s treatise on travel endorses
a prevalent English belief that navigation functioned as a mode of divine revelation, whereby the discovery of new lands and resources to exploit ever-so-slowly revealed the great plan of God’s creation.

Pacific voyage literature, then, reflects the ways that scientific inquiry or natural philosophy are written into a Whiggish narrative of Western economic and moral progress, and the ways that commercial reconnaissance came to be the work of the naturalist. Not surprisingly, voyagers exploit the persona of the naturalist in an effort to secure their own errant identities. Masculinity must be redefined to accommodate the mariner, for in seeking legitimacy, the voyager’s vision of foreign lands often subscribes to a predictable rubric which “offers its practitioners inexhaustible opportunities to celebrate divine wisdom and … to legitimate the authoritarian, patrilineal ideology of Restoration England.”¹⁶ The natural philosopher (or buccaneer or naval officer or explorer) acts as a divine interlocutor, whose observation and ordering of the natural world signals not a dangerous autonomy, but an interpretation of God’s will and an embodiment of divine intervention. Concomitantly, as Markley argues, “the discourses of theology, style, gentlemanly privilege, and experimental natural philosophy interpenetrate,” and in the new science men like Robert Boyle sought “to locate a ground for an absolute faith in a host of contingent, sociocultural beliefs.”¹⁷ This scientific persona is used to great effect by William Dampier and his ghostwriters, and the buccaneer autonomy he represents finds its full, socially-sanctioned voice in the taxonomies of Linnaeus. Johann Reinhold Forster, for example, uses these Linnaean taxonomies in his exhaustive study of the indigenous populations of the South Seas, endorsing, like Dampier, a Protestant vision where cultures are gauged by their ability to assimilate Western conceptions of trade. In such a system, mythical

lands like *Terra Australis Incognita* become yet another sign of a divinely ordered world, whereby English imperial actors function as God’s agents in adding another part of the world to a fantastical, commercial “design.”

By addressing how masculinities were fashioned in relation to Pacific travel, I reframe the “Pacific” as a literary problem. Scholars like Philip Edwards, Anna Neill, and Glyndwr Williams have discussed how bestselling Pacific novels and travelogues mobilized emerging scientific and economic discourses to rewrite the transgressive actions of voyagers as normative, gentlemanly pursuits, thereby weaving these discourses into the fabric of eighteenth-century social order. I recast this historicist approach, arguing that both non-canonical and canonical texts imagined the Pacific as a rich, discursive field for representing both commercial and domestic subjectivities. The voluminous textual material directly addressing or influenced by Pacific discourses speaks to the eighteenth-century reading public’s fascination with the ocean and the nations that circled it. Many of the Pacific texts were bestsellers; William Dampier’s *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), Richard Walter and Benjamin Robins’s *A Voyage Round the World by George Anson* (1748), and John Hawkesworth’s *Accounts of the Voyages and Discoveries in the South Hemisphere* (1773) easily outsold most of the canonical novels of their respective eras. The account of Anson’s circumnavigation even surpassed the sales of canonical heavyweights *Tom Jones* (1748) and *Clarissa* (1748). Subscription lists reveal, too, that these texts were far from Grub Street texts written by hacks, a misconception which accounts for their scholarly neglect in relation to the novel. Prominent members of the Royal Society, aristocratic lords, and grandee politicians dot the subscription lists. Many of these same volumes sit in the

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library of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. The Pacific’s literary reach, however, extends far beyond these travel narratives. Canonical authors like Daniel Defoe and Jane Austen take the Pacific as a rich site of discursive imagination, using that ocean to explore new forms of subjectivity moving into an age defined by the expansion of empire. Given that the reading public consumed these texts as much, if not more, than novels, voyage literature provides an alternative tradition to the novel, and exemplifies how the novel’s overarching question—the relation of the self to society—was being considered from multiple angles and hardly confined to the domestic sphere.

In short, the Pacific functioned as a site of both anxiety and celebration. On the one hand, it represented an imaginative projection of a future English empire where commercial goods, wealth, and national prestige could be enjoyed while circumventing the miasma of slavery that hovered over Britain’s Caribbean and American colonies. On the other, the Pacific represented the fact that England was, at best, a marginal player in both the global and intra-Asian trade networks of the Pacific Rim nations. The works I examine, both canonical and non-canonical, represent how British authors and mariners responded to this reality, and the conditions they thought might make their fantasies a reality. Therefore, we can read into these texts both a history of how England approached its eighteenth-century imperial aspirations, and what sort of “hero” might order, manage, and expand upon this future promise.

Chapter Descriptions

_Ghosts of the Pacific_ follows a chronological order even as it explores the reflexive nature of voyage literature. Defoe, for instance, appropriates the themes of William Dampier while anticipating the same discourses about ecology and land management that so fascinated
Johann Reinho Forster fifty years later. All of the texts I examine, in some ways, move towards the codification of the Pacific mariner as a new form of “gentleman,” whether rewriting the buccaneer as a man of science, or, in Austen’s *Persuasion*, reimagining the mariner as an imperial agent whose professional ethos fundamentally redefines domesticity. The first half of my dissertation examines how representative texts rehabilitated Pacific mariners under the signs of economic adventurism and scientific observation. While early iterations of voyage literature see the mariner as a threat who must be rehabilitated, later authors retroactively construct a coherent, nationalistic figure immune to the Pacific’s unique travails. These later texts introduce and codify a prominent trope, whereby adventurous action on the edges of empire reveals an innate English masculinity *in extremis* that counteracted the perceived effeminacy of aristocratic men at home.

William Dampier’s *New Voyage Round the World* (1697) proved an instant bestseller, and chapter one examines the rhetorical strategies that Dampier’s ghostwriters used to render the buccaneer a polite figure. Adding a significant amount of material on natural history, geography, and ethnography to his journals, Dampier’s ghostwriters reinscribe violent, buccaneer autonomy within a distinctly Newtonian framework. Rewritten as a divine interlocutor, “Dampier’s” observations of the natural world serve to justify economic imperialism and recast his autonomy and interpretative abilities (and their classed and gendered underpinnings) as the basis of gentlemanly identity and social order. Moreover, Dampier’s buccaneering, rewritten as scientific “service to [his] country,” reveals how patrilineal society “retains investments … in forms of power it disowns.”

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19 Mackie, 4.
or rewrite one’s voyage as “successful,” however, was nothing new. But the ghostwriters’ rendering of Dampier’s travels also reinvigorated nationalist paradigms of masculinity by linking scientific inquiry to economic adventurism in the Pacific, revealing the “dependence, even complicity of ‘transgressive’ and ‘resistant’ outlaw powers on the institutions and discourses against which they define their own autonomy.” The character “Dampier” embodies this complex dialectic, while also revealing a fundamental shift in the subjectivity of the male voyager from military adventurism (in the form of Drake) to the disciplined scientist.

The undisciplined body “not suited to conventional sexual and economic desire” is not simply rehabilitated, but rewritten to reinvest sociopolitical order with dominant forms of culture and authority. The ghostwriters’ refashioning of Dampier’s transgressive gender identity renders him an objective, disciplined scientific observer who embodies the most valued modalities of eighteenth-century masculinity. The expansion of overseas trade in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries exacerbated the tension between an older, landed conception of masculinity and one signified by newly mobilized wealth through trade. *New Voyage* must negotiate these discourses to remake the masculine subjectivity Dampier embodies and to create an imperial “reality” acceptable to a polite readership. Ultimately, Dampier’s ghostwriters mobilize a commercial ideology dependent upon the ethnographic, zoographical, and navigational knowledge that comprises commercial reconnaissance. They couple this commercial ideology and the overlapping discourses that reinforce it to sanitize the autonomous persona of the buccaneer and thereby reassert the masculine and civil values that secure personal and national identity. The heroicizing of Dampier as natural philosopher recasts stateless selves

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20 As Edwards writes, “the terms success or failure for a voyage could be adventitious … for on paper purposefulness in fulfilling an objective could be a lot clearer than it ever was from the ship.” Edwards, 224.
21 Mackie, 4.
as English subjects, and renders buccaneer autonomy and its justification of economic imperialism as public service and providentially-ordained action.

In chapter two, I argue that Daniel Defoe’s Pacific novels, *Captain Singleton* (1720) and *A New Voyage Round the World* (1725), imagine new masculine identities free from the affective constraints of nation and home. Both of these novels eliminate one of the genre’s key conventions: the male “homecoming” symbolized by marriage and the acquisition of landed property. Instead, Defoe portrays unfettered economic expansion as necessary for this reformation. These two novels examine commerce dialectically; whereas *Singleton* explores the Hobbesian, materialist origins of commerce, placing it on an uncertain continuum with piracy, *New Voyage* circumvents this troubling reality by rehearsing a prevalent Lockean cultural fantasy that imagines the Pacific as a site of infinite resources. Ultimately, both novels emphasize the necessity of establishing new trade networks in the Pacific, ironically re-invigorating nationalist boundaries by imagining the Pacific itself as part of a Greater Britain.

Defoe also conceives of a solution to the voyager’s literal separation from England and the metaphorical separation from modes of self-definition that comprised the crucial aspects of post-1688 national and gentlemanly identity. Both Singleton and the New Voyager conspicuously call attention to their lack of familial, historical, and national origins, as well as their questionable methods of capital accumulation. Defoe rewrites this separation to exemplify how masculine identity in the early novel proved more fluid than critics supposed, or how Defoe privileged the autonomous, homosocial identity over the psychological, feminine identity dictated by domestic ideology. Consequently, *New Voyage* strategically eliminates the need for spiritual or material “reform” that troubles the ending of *Captain Singleton*. If *Singleton* asks what might constitute virtue for an individual whose identity is not tied to a narrative of future
redemption and homecoming, then New Voyage supplies readers with an answer. Defoe envisions the Pacific not only as an inexhaustible source of lucrative trade goods, but also as a site where traditional ideas of masculinity can be ignored and the outlaw-mariner is free from the necessity of maintaining a normative masculine identity. A new sort of “hero” emerges who Defoe uses to celebrate the character traits downplayed by Dampier a quarter century earlier and that Robinson Crusoe framed as “original sin”: individual autonomy, mobile property, and non-territorialized notions of self and home.

Chapter three details how Richard Walter and Benjamin Robins’s A Voyage Round the World by George Anson (1748) paradoxically uses devastating outbreaks of scurvy during Commodore Anson’s voyage to imagine new forms of masculinity necessary for the extension of the empire. Their representation of scurvy feminizes and racializes the British male body, I argue, to critique older forms of masculinity linked to aristocratic embodiment; the authors equate this crisis of masculinity with what they read as the imperial failure of an effeminate, cosmopolitan gentleman. That cosmopolitanism might function as “a culture’s canny way of laying imaginary claim to a world that it does not yet materially possess”\(^{22}\) or “the metonymic displacement of the lust for empire” itself comprises a compensatory narrative where the celebration of polite taste masks England’s commercial inadequacies.\(^{23}\) Walter and Robins tap into these discourses, ironically revealing the startling instability of English identity, and their images of English abjection only exacerbate the shocks, both literal and metaphorical, to which the seafaring body was heir. I examine how Walter and Robins’s representation of scurvy challenges the cosmopolitanism prevalently associated with aristocratic masculinity and national

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character, instead rewriting older modes of embodiment as the necessary guarantor of identity for imperial endeavors. The authors represent scurvy as a disease which purges effeminacy and acculturation, revealing *in extremis* an innate masculine, English identity; they then reinscribe this identity in Anson and his men, who are duly reconstituted on distant Pacific landfalls like Juan Fernandez and Tinian. The “new” Anson represents a nostalgic model of Englishness divorced from aristocratic cosmopolitanism and effeminacy, which he then asserts over his “effeminate” Chinese and British East India Company counterparts at the bustling, transcultural harbor of Canton.

Anson’s mastery of Pacific space and its most dreaded disease renders him the model of English masculinity necessary for carrying the signifiers of country and culture across the empire, thereby allowing readers to lay psychic claim to the still uncharted Pacific and compensating for an Englishness threatened by the realities of global commerce and acculturation. Rewriting the Pacific and China as the conjoined, but contested, ground where this negotiation of identity is carried out, Walter and Robins ironically use embodiment as a way to “purge residual forms of aristocratic power from modern forms of English subjectivity.”

By dismissing the older notion that only aristocrats function as a nation’s cultural representatives, the *Voyage* functions as a transitional text, illustrating one of the nascent moments in a much later turn to Orientalism, and by redefining embodied identity not as the entitlement of a European aristocracy, but as the common birthright of the white, English male.

The voyages of Cook complete the Pacific voyager’s transformation, and chapter four examines the writings of the naturalist of Cook’s second voyage, the German-born, Protestant minister Johann Reinhold Forster. Although Forster has long been recognized as a naturalist fundamentally at odds with commercial speculation, his writings reveal a more nuanced attitude,

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24 Zuroski-Jenkins, 13.
framing both landed and commercial classes as bound by mutual self-interest. Reading Forster’s natural history lectures and Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World (1778) in the context of eighteenth-century discourses of land improvement, I demonstrate how Forster joins Tahiti and Great Britain in a shared cultural heritage I call “Pacific exceptionalism.” Pacific exceptionalism illustrates how integral components of Britain’s island identity—including cultivation, land ownership, and private property—are influenced by and projected onto Forster’s Tahiti. Differing from stadial theorists who aimed to generalize the rise and fall of civilizations, Forster located for Britain and Tahiti a unique trajectory that placed them outside the fundamentally cyclical nature of civilization and time. Forster’s Observations created an image of Tahiti in the popular imagination that served as “an epistemological basis … for nationalism,” thereby codifying a process of “mak[ing] what is acquired seem innate.”

At the same time, Forster’s empirical rendering of the Pacific illustrates Britain’s metaphorical investments in these discourses alongside the literal investments of its commercial and naval interests.

Moreover, Forster was writing at a time when changes in imperial dogma were coming to the fore. At war for the better part of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Britain showed renewed interest in the Pacific during a time of relative peace and prosperity in the 1760s. With this turn to peace, Britain witnessed a populist groundswell calling for political and social reform—including restricting or eliminating the slave trade—that had been largely glossed over during decades of war. Cook represented the so-called “arts of peace,” defined foremost by an emphasis on scientific investigation and discovery over war, and he formed the basis of a

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25 Brian W. Richardson, Longitude and Empire: How Captain Cook’s Voyages Changed the World (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005): 133. Richardson examines how Cook’s accurate charts of the Pacific influenced a nationalist subjective turn. I extend this analysis to Forster’s writings. Wilson argues that Cook, despite the scientific nature of his voyages, nevertheless formed the basis of a chauvinistic, imperialist English identity. I extend her discussion by examining Forster’s previously understated role in this identity formation. Wilson, 6.

26 Wilson, 19.
new “inquiring masculinity … striated with national, class and gender prejudices and ideals … eagerly embraced by sailors, servants and slaves as well as by officers.” Pacific exploration functioned in part as a logical outgrowth of this popular clamor for a kinder, gentler brand of imperialism, and Cook and his naturalists, with their “inquiring masculinity,” were to be its standard bearers.

With this changing imperialist dogma, Great Britain needed new ways of understanding itself as a people and nation, particularly when the cultural category of “nation” was undergoing its own transformation. During Forster’s era, the nation became “the most accepted and convenient category through which to organize knowledge and consciousness.” That such interest in theorizing nation-states sould occur just as Britain’s interest in the Pacific reached fever pitch seems appropriate because the Pacific itself necessitated a new way of understanding the world. Alan Frost argues that the Pacific voyagers, “set … social and aesthetic traditions” that influenced later writers (including the Romantics), while Cook and the Forster’s specifically “described vistas which European aesthetic conventions did not accommodate … [and] began to develop new and less intellectually limited modes of perceiving nature.” 

Ironically, these “less intellectually limited modes” stemmed from the removal of an imaginary geography in the Pacific. Cook’s accurate charts created what O. H. K. Spate calls a “positional geography,” that in turn allowed Europeans “not just to traverse the South Seas but to use it.” Spate refers to the increasingly tangible role the Pacific played in world markets versus its often fantastic representation in the novels of Defoe; by recreating the Pacific as a site that might finally be

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27 Wilson, 19.
28 Wilson, 7.
studied, ordered, and mastered, Forster’s writings epitomized the conflation of popular imagination, nationalism, scientific observation, and commercial exploitation.

If chapter four argues that Cook’s voyages rhetorically secure the masculine, nationalist identity of Pacific sailors, chapter five argues that Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* (1818) furthers this project by portraying the reformed mariner as a fully integrated member of polite society. Captain Frederick Wentworth has long been recognized as a new model of masculinity who embodies the meritocratic ethos of the Royal Navy, but the navy’s influence on the novel has been treated too singularly; while scholars have argued that Wentworth is modeled upon naval hero Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson, I argue that Nelson’s extramarital affair with Emma Lady Hamilton aligns him with corrupted forms of Regency masculinity associated with the threatening figures of the dandy and the Prince Regent. Moreover, Nelson’s endorsement of ruinous colonial wars in the Caribbean and his continued support of the slave trade render him a dubious model for Wentworth. Austen, rather, derives the meritorious qualities of her naval characters like Wentworth, Croft, and Harville from the Pacific tradition. Wentworth proves such an interesting character because of his transitional status. That is, he embodies the problematic legacies of Pacific adventurism—the predatory raiding of Drake and Dampier, for instance—while also representing a progressive strand of professionalism, entrepreneurial spirit, and strict self-regulation. Austen invokes a figurative construction of the Pacific to distance her naval heroes from both involvement in the Atlantic slave trade (or at least the protection of British trade interests dependent upon slavery) and the morally fraught nature of Britain’s imperial activities in its East Indian theatre like the developing opium trade.

Austen rewrites the navy and empire as institutions that self-consciously erode gender boundaries, and which redefine the domestic as a space of national importance from which a new
social order is derived. Divorced from entitlement, Wentworth’s marriage to Anne Elliot naturalizes his moral and social value over the novel’s ethically and financially bankrupt aristocracy. At the same time, this vision of naval masculinity intimately connects the domestic to England’s larger imperial project, anticipating the way domesticity later becomes a key ideological component of England’s Victorian empire. The idealization of Wentworth is an idealization of imperial activity drawn from the Pacific narratives, wherein Austen draws on a long tradition of an imagined Pacific to rehearse her own theoretical projections of self, society, and nation.
CHAPTER 1
DAMPIER’S LEVIATHAN:
DISCIPLINING THE MALE BODY IN THE VOYAGE LITERATURE
OF WILLIAM DAMPIER

The William Dampier history has given us is not a man, but a character. His first wandering, episodic circumnavigations from 1679 to 1691 included time spent as buccaneer, pirate, and even as an East India Company gunnery officer at Sumatra. After his return to England, Dampier quickly departed for Spain and then the West Indies, where he worked for roughly six years (1691 to 1697) on a ship-salvaging team known as “Spanish Expedition Shipping” that was most likely a front for a gun-running operation. Yet, Dampier was celebrated in his time as a natural scientist and hydrographer rather than as a pirate or arms-trafficker, and scholars today still remember him more for his scientific acumen rather than his penchant for violence. How did this transformation occur? The realities of Dampier’s life, both as an inhabitant of the all-male wooden world and as a violent buccaneer, exemplify what Hans Turley calls the “piratical subject,” a figure who, he argues, destabilizes codified understandings of eighteenth-century masculinity by revealing how the male subject of voyage literature often is “not comfortably suited to conventional sexual and economic depictions of desire.” This non-normative desire includes, as Erin Mackie illustrates, “the negative refusals of heterosociality, of privacy, of domesticity, [and] masculinity as an expression of sexuality.” Drawing on Turley and Mackie’s explication of masculinity, I examine how the written narratives of Dampier’s voyages—

Voyage Round the World (1697) its supplement Voyages and Descriptions (1699), and A Voyage to New Holland (1704)—self-consciously attempt to discipline and reconcile the piratical subject to conceptions of empire recognized and accepted by polite society.

James Knapton published New Voyage Round the World, a bestseller that Dampier used to rehabilitate his image by emphasizing the “service to my country” and his “hearty Zeal for the promoting of useful knowledge, and of any thing that may never so remotely tend to my Countries advantage.” Dampier’s rehabilitation was certainly plausible; English heroes like Drake and Ralegh had used similar defenses to clear their names from charges of piracy and gross incompetence, respectively. Dampier did keep notes on his long journey, sealing them in a bamboo tube to protect them from the elements. These notes, however, served as the basis for a relatively short manuscript entitled “The Adventures of William Dampier,” while New Voyage proves a lengthy tome at 550 pages.

New Voyage, however, was not the exclusive work of Dampier, but the product of a corporate, ghosted authorship. Dampier and his Whig patrons Edward Russell, 1st Earl of Orford and Royal Society member Sir Hans Sloane had the original manuscript extensively reworked and lengthened. Ghostwriters significantly amplified the text, adding “a huge amount of new material on natural history and geography,” while accounts of violence were significantly

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4 William Dampier, A New Voyage Round the World (London: James Knapton, 1697). These lines form part of Dampier’s dedication to then President of the Royal Society Charles Mountague (sic). The Dedicatory Epistle is not numbered, but all references are to this edition and will be cited in the text.

5 The story of Drake’s circumnavigation and subsequent knighthood is well-known, although Elizabeth I did give serious consideration to treating Drake as a pirate. Ralegh’s disastrous voyage was meant to find El Dorado, the mythic city of gold, and his narrative The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empire of Guiana (1596) did little to restore his credit at court, although it did save his head. John Narborough’s underwhelming attempts at commercial reconnaissance were rewritten with great appeal in An Account of Several Late Voyages & Discoveries to the South and North (1694).

6 Dampier’s manuscript is housed in the British Library, MS Sloane 3236.

downplayed or erased altogether.\textsuperscript{8} Glyndwr Williams convincingly argues that the narrative presence of ghostwriters’ “editorial help or intrusion” recast as scientific Dampier’s “rather shadowy role on the voyages,” while Anna Neill has demonstrated that many buccaneers’ warrant for action (at least in their own accounts) shifted from letters of marque and plunder to “natural scientific and ethnographic narrative.”\textsuperscript{9} Sailors from Drake and Ralegh to Dampier and his cronies like Bartholomew Sharp and Lionel Wafer used scientific inquiry as a new basis of narrative and social legitimacy upon returning to England. This social legitimacy proved “the more likely goal of [Dampier’s] narrative persona,” and he sought “to reclaim the ‘English’ identity that his buccaneering had forfeited.”\textsuperscript{10} Dampier and his ghostwriters’ editing and rewriting lend the text an ideological coherence predicated upon his “disinterested” scientific observation, while also illustrating that he was aware of the need to rehabilitate his character.\textsuperscript{11} In this sense, Dampier and his ghostwriters do not present a “new” voyage at all, but mostly adapt and expand a pre-existing tradition of “I wasn’t really a pirate” narratives like those of Drake and Ralegh before him.

Dampier’s buccaneering, rewritten as scientific “service to [his] country,” reveals how patrilineal society “retains investments … in forms of power it disowns.”\textsuperscript{12} Providing valuable scientific and commercial data to refurbish one’s image or rewrite one’s voyage as “successful,”

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Swift satirizes this point in his “Letter from Capt. Gulliver, to his Cousin Sympson,” which was appended to Faulkner’s 1735 Dublin edition of \textit{Gulliver’s Travels}. Swift’s Gulliver writes, “I hope you will be ready to own publicly, whenever you shall be called to it, that by your great and frequent Urgency you prevailed on me to publish a very loose and uncorrect Account of my Travels; with Direction to hire some young Gentlemen of either University to put them in Order, and correct the Style, as my Cousin Dampier did by my Advice.”
\item Mackie, 4.
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however, was nothing new. The ghostwriters’ rendering of Dampier’s travels also reinvigorated nationalist paradigms of masculinity by linking scientific inquiry to economic adventurism in the Pacific, revealing the “dependence, even complicity of ‘transgressive’ and ‘resistant’ outlaw powers on the institutions and discourses against which they define their own autonomy.” The character “Dampier” embodies this complex dialectic, while also revealing a fundamental shift in the subjectivity of the male voyager. The undisciplined body “not suited to conventional sexual and economic desire” is not simply rehabilitated, but rewritten to reinvest sociopolitical order with dominant forms of culture and authority. The ghostwriters’ refashioning of Dampier’s transgressive gender identity renders him an objective, disciplined scientific observer who embodies the most valued modalities of eighteenth-century masculinity. The Whig settlement of 1689 signaled a fundamental restructuring of patrilineal institutions and witnessed the emergence of masculine qualifiers like civility, virtue, and taste, which were increasingly separated from aristocratic honors conferred by birth. The expansion of overseas trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries exacerbated the tension between an older, landed conception of masculinity and one signified by newly mobilized wealth through trade. *New Voyage* must negotiate these discourses to remake the masculine subjectivity Dampier embodies and to create an imperial “reality” acceptable to a polite readership. His reconstitution as a civil character, then, is dependent upon the social and economic discourses that construct the “polite” masculine persona available to the eighteenth-century voyager.

Relatively little work, however, has been done on the interpellation of a masculine, gendered subject in eighteenth-century voyage literature. Scholars like Philip Edwards, Jonathan

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13 As Edwards writes, “the terms success or failure for a voyage could be adventitious … for on paper purposefulness in fulfilling an objective could be a lot clearer than it ever was from the ship.” Edwards, 224.
14 Mackie, 4.
15 For an explanation of the Whig settlement of 1689’s effect on masculine identity, see Mackie’s introduction “Historicizing Masculinity: The Criminal and the Gentleman” in *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates*, 1-34.
Lamb, Neil Rennie, and Glyndwr Williams have produced valuable studies on voyage literature itself, but none of these deals explicitly with the question of masculine identity. The few critics who have, notably Mary Louise Pratt, tend to examine masculine identity as its own essentialist, static category, collapsing the male voyager into one mode of object relation, wherein the imperial male functions as a metonymic representative of the univocal “West” versus an Orientalist “Other.” The singular male territorializes the other through the male gaze, recreating foreign peoples as “the domestic subjects of Euroimperialism.” Dampier’s narratives necessitate a more nuanced understanding of imperial male identity. The methodologies of feminist critics like Laura Brown, Catherine Ingrassia, and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace reveal how patrilineal systems situated women’s domestic consumption of foreign goods like tea and china as the prime mover of empire, and how the discourses surrounding trade, credit, and domesticity sought to discipline the actions, manners, and morals of women. And although empire-building has historically been associated with traditional male roles such as the buccaneer, the naval officer, the merchant, or the explorer, these feminist methodologies emphasize “the recognition that a gendered subjectivity is produced in relation to other social and economic forces.” Such feminist frameworks thus help us to better understand how another sort of domestic consumption by polite readers “naturalizes” the “heroes” of voyage literature according to their own settled understanding of masculinity.

Dampier’s *New Voyage* attempts to make natural that which is ideological by appropriating overlapping discourses of science, commerce, virtue, and religion that are at times

19 Kowaleski-Wallace, 10.
opposed. Dampier’s “science” casts him as polite and fashionable, but also as the political surrogate of his patrons. Scientific inquiry or natural philosophy are written into a Whiggish narrative of Western economic and moral progress, and Robert Markley argues that this “new” science “offers its practitioners inexhaustible opportunities to celebrate divine wisdom and … to legitimate the authoritarian, patrilineal ideology of Restoration England.”20 Although Dampier’s voyages rehearse (rather unsuccessfully) a theme beginning with Sir Francis Drake’s 1577-1580 circumnavigation—loot and plunder Spanish settlements and shipping in the South Seas—the written accounts rationalize commercial and territorial expansion by rhetorically framing such action in the language of providential design and the guarantee of “traditional” rights and liberties associated with the 1689 settlement.

The ideological power of Dampier’s ghostwriters, then, was their ability to create a unified character “Dampier” who brings an authoritative order to the jumbled gleanings of his travels—to make reality out of itinerant, unreliable observation. Graham Dawson has written that the literary representation of imperial males during the Victorian era “organize[d] the available possibilities for a masculine self,” and because “the imagining and recognition of identities is a process shot through with wish-fulfilling fantasies, these cultural forms often figure ideal and desirable masculinities, in which both self and others may make investments.”21 My analysis extends Dawson’s argument to eighteenth-century voyagers, and examines how Dampier’s narratives reveal a self-fashioning of the “heroic” voyager which readers can believe as a credible—if ultimately fictional—narrator who rewrites his Pacific adventures as both commercial and suited to a “civil” masculine identity defined by taste, virtue, and, more

importantly, proper expressions of economic desire. By locating the ideological investments that naturalize the voyager as “heroic,” we can investigate how fantasies of empire are reproduced in these texts and in the minds of readers. Dampier’s ghostwriters do not simply rehabilitate his shadowy buccaneering past; they discipline and normalize the transgressive body of the male seafarer, making it an available and recognizable cultural model that populates the later fiction of Swift and Defoe, and which made future Pacific “heroes” like George Anson and James Cook imaginable to their readers and themselves.

I. Stateless Subjects

In contrast to relatively short Atlantic crossings, Pacific voyages could take years, exacerbating the navigational problems, disease, and other shocks to which the seafaring body was heir. And, in an age characterized by “the evolution of a self guarded by certain political rights and duties, the growth of a market economy based on credit and overseas trade, and the completion of the map of the world,” there existed the common belief that “the civil selves of seaborne individuals degrade” to a sort of proto-civilized state, or a return to a Hobbesian state of nature when separated from the markers of polite society.22 The erosion of masculine, national identity, at least in the case of mariners, came to be associated specifically with Pacific and South Seas voyaging.

The problem of longitude encapsulates the ghostwriters’ attempt to construct, stabilize, and make coherent an imperial masculine identity. In Dampier’s time, sailors could only approximate their location at sea, a navigational conundrum the Portuguese referred to as *ponto*

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de fantasia, or “point of fantasy,”23 and a problem which continued to have far-reaching implications for military and commercial ventures. Latitude could be determined with relative certainty. Longitude, however, was nearly impossible to calculate, primarily because of the lack of accurate time pieces.24 Sailors’ crude estimation of longitude, known as “dead reckoning,” amounted to estimating speed and direction over a given period of time. Consequently, mariners sailing across the equinoctial line for purposes of commercial or military venture often found themselves with no fixed, physical referents. Maps were often inaccurate; dead reckoning made island way-stations hard to find; the ravages of scurvy made even the body an unstable site of truth. Sailors could not trust their physical senses because one of the disease’s side-effects included bizarre hallucinations.25

Lamb and Richard Frohock succinctly articulate the problem of a stable personal and national identity in concert. Frohock writes that South Seas islands like Juan Fernandez “function[ed] as a laboratory for experimental refashioning of personal identity for castaways.”26

23 Lamb, Preserving, 165. The English held the same concept. A 1753 geographer named John Green groused, “There are in the South-Sea many Islands, which may be called Wandering-Islands.” Qtd. in Glyndwr Williams, The Great South Sea, 11.

24 Dava Sobel’s Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time (New York: Penguin, 1995) provides a concise overview of the longitude problem. Mariners can compare local time to the time in their home port, using the difference to determine their longitudinal position (one hour’s difference equals fifteen degrees of longitude). Eighteenth-century clocks, however, routinely lost as much as fifteen minutes per day, making exact measurement impossible. The rival “lunar method” involved measuring the distance from the moon to various stars in the night sky. Yet the lunar method has obvious difficulties: cloudy nights, nights with no moon, and a lack of accurate star maps for the uncharted southern hemisphere, not to mention that the complex calculations took upwards of four hours for a trained mathematician to complete. It was not until Cook’s second voyage that John Harrison’s maritime clock was tested and found reliable. Even then, clock time constitutes an arbitrary measurement of time in conjunction with an arbitrary spot—the prime meridian. Observable scientific phenomena determine the location of the equator, but the location of the prime meridian at Greenwich remains a political (and arrogant) decision locating England as the center of the world. Although accurate and practical, Harrison’s clock and corresponding calculations illustrate that location, like identity, remains a relative construction.

25 Probably the most notable literary example of these hallucinogenic effects of scurvy can be seen in the unnamed mariner’s tales from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1798). Lamb convincingly argues that scurvy represented the greatest threat to management of ship and self while at sea. See Lamb, “Scurvy,” Preserving the Self, 114-131. I discuss the problems scurvy posed to masculine identity at length in chapter three.
This “experimental refashioning” involves a self-conscious break with a former English identity guaranteed by rights and duties, and which, Lamb writes, “expand[s] the minds of individuals, and fill[s] them with dreams of power and plenty.” Just as longitudinal problems made determining a fixed location an arbitrary exercise, so too these fantasies of autonomy make the determination of a “fixed” or stable masculine identity arbitrary. The figurative dissolution of the social contract by these autonomous mariners who dream of living outside the bounds of civil society remained a constant threat on sea voyages. Consequently, the very guarantors of “normative” identity are called into question, a fact readily enough made clear by the competing and overlapping discourses of science, commerce, and religion that must be deployed to secure the identity of the imperial male. This problem articulates a paradox because errant mariners were at once necessary for the continued maintenance and expansion of England’s commercial empire, even as they represented the transgressive figures who threatened entrenched ideals of European civility and the empire itself. The retroactive construction of identity undertaken by Dampier’s ghostwriters in New Voyage, Voyages and Descriptions, and A Voyage to New Holland articulates this problem, combatting Dampier’s buccaneer autonomy by deploying scientific and commercial discourses that interpellate him as a proper English subject.

In the Hobbesian sense, the threat of civil degradation is linked to issues of autonomy and antisocial energy embodied by all mariners. Hobbes reads “autonomy” as the delusional belief

27 Lamb, Preserving, 174.
28 Barbara Benedict points out a more humorous analog in the poem The Longitude Found Out: A Tale, in which Sylvius “measure[s] out the Longitude” in an act equating scientific inquiry with masturbation, only then to find “new Longitudes” with an anonymous nymph. While the poem signifies the “satiric transformation of curiosity into a search for pleasure,” it also proves an interesting conflation of scientific inquiry and heteronormative male desire, suggesting that the search for knowledge defines male identity just as sexual desire does. Alternately, the poem might suggest that scientific inquiry be shunned altogether in favor of performing a more traditional masculine identity. Benedict, Curiosity: A Cultural history of Early Modern Inquiry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001): 83-84.
that the individual self can survive outside of the social contract. The authors of voyage literature often link this autonomy to fears of a regression to a proto-civilized state, but, for readers, autonomy functions more as a byword signifying freedom from (or a self-conscious flouting of) social strictures. Readers of voyage literature are able to project their own transgressive senses of self onto an always unstable ideology of identity. On the one hand, pirates and buccaneers serve as fantasy figures of identification, embodying readers’ repressed desires for unbridled social and political autonomy; on the other, they can serve as figures of disavowal—dismissing their tales as fantasy (as in Gulliver’s Travels) allows readers to reinscribe the fiction of individual and social stability that undergirds “normative” senses of self and society.

More generally, the “statelessness” of the ship at sea illustrates the contingent relationship between self and state. Dampier and the buccaneers enjoyed a geographic and temporal liberty unavailable to those in the navy or merchant marine. William Hasty suggests that the pirate ship functioned as an “epistemic geography” in and of itself, a highly mobile space that freed Dampier and his ilk from the restraints of state and investors, thus affording them the opportunity to sail in places hostile or inaccessible to traders and the navy.29 The mobility and access to far-off ports and uncharted waters facilitated the chance to encounter different lands, peoples, and trade networks that might otherwise be off-limits. The egalitarian nature of privateer and pirate crews (at least in theory) provided a respite from the discipline the common sailor faced in military or trade vessels. Because pirates and privateers often relied on intimidation rather than brute force to capture ships, the relatively high number of crewmen onboard also freed Dampier from the intense labor demands placed on the common sailor.

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thereby affording him the time to make his observations and draw up his notes. On the
geographically and culturally mobile pirate ship, traditional English guarantors of identity such
as home, virtue, country, and even profit are undermined. Crews were usually multi-ethnic, and
white Englishmen were often in the minority. In contrast, the rigid discipline of state vessels
enforced a fixed ideology of identity aboard ship in terms of rank that was asserted through the
state’s monopoly of force on the high seas, as represented by the absolute authority of officers.

This contingent relationship between self and state is characterized by Dampier’s own
life. Although the published works closely align the character “Dampier” with the character
“Drake,” Dampier was little more than a common buccaneer for the better part of his pre-
celebrity life (and arguably afterwards). His career spanned four major voyages. From 1679 to
1688, Dampier sailed with various buccaneer and pirate crews, and was then briefly the master-
gunner at the fort at Bencouli in Sumatra, until arriving back in England in 1691. His most
famous work, A New Voyage Round the World, and its supplement, Voyages and Descriptions,
chronicles that time. The events of his life between this 1691 arrival and the six years before the
publication of New Voyage, however, are unclear. Joel H. Baer has uncovered a trove of public
records that suggest Dampier was employed as part of “Spanish Expedition Shipping,” a ship
salvaging operation in the West Indies that may have also been involved in gun-running to rearm
Spanish colonists in the vicinity. Baer notes that New Voyage contains only one reference to the
six missing years—a short note of Dampier’s that he “lay at anchor at the Groin in July 1694.”

Marcus Rediker details how these egalitarian working conditions aboard many privateer and pirate ships were
codified as a social practice known as “Jamaica Discipline.” Rediker’s Marxist reading of Jamaica Discipline
typifies this code as “constituted in the confrontation with capital” and “created over and against the logic of
discipline and cooperation for the sake of profit.” While privateer and pirates crews obviously did cooperate for
profit, they did so in their own interest rather than on behalf of the state or investors. Marcus Rediker, Between the
Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750

The Groin, or La Coruna, Spain, was the home base of Spanish Expedition Shipping, where four ships were being outfitted under the license of Carlos II. The story takes an intriguing turn when eighty-five of the men mutinied while the ships were still in port, stole the flagship *Charles II*, and under the leadership of the infamous John Avery, turned pirate and sailed to the Red Sea. They then sailed to the waters off Bombay, where they pirated the Grand Mughal Aurengzab’s *Ganj-i-sawai*, an action that led the Grand Mughal to threaten the destruction of the East India Company. Although Dampier did not join this pirate crew, he testified on behalf of his former colleagues and partially funded the legal defense of the six men whom the East India Company charged with the crime, and most likely knew Avery personally from their days working on the *Charles II* together.\(^{32}\) It seems only fitting that one of the greatest pirate legends, who would go on to inspire dreams of economic independence and Indian gold for feckless pirate missions such as that of Captain Kidd, would befriend one of the greatest buccaneer legends, whose writings would similarly inspire myriad dreams of Spanish gold that ended only in failure and frustration.

In 1699, the Admiralty appointed Dampier to command the naval vessel *Roebuck* on an exploratory venture to New Holland (modern-day Australia). The account of this voyage Dampier published as *A Voyage to New Holland* in 1704. Dampier was then hired to command the privateer *St. George* and prey on Spanish shipping in the South Seas, an ill-fated voyage that left England in 1703 and was plagued by mutiny and shipwreck. Although Dampier (wisely) did not write an account of this voyage, those of other sailors, such as William Funnell’s 1707 *A Voyage Round the World*, roundly criticize Dampier’s command, and evidently the voyage’s backers agreed. Dampier died in 1715 with the lawsuit still ongoing regarding the loss of the

vessels *St. George* and *Cinque Ports* during the voyage. Dampier’s final voyage was as pilot for Woodes Rogers’s privateering cruise that departed England in 1708, which Rogers related in his *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (1712).

While military or commercial ventures offer seemingly obvious examples of state interests, Dampier’s shadowy past as privateer, buccaneer, and pirate unsettles these seemingly stable referents. Dampier’s writings (or his ghostwriters’) reveal that, like identity, state interests can themselves often be relative or unstable; smuggling, privateering, and even legal trade function on an uncertain continuum with piracy. To negotiate this disjunction, Dampier’s ghostwriters create a character capable of reconciling the more lurid aspects of his buccaneer persona to the ostensibly stable interests of the state. Or, more to the point, in rhetorically creating a buccaneer who functions not outside of but as constitutive of England’s greater imperial project, they also create a fiction of stable state interests defied by the realities of Dampier’s life.

The narratives accomplish this feat by rehearsing a long history of English fascination with Spain’s American empire. The geographical, zoological, botanical, anthropological, and navigational knowledge that Dampier’s observations contained undoubtedly did much to rehabilitate his image, although this wealth of knowledge merely rekindled a long-held cultural fascination with the South Seas. The Amboyna massacre of 1623 effectually blocked English access to the Pacific from the East Indian approach, meaning that Dampier’s crossing of the Isthmus of Panama and subsequent adventures signaled that “the door to the South Seas” which

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33 Famous material witnesses against Dampier include Alexander Selkirk. C. D. Lee argues that the trial served as a fine example of the “curse of party,” in that prominent Tories were seeking to embarrass Dampier’s early Whig patrons Sir Hans Sloane and First Lord of the Admiralty Orford. Lee, 387.

both the English and Spanish thought “fastest shut” had once again been opened (NV, 180).  

Dampier employs a two-pronged approach to reconcile his buccaneering past to state interests. First, he appropriates a version of heroic masculinity based on economic adventurism in the Pacific. What emerges is a character “captured” by pirates who paints himself both as a heroic, patriotic commander in the tradition of Drake, and as an observer of villainies that he abhors but in which he finds himself involved. Second, because buccaneer crews often sailed where the English merchant marine and navy either had no business or no access, Dampier gained wide-ranging geographical knowledge which he parlays into commercial reconnaissance and the basis of a commercial speculation focused on the Pacific. The ghostwriters craft a commercial ideology wherein economic expansion in the Pacific and South Seas acts as one of the cardinal motivations of the English hero, rather than the impetus of murderous pirates.

II. The Door to the South Seas Opens

Dampier initiates a fantasy that commercial adventurism can secure the personal and national identity of the imperial male by describing this adventurism as service to one’s country, thereby inoculating him against autonomous impulses and charges of Hobbesian self-interest. By rehabilitating the image of the mariner-author as disinterested observer rather than degraded civil self, Dampier’s ghostwriters rhetorically create the necessary ideological fiction that the imperial male is both a reliable narrator and a coherent character who secures the link between national and scientific interests. In actuality, the character Dampier exploits narratives of the

35 For an explanation of the Amboyna massacre and its repercussions, see Lamb, Preserving, 50.
rehabilitated civil self to recast commercial ventures as the anchor of a stable identity. The
ghostwriters, however, control and strategically deploy the “reality” of his observations,
displacing questions of “truth” into an unproblematic narrative of civil society predicated upon
international commerce. On a practical level, it was increasingly crucial to have objective,
accurate data on which to base trade missions, particularly in the Pacific. Although effectively
shut out of trade in Spanish America and the Dutch Spice Islands, Dampier’s local knowledge of
these regions provided possible alternatives for settlement and trade factories unknown to (or
simply ignored by) Spanish and Dutch locals. Despite the fact that Dampier claims his purpose
was ethnographic observation and “to endulge my curiosity,” his manuscript draft frames
national service as the procurement of commercial and naval intelligence, informing the English
of “the riches which may be gotten out of the mines in America.”

In deploying these observations, “Dampier” appropriates Drake’s legacy. Francis
Fletcher’s 1628 account *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake* emphasizes predatory
raiding and the destruction of Spanish settlements as patriotic acts, as well as the importance of
tractable trade partners in the New World, and he identifies the territories and Indians best-suited
for long-term economic ventures. Dampier does something similar, in that he “provides
ethnographic evidence for the natural-jurisprudential principle that successful commercial
activity is linked to the evolution of a strong civil authority.” In *New Voyage*, Dampier makes
the Americas appear ripe for the taking because potential wealth is connected to Amerindian
alliances that optimistically promise the overthrow of Spanish rule. Of the Moskito Indians on
the Isthmus of Panama, Dampier writes, “They have no form of Government among them, but
acknowledge the King of England for their Soveraign: They learn our Language, and take the

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37 Qtd. in Neill, 43.
Governor of Jamaica to be one of the greatest Princes in the World” (NV, 11). The Moskitos’ ability to speak English and their willingness to recognize English law under King Charles II and his Jamaican governor cast them as reliable trade partners and allies who can be used to subvert Spanish interests.  

This lingual and legal apprehension, then, signals a mutual kinship between English and Moskito that recognizes proper hierarchical expressions of sovereignty, a fantasy Dampier reinforces in his observations that the Indians despise the Spanish but would welcome the English with open arms. Dampier even frames these tribes as themselves English; suffering under the rule of the Spaniards, the Indians of the Amapalla Gulf are described as “very melancholy and doleful.” But Dampier theorizes, “They are then only condoling their Misfortunes, the loss of their Country and Liberties … increas’d probably by some Traditions of their ancient Freedom” (NV, 127). “Ancient Freedom” suggests that these Indians share a common, Whiggish birthright with the English, to the point that this tribe was used to justify the Scots’ Company’s expedition to settle the Isthmus of Panama in 1698. Claiming that the tribe’s civility and liberties constituted them as a sovereign nation prior to Spanish rule, the Scots’ Company argued that they were not infringing on Spanish territory because sovereign nations had a right to open themselves up to trade and settlement. The Scots later used the Darien Indians’ ill treatment at the hands of the Spanish to analogous their own mistreatment by William III and England, who effectively sabotaged the Scots’ Company’s Darien scheme in order to protect English trade in the West Indies. Dampier and his compatriot Lionel Wafer’s description of this tribe stands, at the very least, as partially responsible for the Scottish nation’s first serious

colonial venture. It also suggests that the imperialist task of “making” Englishmen abroad will not prove difficult in Spanish America.

Grounded by descriptions of a people already familiar with an English governmental jurisprudence based on private property and popular consent, visions of fantastic wealth abound in Dampier’s narratives. At the gold mines near Santa Maria, Dampier writes, “There was never a greater opportunity put into the hands of men to enrich themselves than we had … which might have been done with ease” (NV, 158). Dampier then proceeds to lay out a plan in which privateers, Indians, and Negroes combine from “all parts of the West-Indies” so the English “might have been Masters not only of those Mines, (the richest Gold-Mines ever yet found in America) but of all the Coast as high as Quito: and much more than I say might then probably have been done. But these may seem to the Reader but Golden Dreams” (NV, 159). Here, Dampier explicitly acknowledges that his readers will think he has created a fantasy of wealth, but justifies himself by again invoking “service to one’s country.” His representation of the European-style sociability of the indigenous populations whitewashes the inherent violence of seizing Spanish gold mines, and conveniently avoids the fact that Dampier’s scheme simply calls for one European power to overthrow and replace another. Dampier also provides a convenient explanation for why he did not return to England with phenomenal riches—a lack of manpower. Thus, his “golden dreams” also rehearse an upper-class projection of empire “based not upon

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41 For an extended discussion of the Scots’ Company, see Bridget McPhail, “Through a Glass, Darkly: Scots and Indians Converge at Darien,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 18.3 (1994): 129-147. In an interesting intersection between Locke and Dampier, Eva Botella-Ordinas examines how Locke responds to a Spanish-English territorial dispute regarding the harvesting of logwood on the Bay of Campeachy, where Dampier and many buccaneer communities flourished, and which Dampier recounted in his *Voyages and Descriptions*. Botella-Ordinas explains how the English claimed sovereignty over these logging forests based on *res nullius*, or the idea that undeveloped lands were free to be claimed. Locke’s contingency between labor and land value privileges “English improvement of nature against Spanish spoilage of nature.” Botella-Ordinas, “Debating Empires, Inventing Empires: British Territorial Claims Against the Spaniards in America, 1670-1714,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 10.1 (2010): 142-168.

42 Apparently Dampier meant this in all earnestness. Masefield notes that in 1704, Dampier bungled an assault on this town while on the privateering voyage of the *St. George*. Masefield, 7.
settlement but upon the enjoyment of a ‘surplus’ produced by a willing, if lowly paid, native population.”⁴³ He imagines Santa Maria’s potential both in terms of resources and a cheap, indigenous labor force that could be exploited. He justifies the English “liberation” of South American goldmines by positioning the evil Spaniards as tyrannical usurpers infringing upon the property and innate liberties of the Amerindians.

The 1699 trial of one of Dampier’s buccaneer compatriots Bartholomew Sharp provides an opportunity for legitimizing this English intervention. Dampier and Sharp together had participated in the sack of Santa Maria approximately eighteen years earlier (circa 1681). When Sharp returned to England, his role in the attack and looting earned him a charge for piracy, but he was acquitted on account that “he held a lawful commission from one of the Darien princes,” a letter of marque issued by the Darien Indians.⁴⁴ That the English recognized such a letter of marque means that they effectively recognized the sovereignty of the Darien Indians, which would undergird Dampier’s contention that the Spanish were unjustifiably encroaching upon a recognized nation. The implicitly Hobbesian narrative of Dampier’s coalition violently seizing property is rewritten as the restoration of the proper Indian stewards of the land and its wealth—partnered with the English, of course.

Dampier continues to frame commercial potential within the bounds of empirical observation (of a sort) when he commanded the naval ship Roebuck during the 1699-1701 voyage to chart Australia (then known as New Holland). Masefield has published some of Dampier’s letters to the Admiralty proposing the New Holland voyage, in which Dampier asserts

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with gusto, ‘‘’Tis reasonable to conceive yt so great a part of the World is not without very valluable commodities to incourage ye Discovery … and of much ye same kindes; probably, as are produced in Countryes of Asia, Africk, or America of ye same Latitudes.’’\textsuperscript{45} Dampier operates under a superficially transitive latitudinal logic that leads him to assert “there are many islands in that sea between new Holland and New Guinnia which are not frequented by any Europeans and … are not without spice.”\textsuperscript{46} He theorizes that because New Holland lies along the same latitude as rich parts of Africa, America, and particularly the Spice Islands that it must hold troves of the same valuable commodities.\textsuperscript{47} Just as important, the wealth of New Holland will not provoke a war with a rival power: “An attempt upon ye unknown Tracts of yt part of ye World, has ys to recommend it, yt none of our European Neighbours can think themselves injured thereby.”\textsuperscript{48} Unlike the golden dreams of Santa Maria, where war with the Spanish would be the likely outcome of seizing such a rich prize, New Holland presents an opportunity for the English to amass wealth while still maintaining their civil selves. Both Williams and Markley point out that this view of the South Pacific and South Seas represents a pervasive cultural fantasy that immense stores of gold were to be had simply by trading trinkets for it with tractable natives.\textsuperscript{49} The potential of New Holland allows the English to gain wealth while circumventing a literal war with the Spanish and Dutch and a figurative Hobbesian state of nature.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{45} Dampier’s letter was published by Masefield in volume 2 of \textit{Dampier’s Voyages}, 325. Unfortunately, Masefield failed to include this date, although the letter was most likely written in May or June of 1698, judging by the dates of the other correspondence.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Dampier, \textit{Voyages}, 2: 326.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Robert Markley writes of this voyage, “The nature of the lands he sails past must be extrapolated from what he knows of those islands that lie to the west, namely the Spice Islands.” Markley, \textit{The Far East and the English Imagination} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 217.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Dampier, \textit{Voyages}, 2:325.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Markley links this fantasy to the underlying aristocratic ideology that “one should not have to work to make money,” which allows enterprising sea captains to maintain their gentlemanly status. Markley, \textit{Far East}, 221. See also Glyndwr Williams, ‘‘The Inexhaustible Fountain of Gold’: English Projects and Venture in the South Seas, 1650-1750,” \textit{Perspectives of Empire: Essays Presented to Gerald S. Graham}, ed. John E. Flint and Glyndwr William (London: Pearson Education Ltd., 1973): 27-53.
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Despite Dampier’s naked assertions of great wealth, the Admiralty’s orders are framed as scientific, and the Roebuck was outfitted under the guise of a voyage of discovery.

Unfortunately, Masefield has abridged these orders in his own words, but his paraphrase reads, “[Dampier] must ‘take especial care’ to use his best endeavours to discover any ‘such things’ as may tend to the good of the Nation,” which includes bringing home “specimens of the produce of the lands at which he touches” (although this most likely refers to spices) and “some of the Natives, provided they shall be willing to come along.” He is also instructed “to keep an exact journal of his proceedings, and of all things remarkable.”

His Preface to A Voyage to New Holland proclaims “This Satisfaction I am sure of having, that the Things themselves in the Discovery of which I have been imployed, are most worthy of our diligentest Search and Inquiry; being the various and wonderful Works of God in different Parts of the World.” Such rhetoric is keeping in line with his orders from the admiralty, and also with the dictates set down by the Royal Society in their 1666 document “Direction for Seamen Bound for Far Voyages,” which instructs mariners to “study nature rather than books and from the observations made to compose such a history of her, as may, hereinafter, serve to build a solid and useful philosophy upon.”

Dampier’s narrative situates commercial discoveries as those made for “the good of the Nation,” thereby establishing scientific knowledge and its concomitant commercial reconnaissance as stable indicators of imperial male identity.

Dampier’s real ambitions are quite clear, however. Aside from pitching the voyage as a commercial venture, he (or a ghostwriter) writes in the body of the text, “I could not but hope to

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50 Dampier’s Voyages, 2:331. The orders are labeled “Dampier’s Instructions” (Record Office, Adm. Sec. Out-Letters, 25), dated 30 November 1698.
51 William Dampier, A Voyage to New Holland, ed. James A. Williamson (London: The Argonaut Press, 1939): lxvii. All references are to this edition and will be cited in the text.
52 These instructions are widely quoted. The document was originally found in the Royal Society’s Philosophical Transactions, January 1666.
meet with some fruitful Lands, Continent or Islands, or both, productive of any of the rich Fruits, Drugs, or Spices, (perhaps Minerals also, &c.) that are in the other Parts of the Torrid Zone” (VNH, 121). He later writes of New Guinea: “It is very probable this Island may afford as many rich Commodities as any in the World; and the Natives may be easily brought to Commerce, though I could not pretend to it under my present Circumstances” (VNH, 217). The author recommends a full-scale commercial project, again citing a lack of men as the only reason he was unable to exploit the riches of New Guinea. More importantly, the episode exemplifies the ghostwriters’ elevation of ideology over actual experience; commercial speculation serves as the basis of Dampier’s narrative identity more so than does empirical observation of real peoples, lands, and resources.

Throughout his writings, Dampier alternately mobilizes Hobbesian and Lockean discourses linking the development of commerce to the development of civilization. Dampier describes the Mindanaons of the Philippines as “the greatest Nation in the Island, and trading by Sea with other Nations, they are therefore the more civil” (NV, 325). He also says they are “ingenious, nimble, and active, when they are minded, but generally very lazy and thievish.” This lazy streak, however, Dampier attributes to the arbitrary rule of their prince: “For he dealing with them very arbitrarily, and taking from them what they get, this damps their Industry, so they never strive to have any thing but from hand to mouth” (NV, 326). Here, the author equates the lack of property rights with incivility, and, in good Whiggish fashion, with tyranny. Although the Mindinaons seek out trade and commerce with others, the absence of property rights prevents them from retaining their profits and therefore reaching their civilized potential. The narrative creates a scenario wherein the Mindinaons inhabit a Hobbesian state of nature, because their tyrannical prince has created a war of all against all. The native tribesmen steal from each other
because their prince steals from them, and all live in a constant state of fear and vigilance where the most common form of retaliation is to “poison[] secretly those that have affronted them” (NV, 326). We can also read the Mindanaons with an analogical political valence: the “incivility” of arbitrary rule conjures up images of Tory and Jacobite bogeymen, the traditional enemies of the Whiggish commercial ideology that Dampier’s ghostwriters espouse.

Although “civility” can often be defined as simply a willingness to trade (and more often than not to trade on terms favorable to the English), Dampier’s construction of “civility” in the East Indies relies more on a mediation of differences and nationalities that creates a hospitable commercial climate. The commercial potential of the Mindanaons also signals the potential reform of English mariners’ degraded civil selves and thus a stabilization of personal and national male identity. When the buccaneers landed at the Philippines in 1686, they had been at sea roughly five years, and although Dampier only intermittently and casually records the acts of violence committed by the crew, such as those at Piura, Tabago, Leon, and Rea Lejo, one can assume that a band of buccaneers raiding Spanish villages and shipping in the South Seas did so with sword and musket rather than stern words. At Mindanao, however, Dampier again turns to his latitudinal logic and envisions establishing an English trading factory. In an echo of the Moskito and Darien tribes’ hatred of the Spanish, the Mindanaons, being “most afraid of the Dutch … have a long time desired the English to settle among them, and have offered them any convenient place to build a Fort in” (NV, 331). Because Mindanao lies along the same latitude as islands like Amboyna and Java, he reasons, spices can be grown to compete commercially with the Dutch. The glitter of wealth begins to reform the buccaneer identity, and the degraded civil self is recuperated as a commercial agent of the English. Dampier writes,
Upon mature thoughts, I should think we would not have done better, than to have complied with their desire they seemed to have of our living here; and to have taken up our quarters among them. For as thereby we might better have consulted our own profit and satisfaction, than by the other loose roving way of life; so it most probably have proved of publick benefit to our Nation, and been a means of introducing an English Settlement and Trade, not only here, but through several of the Spice Islands, which lye in its neighborhood. (NV, 349-350)

The potential wealth of the Spice Islands begins to lead Dampier away from the “roving life,” at least according to the ghostwritten account.

Later at the Nicobar Islands, Dampier finds “a Prospect of advancing a profitable Trade for Ambergrease with these People, and of gaining a considerable Fortune to my self” (NV, 481). He extols the virtues of local knowledge, citing that “in a short time I might have learned their Language, and … especially by conforming my self to their Customs and Manners of Living, I should have seen how they got their Ambergrease … and [at Achin] to have furnished my self with such Commodities, as I found most coveted by them; and therewith, at my return, to have bought their Ambergrease” (NV, 481-82). Dampier’s plans to learn the language and local customs to invigorate intra-Asian trade networks are no surprise. Many East India Company factors did the same thing for obvious reasons. What is noteworthy is the way the ghostwriters’ evolving commercial ideology posits buccaneers as the vanguard of English economic expansion in the region. The geographical mobility and freedom from the constraints of state and investors that characterized the buccaneer’s violent life paradoxically allowed his ghostwriters to advance an ethos which suggests trade and contractual agreement trump violence. Frohock writes that “Dampier’s anecdotes and descriptions indicate that the English must learn to cohabit in new
environments, which have their own forces and logic.” He goes on to write that Dampier and his ghostwriters imagined buccaneers as “positioned to help usher a new imperialist paradigm into being.” Dampier’s assimilation of local custom intersects with commerce in ways that can be rewritten as service to the state.

Tellingly, this sentiment exists only as a ghostwriter’s editorial insertion. Although Dampier’s manuscript does identify possible places of settlement, it remains concerned purely with self-interest rather than reformation. This editorial intervention carries two important implications. In manuscript form, Dampier’s nod towards “settlement” probably only implies that Mindanao and the surrounding islands would serve as strategic outposts for attacking Dutch shipping and stealing spices, with occasional raids on Dutch settlements. In short, the buccaneer’s manuscript contains a blueprint for establishing pirate bases in the Spice Islands to harry and profit from England’s enemy. For publication, however, ghostwriters rewrite this “settlement” as a commercial project that illustrates the regenerative powers of trade, or trade’s transformative capabilities. The “stateless” Dampier is transformed into a proper English subject.

Similar instances of this editorial intervention abound elsewhere. Dampier recommends Pulo Condore as an island “commodiously in the way to and from Japan, China, Manila, Tonquin, Cochinchina, and in general all this most Easterly Coast off the Indian Continent” (NV, 394). He lauds the location’s prime access for ships to resupply with food, water, and materials, its suitability for a fort with a well-fortified harbor, and its proximity to Cochinchina especially. Although Dampier does not fully extrapolate the value of the Southeast Asia trade in New Voyage Round the World, his supplemental volume entitled Voyages and Descriptions contains a much longer account of these opportunities. He castigates the English as shortsighted for not

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53 Frohock, Buccaneers and Privateers, 114, 119.
having vigorously developed this trade, blaming the local factory chief at Tonquin for not recognizing the business opportunities before him. Dampier says, “Tho’ Men ought not to run inconsiderately into new Discoveries or Undertakings, yet where there is a prospect of Profit, I think it not amiss for Merchants to try for a Trade, for if our Ancestors had been as dull as we have been of late, ‘tis probable we had never known the way so much as to the East-Indies.”

Dampier’s sales-pitch includes an appeal to the natural superiority of the English constitution as seen in his forebears—brave, adventurous, and opportunistic. There is also the implicit suggestion that because the English look to settle and trade they are more civilized than those who might simply rove or colonize by violent measures. The Dutch especially were notorious for violence in this region, subjugating all of the Spice Islands with garrisons and cutting down any groves of nutmeg trees not grown under their authority.

Dampier himself rehearses the Hobbesian arc of civil contract—a lawless and fearful state of nature, which he realizes is untenable, replaced by jurisprudential principles guaranteed by and necessary to promote commerce and private property. The key phrase that Dampier loves so dearly—service or benefit to one’s country—reappears at the exact moment of his rehabilitation. Obviously, the thrust of “publick benefit” is the spice trade that Dampier hopes to establish (or inspire the English to establish) at Dutch expense. But he simultaneously reinscribes a notion of “home” or England in the far-flung reaches of the world with his talk of permanent settlement, even as he privileges the idea of mobile property and trade. The published narrative downplays fears of a compromised identity by reasserting the civilizing powers of commerce, imagining the Pacific as a site ripe for European-style sociability, rather than as threat to it. “Publick benefit” comes not just in the form of wealth, but in the economic adventurism.

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54 William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, in *Dampier’s Voyages*, 2:33. All references are to this edition and will be cited in the text.
that has the power to recast individuals as “English,” no matter where (or who) they might be in the world. Furthermore, by doggedly clinging to examples of imagined riches like the sparsely inhabited islands of Papua New Guinea, Dampier projects onto the world the conditions that would sustain an infinite trade, thereby rendering scarcity and piratical action obsolete. In crafting the character “Dampier,” the ghostwriters rehearse an ideological projection of character based upon an amalgam of scientific, commercial, and jurisprudential discourses.

III. Buccaneer Autonomy and the New Science

Because sea-narratives ostensibly gave first-hand accounts of foreign lands, exotic customs, and unknown flora and fauna alongside tales of derring-do, they proved of great interest to armchair travelers and philosophers. John Locke writes in the introduction to Awnsham and John Churchill’s *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1704), “The relation of one traveler is an incentive to stir up another to imitate him, whilst the rest of mankind, in their accounts without stirring a foot, compass the earth and seas, visit all countries, and converse with all nations.”

Yet Dampier’s eyewitness accounts were not without skeptics, both because the methods of producing reliable evidence were still in great doubt, and because less naïve readers saw Dampier and other buccaneer-authors for the opportunists they really were. The latter-day buccaneer George Shelvocke opens his own *A Voyage Round the World by Way of the Great South Sea* (1726) with a savvy appraisal of his predecessors: “It has generally happen’d that those Gentlemen have had some other design in view, than to make compleat discoveries.”

Despite claims otherwise, the objective of Dampier and his compatriots was always plunder, and

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“discoveries” were afterthoughts: first in terms of island waystations for buccaneer crews and only after the fact as potential sites of commercial exploitation.

As it became increasingly crucial to have objective, accurate data on which to base state-sanctioned trade missions and military ventures, the age-old question “How can one trust the word of the traveler?” became of ever greater importance. Steven Shapin argues that seventeenth and eighteenth-century “truth” was a social construction, or that “knowledge [was] the result of the community’s evaluation and actions, and it [was] entrenched through the integration of claims about the world into the community’s institutionalized behavior.”

Contemporary scientific thinking (particularly in England) privileged the word of the disinterested gentleman above all else, wherein “an honor culture [that] molded truth to the contours of power” marshaled the unassailable social credibility of the free, upright English gentleman to demonstrate that “credible knowledge was established through the practices of civility.” This production of knowledge, of course, displays a fundamental problem because “[a] culture’s routine practices are not regarded as problematic and in need of explanation.” Knowledge production could be dismissed on the grounds that it violated the Royal Society’s standards of “epistemological decorum,” making imperative the ability to fashion one’s self as a disinterested, disciplined masculine subject and observer capable of “doing the proper thing in the proper setting.”

58 Lamb argues that this problem “was never adequately solved.” Lamb, “Eye-Witnessing,” 202. Edwards describes the problem as “the discomfort of the new travel-literature about its readership,” and he writes that even much later in the eighteenth century when methods of scientific observation and classification had been much improved and standardized, “the all-important lay readership were still unhappy about the proper division between information and experience in travel accounts.” Edwards, 43.


60 Shapin, 65-66.

like A. O. Exquemelin’s *Buccaneers of America* (1684), for example, this knowledge could not be trusted on grounds that it violated the Royal Society’s standards of “epistemological decorum.”

But, as Julia Schleck has argued, “those whose social credit was the highest did not necessarily receive the greatest trust for their professions of knowledge about distant places and cultures.”63 Early modern ships’ captains, who were usually minor gentry or “gentlemen” in a broad sense of the term, altered reports in hopes of gaining status from their influential patrons, and Richard Helgerson reveals how different readerships rendered the genre teleologically unstable: “Where merchants were motivated by a relatively uncomplicated desire for profit, gentlemen needed the impulse of glory.”64 Target audiences determined what the narrative emphasized. What this teleological instability reveals, in one respect, is the instability of the social category “gentle,” which is determined by “unending social and economic negotiations to determine (always contingent) hierarchical positions of rank, stature, and power.”65 New science and the voyage literature that helped disseminate it thus reveal “the trade-offs necessary to maintain moral, political, social, and economic order in a class-stratified society.”66 More accurate (but less sensational) knowledge can be gleaned from the records of long-distance trading companies like the East India Company. Looking at the production of knowledge in new, historically informed ways reveals that “truth” is more suitably thought of as

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62 Shapin, xxix. Shapin notes the vexed relationship between civility and trust. Although one was to “trust” another’s word and growing credence was given to “a rhetoric which insisted that no source of factual information possessed greater reliability or inspired greater confidence than the direct experience of the individual,” the validity of texts like voyage literature remained in doubt. Shapin, 202. William Hasty describes how Dampier’s account conforms to the dictates of epistemological decorum by “exploiting the ambiguities of imperial politics at sea” to secure a “retrospective repentance.” Hasty, 40-54.


65 Markley, *Fallen Languages*, 27.

66 Markley, *Fallen Languages*, 27.
“accomplishments, as historical products, [and] as actors’ judgments and categories.”

Essentially, the presupposed reason and logic of scientific observation and experimentation remains a situated construction, and truth an ideological category.

Voyage literature and the Royal Society, however, played a reciprocal role in the legitimacy of the new science characterized by natural philosophers like Robert Boyle. Dampier’s narratives were some of the first to pass muster with the Royal Society because “doing the proper things in the proper setting” meant appropriating Boyle’s literary technology of “virtual witnessing” to garner credibility. A “technology of trust and assurance” creates a credible “laboratory of the mind and the mind’s eye.” Yet Boyle’s own methods of “virtual witnessing” are implicitly drawn from the earlier sea-narrative tradition of Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas, whose collections of voyages published in 1600 and 1625 asserted the sort of Baconian empiricism that functioned as the bedrock of the Royal Society’s “epistemological decorum.” Boyle himself was a man of volatile imagination who viewed his technology of virtual witnessing as a method of apprehending the marvelous or wondrous; in his pursuit of truth, Boyle creates a literary method that, Bruno Latour writes, “allows mute objects to speak through the intermediary of loyal and disciplined scientific spokespersons.” These texts of Hakluyt, Purchas, Boyle, and Dampier share a sensory emphasis that moves beyond merely circumstantial detail. Dampier’s texts, like Boyle’s, offer a mimetic representation of the natural world, and, more importantly, a mimetic representation of what the Pacific might be now that the door to the South Seas had been opened.

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67 Shapin and Schaffer, 14.
68 Shapin and Schaffer argue that the literary technology of “virtual witnessing” constitutes the experimental scene in the reader’s mind’s eye through dense, prolix descriptions and naturalistic images that represent not an “ideal” picture of the experiment, but the experiment itself. Shapin and Schaffer, 60-65. Dampier and others (or their ghostwriters) appropriate this literary technology (most likely at the behest of Sir Hans Sloane) through lengthy descriptions and sketches of local flora and fauna during voyages.
69 Shapin and Schaffer, 60.
70 Qtd. In Lamb, Preserving, 60.
Partially because voyage literature influenced and appropriated Boyle’s “virtual witnessing,” it proves unsurprising that Hobbes objects to the narratives’ truth claims, in what amounts to a reenactment of his clash with Boyle over the legitimacy of the veridical subject. In the case of experimental science, Hobbes believed that “a set of theoretical assumptions” pervaded any controlled experiment, and that “both in principle and in practice, those assumptions could always be challenged.” This same logic extends to voyage literature. Hobbes’s view of human nature undermines the veracity of the sea-narrative as he outlines in his *Philosophical Rudiments*: “But if it so happen, that being met, [men] passe their time in relating some Stories, and one of them begins to tell one which concernes himself; instantly every one of the rest most greedily desires to speak of himself too; if one relate some wonder, the rest will tell you miracles, if they have them, if not, they’ll fein them.” Woodes Rogers’s critique of Dampier implicitly echoes Hobbes. He writes, “Tis also a particular Misfortune which attends Voyages to the South-Sea, that the Buccaneers, to set off their own Knight-Errantry, and to make themselves pass for Prodigies of Courage and Conduct, have given such romantick Accounts of their Adventures, and told such strange stories.” Hobbes theorizes that man is essentially unstable as a site of truth, and he thus effectively reduces the genre of voyage literature (and its hypothetical state of nature) to little more than romance and competitive storytelling. The word of the traveller cannot be trusted because personal experience and observation, Hobbes writes, are “nothing but memory.” If “truth” is the basis of social order, then Hobbes views voyage literature and its knowledge as a profound threat; he thought that “because belief and opinion

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71 Shapin and Schaffer, 112.  
73 Woodes Rogers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World* (London, 1712): xvi. Rogers’s solution to combat such tall tales was to keep a sort of collective journal, open for viewing at all times, and free to be corrected by any member of the crew.  
74 Qtd. in Shapin and Schaffer, 108.
belonged to individual men and were subject to their passions and interests, they constituted too shifting a ground on which to erect the frameworks of social order.”

Or, as Benedict, writes, “Such customs thus reinterpret culture, sociability, and even human nature by relative, not absolute principles, and those who cultivate watching or admiring these customs seem to prefer disorder.”

Readers’ belief in such tales lends mariner-authors credibility and the honorable status of “gentle,” and runs the risk of allowing “romantic” mariner-outlaws to colonize their minds with the protagonists’ self-interested interpretation of sociopolitical order.

Hobbes views the “competitive dream-state” he describes in Philosophical Rudiments as dangerous because it provides men with the fantasy of autonomy. If, as Hobbes thought, social order and thus the civil contract were linked to epistemology, voyage literature was dangerous because it “led people to epistemic and therefore moral commitments which would endanger them.”

J. Paul Hunter has described how Boyle created “a context of receptivity” in ordinary people, which, he argues, empowered individuals to interpret the textual signs of everyday life. But, “once unleashed, the power of the individual to interpret was impossible to control.” The ability to interpret knowledge makes priests of us all, and such autonomy represents a profound threat to the civil contract: “If grand conclusions could be supported by individual experience and the subjective observation of any event or thing, who knew what might result—heretical ideas in religion and politics [or] irresponsible readings of natural and human events.”

This autonomy of interpretation parallels the autonomy of mariners at sea, whose narratives monopolize the construction of “truth” by both appropriating and challenging the strictures of

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75 Shapin and Schaffer, 105.
76 Benedict, 13.
79 Hunter, 289.
civil society. In the logic of Hobbes, the mariner-author joins a confederacy of deceivers, propagating the world with visions of autonomous individuals. It is the very assertion of “truth” that proves problematic, even as the “truth” of scientific observation was seen by many as the only path for buccaneers to claim legitimacy. The mariner-author then becomes a figure inhabiting a Hobbesian state of nature, a man of antisocial energy who must be contained.

To offset the antisocial energy that Hobbes identified in voyage literature, mariner-authors and their ghostwriters mobilized discourses of the new science to create ever-evolving global taxonomies. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century methods of taxonomy and cataloguing do not, in and of themselves, unify knowledge, instead arguing that God’s providential design can be discerned in the order of the natural world. This compulsion to categorize and rank implies that methods of articulation or representation were constructed with an aim towards revealing this design, although these methodologies and their rhetorical representation could also be used to shore up “the stability of a sociopolitical order which [the Royal Society] perceive[d] as both divinely sanctioned and beset by a variety of internal and external threats.”

Despite the presence of a divine will, however, the natural world’s inherently “fallen” state signals chaos and disorder, requiring the continual intervention of God. The natural philosopher (in this case the buccaneer) acts as a divine interlocutor, whose observation and ordering of the natural world signals not a dangerous autonomy, but an interpretation of that will and an embodiment of divine intervention. Concomitantly, as Markley argues, “the discourses of theology, style, gentlemanly privilege, and experimental natural philosophy interpenetrate,” and in the new science men like Boyle sought “to locate a ground for an absolute faith in a host of contingent, sociocultural beliefs.”

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describing his observations before Linnaean classification as “a confused heap of disjointed limbs.””82 Forster’s description holds fascinating implications when thinking in terms of psychic fragmentation, or how “the unmapped real terrain evokes within the psychic landscape the terror of an infinite world without boundaries.”83 Knowledge with no organizing system represents a chaotic threat or an emphasis on pleasure over “truth,” and, more ominously, suggests the absence of providential design, and thus the fundamentally arbitrary nature of hierarchy and rank that typifies polite society. God’s intervention through the natural philosopher or buccaneer reinscribes order in nature, thus justifying a patrilineal and class-divided society in England.

The buccaneer autonomy signaled by Dampier’s observations, in being rhetorically rewritten as the language of providential design, monopolizes the construction of “truth” and thereby serves as a stable referent in the gendering of the imperial male. Observers like Dampier or Forster could inhabit the priestly role of Boyle, codifying the practices of scientific observation and “assert[ing] even more powerfully the authority of print … and the class which controlled it.”84 Dampier’s ghostwriters appropriate a commercial ideology to make some sense of his jumble of observations, but in describing “the various and wonderful Works of God in different Parts of the World” as a pre-ordained sign of English commercial superiority, they write themselves into a rhetorical Catch-22. In attempting to construct Dampier as impartial observer, they in fact reinscribe Dampier with the same sort of ideological investments of Boyle and his peers that Hobbes decries. The less ideologically inflected, or the more “disinterested” the ghostwriters paint Dampier, the more invested he becomes in the sociopolitical discourses of science, commerce, and religion that constitute polite society. This reinscription of the most

83 Dawson, 49.
84 Pratt, 30.
valued modalities of identity on land secures the semi-fictitious Dampier’s personal and national identity, even if it comprises romantic tales cynically rewritten as God’s divine will made manifest in material creation.

IV. Weary of this Mad Crew

In contrast to the imperial masculine identity crafted by Dampier’s ghostwriters, the real man was one who sounds more akin to Hobbes or Rogers’s description of buccaneers. Forced to leave Mindanao with buccaneers newly minted as actual pirates, Dampier calls himself “sufficiently weary of this mad Crew” (NV, 402). This “madness” affords Dampier the opportunity to cast himself rhetorically as a prisoner rather than compatriot. He reiterates this point by justifying his murky association with the pirates as one that benefitted the nation: “I was well enough satisfied, knowing that the farther we went, the more Knowledge and Experience I should get, which was the main thing that I regarded” (NV, 440). Dampier casually declares that, so long as he is pressed into service, he will use the pirate ship to his own ethnographic ends. He rationalizes that sailing further with the pirates affords him “more variety of places to attempt an Escape from them, being fully resolv’d to take the first opportunity of giving them the slip” (NV, 440), but it takes quite some time before he actually accomplishes this goal. Presumably, Dampier’s ship would have put in for fresh water and supplies at any number of ports, highlighting the implausibility of Dampier’s assertions that he was unable to slink away. Moreover, given the egalitarian structure of pirate crews, Dampier was more than likely free to come and go as he pleased, although being caught in a Dutch or Portuguese port would have been difficult for an Englishman. While Dampier’s claims that he was more prisoner than participant soften the edges of his piratical past, they also make for a much more entertaining
adventure story. The idea that seemingly innocuous scientific data can be gathered while in the company of a murderous crew lends the text an illicit allure. Dampier’s contemporaries employed the same narrative strategy, and this trope of “prisoner” pirates reaches its fruition in Treasure Island’s Jim Hawkins.

Dampier’s claims that he was merely along for the ride, however, fall apart under close examination of the Dampier who is left out of the published narratives. There are myriad examples where ghostwriters whitewash his violent actions and those of his comrades, but these remain in his manuscripts, the writings of his contemporaries, and in the extant legal documents from his voyages. The ghostwriters account for this violence, however, simply by relying on nationalist appeal, or as O. H. K. Spate writes, “The many books of Voyages and Adventures contributed powerfully to that obsession of British projector{s}, the subversion of the Spanish American empire.”

During his first crossing of the Isthmus of Panama in 1681, Dampier speaks of “a small Plantain-walk, which we soon ransackt” (NV, 17). At the Peruvian town Piura, Dampier records that Captain Swan requested “300 packs of Flower, 3000 pounds of Sugar, 25 Jars of Wine, and 1000 Jars of Water to be brought off to us; but we got nothing of it. Therefore Captain Swan order’d the Town to be fir’d, which was presently done. Then all our Men came aboard” (NV, 145). Later, Dampier says, “While we lay here at Tabago, some of our Men burnt the Town on the Island” (NV, 205). In another instance, Captain Swan punishes a conniving Spanish governor at the city of Leon by “order[ing] the City to be set on fire, which was presently done” (NV, 220). At the next town, Rea Lejo, it is unclear who gave the order to burn the city, but burn it did: “Some of our destructive Crew set fire to the Houses: I know not by whose order, but we march’d away and left them burning” (NV, 223). Dampier’s only other recourse to account for such looting and burning is to distance himself from the command

85 Spate, 131-133.
structure of the buccaneers, making the argument that while others plundered he was merely attempting to explore and discover. Yet, while Dampier seems at least casually complicit in these acts, he balks at the violence committed by his comrades in other parts of the world. For instance, the abuse of the native peoples at Achin becomes so egregious that Dampier notes “we should be afraid to trust our selves among them” (NV, 476). The incident in question arose over the plundering of a small boat full of coconuts and coconut oil, which Dampier reports “was not for the lucre of the Cargo” (NV, 476). When Dampier casually endorses violence, he reconstitutes it as an emulation of Drake or as actions necessary for survival. Otherwise, he frames violence as unnecessary and beyond the dictates of self-preservation.

Accounts of Dampier’s personal violence abound, mainly during his time aboard the Roebuck (1699 to 1702). Although discipline at sea could be undeniably harsh, even by these standards Dampier abused a junior officer, Lieutenant George Fisher, to such an extent that at the ensuing Courts-Martial the Admiralty revoked all his pay for the New Holland expedition, and declared “the said Capt. Dampier is not a Fitt person to be Employ’d as comdr. Of any of her Maty. ships.”86 The row appears to have arisen over Fisher’s claims that Dampier meant to steal the ship and turn pirate. In a letter to the admiralty of 22 April 1699, Dampier defends his actions, citing Fisher’s constant abuse. He writes, “Fisher called me Old Dog, Old Villain, and told my men Gents take care of that Old Pyrateing Dog for he designs to Run away with you and the King’s ship.”87 Dampier then locked Fisher in his cabin without food, water, or a literal pot to piss in, and days later at Bahia harbor in Brazil, Dampier turned Fisher ashore. In one of the most telling statements of the Courts-Martial, Fisher claims that the ship’s clerk told him, “They would find Captaine Dampier another sort of a Man when he came on the other side of the

86 Dampier’s Voyages, 2:604. The entire proceedings of the Courts-Martial are in 2:594-605.
87 Dampier’s Voyages, 2:333.
Equinoctall Line.”

To bolster this circumstantial evidence, Funnell makes similar claims about Dampier in his 1707 *New Voyage Round the World*, which detailed the 1703 privateering voyage of the *St. George*. Dampier, for his part, blithely writes in *Voyage to New Holland* that his harsh discipline was “the better Opportunity to compose the Disorders among my Crew” (59). When put in command, Dampier resorts to the same monopoly of force that his earlier buccaneering days undermined. Fisher’s charges of piracy force Dampier to secure his identity by the only means available to him—pulling rank. This episode illustrates once again the inherently arbitrary—and fluid—nature of masculine identity on the high seas, and reiterates the ghostwriters’ elevation of ideology and discourse over actual experience to turn Dampier into a suitable embodiment of English national identity.

At the Courts-Martial, Fisher reported talk of piracy among the crew, which he claims Dampier ignored. Interestingly, two of the men Fisher supposedly overheard were James Grigsen and John Knight, who Baer identifies as old comrades of Dampier’s from his Spanish Expedition Shipping days, and who he speculates received funds for their legal defense against charges of piracy from Dampier himself. The evidence admittedly is circumstantial, but it appears that even if Dampier did not intend to turn pirate, his invitation to old cronies still under the shroud of piracy heightened tensions between the career naval officer Fisher and men whom he clearly saw as a pack of brigands. Dampier does himself no favors on this front, admitting that the Dutch fort at Timor denied him and his men water for days because “they took us to be Pirates” (*VNH*, 133).

Dampier’s encounter with the New Holland Aborigines offers another example of the captain’s penchant for violence. On New Holland, Dampier describes a confrontation where,

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88 *Dampier’s Voyages*, 2:599.
89 Baer, 107.
after repeated attempts at “friendship” by the English, he was forced to shoot an Aborigine who was part of a gang attacking the English sailors. Friendship can best be read as an attempt to trade, and the Aborigines’ refusal to do so on the Englishmen’s terms is taken instantaneously as a violation of the civil-commercial contract and thus legitimizes violence. Glyndwr Williams, however, has uncovered the journal of the *Roebuck*’s master, Jacob Hughes, who described the Aborigines as “very shy,” and claims Dampier and his men chased down the frightened natives who had hoped only to retrieve one of their own comrades already wounded by the English. Despite the refined identity Dampier’s ghostwriters wish to fashion, the accounts of his comrades tar him as a cruel and vindictive man whose state-secured command merely reenacts (or emboldens) the murderous violence of his buccaneering past.

Dampier’s violence reveals the inherent instability of masculine identity, revealing how he remains at once threatening to, but constitutive of, the underpinnings of a “gentlemanly” ethos of polite society and imperial expansion. This problem of instability registered by unchecked violence remained a problem in voyage literature until Cook’s day (and beyond). Hawkesworth’s unvarnished representation of Cook’s orders to gun down six Maori tribesman at Poverty Bay reenacts the same negotiation of identity that Dampier represents throughout his texts, and such violence enacts yet another example of mimetic representation that allows readers simultaneously to experience and distance themselves from their own transgressive impulses. Such violence is able to “neutralize reader aggression,” in that it sparks moral outrage in the reader and thus reaffirms civility at home. The moral costs of empire building can be examined through reflection and self-questioning, sanitized by self-righteous performances of superior virtue through appropriate sympathy, and then paradoxically legitimized even as they

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90 Williams, “Buccaneers, Castaways, and Satirists,” 119.
91 Lamb, “Minute Particulars,” 291.
are critiqued: “If only the Aborigines or Maori would have traded with us, then violence would not have been necessary.” Indignation over imperial violence ostensibly signals an identity that would not fall prey to the degradation of the civil self were it abroad, thus reenacting the fundamental paradox of voyage literature: repressed desires for autonomy become a way of emphasizing “normative” senses of self and society among readers.

A close examination of Dampier’s narratives makes clear the discourses that he and his ghostwriters mobilize to discipline and heroicize the seafaring male body. No matter how many rhetorical acrobatics are performed, the character “Dampier” still exists in Hobbes’s “competitive dream-state.” Dampier’s ghostwriters use scientifically inflected fables of commercial wealth as the primary anchor of imperial male identity, but Dampier’s commercial speculations are always already an act of wish fulfillment. But because Dampier resuscitates the civil self through these visions of wealth and the suppression of violence, he also implies that the notions of civil contract, civil society, and therefore a stable masculine identity are possible even on the far side of the globe. By reassuring armchair travelers of the relationship between the civil self, science, and commerce, Dampier rhetorically eradicates the chief condition of the Hobbesian state of nature—scarcity. He assumes a Golden Age viewpoint that relies on infinite resources; commerce secures the civil self and signifies that a civil society exists, thereby (theoretically) eliminating the savagery and fear that accompanies a state of scarcity. But Hobbes adds this caveat regarding fear and society: “I hope no body will doubt but that men would much more greedily be carried by Nature, if all fear were removed, to obtain Dominion, than to gaine Society.”

Civil society comes to rest in a curious position—the freedom from scarcity and its condition of fear is what makes a society civilized, yet the byproduct of this

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freedom seems remarkably similar to that of fear in the state of nature. The motivations are different, but the outcomes are the same.

Even Dampier acknowledges that commerce run amok results not in a civil self but a degraded self exerting dominion over others. Celebrating the civility of trade, Dampier says, “The more Trade, the more Civility; and on the contrary, the less Trade the more Barbarity and Inhumanity” (VD, 45). But when a country unaccustomed to trade finally becomes part of the global market, Dampier curiously admits, “They will be in danger of meeting with Oppression: men not being content with a free Traffick, and a just and reasonable Gain, especially in these remote Countries: but they must have the Current run altogether in their own Channel, though to the depriving the poor Natives they deal with, of their natural Liberty: as if all Mankind were to be ruled by their Laws” (VD, 46). Dampier aims this critique squarely at the Dutch, whose subjugation of the Spice Islands exemplifies men not content with “reasonable gain.” The sympathy here lies not so much with the natives as it does with other trading nations who suffer as a result of the Dutch monopoly. Just as trade exists along an uncertain continuum with piracy, the “civility” that moors masculine imperial identity exists as an unstable signifier contingent upon not only commerce, but how identity is negotiated for commercial purpose and how that commerce is carried out.

Ultimately, Dampier’s ghostwriters mobilize a commercial ideology dependent upon ethnographic, zoographical, and navigational knowledge that comprise commercial reconnaissance. They couple this commercial ideology and the overlapping discourses that reinforce it to sanitize the autonomous persona of the buccaneer and thereby reassert the masculine and civil values that secure personal and national identity. The heroicizing of Dampier as natural philosopher recasts stateless selves as English subjects, and renders
buccaneer autonomy and its romantic tales as providentially sanctioned. In doing so, Dampier’s texts attempt to give form to the imperial male, creating a stable masculine identity based on polite, landed forms of cultural authority that readers saw as guaranteed by traditional English rights and liberties, and which enables his readers to perform the equivocations necessary to justify economic imperialism as public service and the will of God. Yet the cultural anxiety stoked by buccaneers continues to manifest itself in the writings supposedly rehabilitating their identities. The true power of Dampier’s ghostwriters lay in their self-awareness; in crafting “Dampier” they are able to exploit the fact that the real Dampier existed only in imaginary relation to the ideological underpinnings of empire. They create a character who is both patriotic and heroic, as well as endlessly fascinating in the way that he simultaneously exists outside of, yet as also a necessary part of, the power structures that mobilized Pacific exploration in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Dampier and his ghostwriters’ texts naturalize the masculine identity of English heroes waiting to exploit a rich, imaginary empire in the Pacific, and which reinscribe normative senses of self and sociopolitical order in England.
CHAPTER 2

NO DISHONOR TO BE A PIRATE:

IMAGINING INFINITE ADVANTAGE IN DANIEL DEFOE’S

PACIFIC NOVELS

In the beginning of his novel *A New Voyage Round the World* (1725), Daniel Defoe criticizes his voyage literature forbears, dismissing the accounts of famous voyages by English explorers like John Narbrough, John Wood, and Martin Frobisher, because they “are indeed full of their own Journals, and the Incidents of sailing, but have little or nothing of story in them, for the use of such Readers who never intend to go to Sea.” Absent from Defoe’s list is William Dampier, whose title the author appropriates, ostensibly both to cash in on a popular title recycled by many mariner-authors, and to ridicule the long history of “new voyages.” The “new voyages” were, in fact, remarkably unoriginal, and most attempted to emulate the exploits of Sir Francis Drake, preying on Spanish ships and raiding small coastal settlements in Chile and Peru. Defoe’s “Pacific novels,” specifically *New Voyage Round the World* and *Captain Singleton* (1720), self-consciously rework much of voyage literature’s generic conventions. These novels avoid the tendentious, scientific style of writing that Dampier’s ghostwriters employed. In *Singleton*, details of winds, tides, and latitude are absent; in *New Voyage*, gone are the more gruesome staples of voyage literature: scurvy, violence, and staggering mortality rates. So in criticizing the lack of “story,” Defoe erases scientific inquiry, the hardships of sailing, and fears of self-degradation as the ontological basis of voyage literature. He parodies tendentious ethnographic observation and navigational information, systematically eliminating anything of real use for

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those who “intend to go to sea.”

2 The question then logically follows: what is of “use” for those “who never intend to go to sea?”

This chapter explores what Defoe saw as worthy of “story,” and thus considers how these Pacific novels link imaginative projections of trade, masculinity, and empire. Defoe’s fictional rendering creates the Pacific both as a future site of imperial expansion that would enable Britain to ascend to the status of a world power, and as a proving ground for the masculine identities necessary to make this vision a reality. In these novels, Defoe crafts a theory of “infinite advantage” dependent upon a vision of commerce free from sociological, ecological, and political constraints. Both Singleton and New Voyage imagine new masculine identities freed from imperial trade restraints and, more importantly, the affective constraints of nation and home. 3 Whereas Singleton problematizes this relationship by exploring the materialist origins of commerce and placing it on an uncertain continuum with piracy, New Voyage unabashedly counters this problem through its imaginative construction of infinite resources, a rhetorical gambit that allows Defoe’s nameless New Voyager to embody conceptions of national identity predicated on economic expansionism without the taint of predatory trading practices or the specter of Hobbesian self-degradation. Previous narratives like those of Narbrough, Dampier, and Rogers, in many ways, provided only dubious speculations of infinite riches, and the failure of many voyages merely reiterated the peripheral status England still held in the Pacific. Defoe’s

2 Circumnavigational accounts such as those of Narbrough, Dampier, and George Shelvocke were used as guides for mariners in the South Seas. As I discuss in chapter three, George Anson made use of these (often inaccurate) tomes of collective knowledge to guide his passage around Cape Horn, to find Juan Fernandez, and to learn the sailing habits of Spain’s Acapulco and Manila galleons.

3 These imperial trade restrictions include the chartering of exclusive joint-stock companies such as the Royal African Company, the East India Company, and later the South Seas Company, all of which exercised trade monopolies in their respective theaters of operation that turned even “legitimate” merchants into smugglers. These restrictions also included the ever-tenuous (or non-existent) trade relationships in the Spice Islands with the Dutch and in the Americas with Spain. For an interesting take on how the character Singleton manipulates these trade monopolies, see Siraj Ahmed, The Stillbirth of Capital: Enlightenment Writing and Colonial India (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012): 51-74.
Pacific novels, however, imagine the uncharted Pacific as a site for the future projection of British cultural and economic power, allowing him to reinscribe British identity in those vast, trackless oceans.  

Defoe’s appropriation of the title *New Voyage Round the World* makes an ironic statement about his novels’ break from the work of Dampier. In the previous chapter, I argued that Dampier’s ghostwriters craft a “civil self” by creating an English, masculine identity that is fundamentally commercial in nature. Read in this context, Defoe’s comments about this lack of “story” cannot be dismissed as a complete refutation or casual mockery of Dampier. Practically all of Defoe’s writings, Pacific or not, focus on the tension between their protagonists’ quest for autonomy and the “unruly realities,” as John Richetti terms them, of “those personal, social, natural, and historical determinants which threaten the autonomy and even the physical survival of the self.”

Scholars like Richetti, Ian Watt, Nancy Armstrong, Michael McKeon, and James Thompson (to name only a few) examine Defoe’s role in the “rise of the novel” as a progenitor of the bourgeois, economic subject. Defoe’s novels prove so rich in this regard, because, as Thompson writes, Defoe views “the opposition between domestic and economic [as] still under construction.” And, if “the novel not only follows the rise of capital but also always abets it,” then it follows that we still look to Defoe as one of eighteenth-century commerce’s greatest theorists and propagandists when addressing its problematic assimilation into the prevailing, traditional conceptions of gentlemanly identity dependent upon landed property. Defoe articulates a sort of economic adventurism that privileged homosocial bonds over

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7 Ahmed, 51.
heteronormative ones, mobile property over land ownership, and the wooden ship over the
country seat.

To speak of a “fixed” or monolithic eighteenth-century masculinity would be
anachronistic, and these novels aid in understanding gender identities as fluid, always-already-
contested constructions. This “experimental refashioning of personal identity” undertaken by
Defoe’s protagonists casts his Pacific in much the same light as the South Seas “laboratory”
where buccaneers performed a transgressive masculinity that self-consciously flouted the
strictures of a more traditional English identity. But where Dampier and his ghostwriters’ texts
appropriate commercial and scientific discourses to discipline and normalize the transgressive
autonomy of the male seafarer, Defoe’s Pacific novels celebrate this autonomy, imagining how
their protagonists might manage and overcome the “unruly realities” connected to more
traditional identity anchors. Defoe, then, like Dampier, examines how the Pacific represented a
profound threat to an essential “Englishness,” yet he paradoxically employs the Pacific—and
specifically Pacific fantasies like the Northwest Passage and *Terra Australis Incognita*—to
reconcile mariners’ autonomy to a coherent national identity based on international commerce.

Defoe’s characters accomplish this task, I argue, by adopting the commercial masculinity
of “Dampier.” Although Defoe ridicules the flimsy rationalization of scientific inquiry as the
basis of the mariner-author’s narrative authority, he fictionally explores how the character
“Dampier” reconciles predatory capitalism to conceptions of national identity dictated by
economic expansionism. Defoe, however, undertakes a different sort of identity construction
than does Dampier’s ghostwriters. Where they must shore up a dangerous buccaneer identity by
pressing it into the service of the nation, ultimately placing this maritime subject under state
jurisdiction, Defoe reframes trade, civility, and morality as *essentially* connected, thereby
sanitizing his characters’ autonomy. Commerce and acquisition are moral in the first place, and narrative authority is derived from “the mutually constitutive terms of morality and trade.” Moreover, Defoe need not perform sketchy commercial speculation because his “story” inevitably delivers. Singleton employs an ongoing reconstruction of character to provide access to morally rationalized riches, while New Voyage eliminates the need for spiritual or social reformation at all.

This mutually reinforcing network of commerce, masculinlity, and morality unsettles many traditional markers of eighteenth-century identity, particularly in the way the author emphasizes non-territorialized ideas of property and community. Critics have overlooked the ways that Defoe’s Pacific novels (and even his canonical ones) complicate the traditional ethos of eighteenth-century masculinity. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Jonathan Lamb details the hardships of Pacific voyages alongside the psychic fragmentation that results from the metaphorical separation from these modes of self-definition. Dampier’s ghostwriters privilege traditional masculine signifiers like Protestantism in the published writings to combat this fragmentation, but the “story” or moral of Defoe’s Pacific novels is what a character might look like when freed from the strictures that defined domesticity and the affective restrictions of “home”—“virtue, land ownership, history, [and] religion.” Both Singleton and the New Voyager conspicuously call attention to their lack of familial, historical, and national origins, as well as their questionable methods of capital accumulation, suggesting that Defoe was well-read in Hobbesian and Lockean conceptions of travel. Just as Singleton signals a generic break with

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9 Ian Newman reads Captain Singleton as a novel of spiritual reform only in the sense that Singleton must shift from a mobile existence to one defined by a stable domesticity. Psychological interiority (here read as self-reflection) is restored when Singleton stops wandering and reconciles himself to possessive individualism. Newman, “Property, History, and Identity in Defoe’s Captain Singleton, Studies in English Literature 51.3 (2011): 565-583.
10 Newman, 566.
the sea-narrative tradition when asserting “You can be sure I kept no journal,” he signals a territorial separation from national and domestic affectations by declaring that “I [have] no home, and all the World [is] alike to me” (35). Singleton’s character is dominated by his lack of cultural, national, and domestic affiliation—his “singleness.” His name and origin belie an “ontological condition representing not filiation but rather alienation,” and as such Singleton “contain[s] in remarkably condensed form an allegory of the modern individual.” We learn even less of the nameless New Voyager, but both characters embody transgressive qualities that characterize how eighteenth-century masculine identity remained always in flux.

Defoe explores this fascination with the separation from the affective bonds of “home” in a number of texts, and it is telling that he published Captain Singleton only one year after Robinson Crusoe (1719). Captain Singleton and New Voyage, in many ways, function as the counternarrative to Robinson Crusoe, and examine “what might constitute virtue for an individual whose identity is not tied to a teleological narrative of future redemption and homecoming.” In one of the more original and thought provoking readings of Crusoe’s identity, Hans Turley examines how the masculine identity of the author’s protagonists “does not have to be defined by ownership of property or domestic stability,” a claim he develops through the figure he terms the “piratical subject.” The “piratical subject” is defined by transgressive economic and sexual desires, and Turley uses that model to examine how masculine identity in the early novel proved more fluid than critics supposed, or how Defoe privileged the autonomous, homosocial identity over the psychological, feminine identity dictated by domestic

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12 Ahmed, 55.
13 Newman, 576.
ideology. Jody Greene employs the Derridean descriptor “enisled” as her controlling image of Crusoe, noting that “the problem of solitude’s relationship to human happiness is … a pervasive problem to which [Defoe] returned throughout his oeuvre.”15 This problem of solitude, while affording characters like Crusoe, Jack, Moll, Roxana, and Singleton the chance to pursue capital accumulation outside the regular bounds of sociability, nevertheless renders these characters profoundly antisocial and in need of reform—what Greene calls “vaguely monstrous.”16 Ian Watt is kinder, comparing Defoe’s “assertion of the primacy of individual experience” to the Cartesian assertion of cogito ergo sum.17 Yet the implication remains that Defoe concerned himself explicitly with this “vaguely monstrous” autonomy.

What Greene describes as “vaguely monstrous,” Defoe’s Crusoe describes as “original sin.” Critics generally have read Crusoe’s “original sin” as the rejection of his father, but implicit in this original sin is also a rejection of domesticity and the roving life to which such a rejection subsequently leads. This “original sin” pits “the expansive ideology of capitalism” against “the conservative moral and religious ideology which is its logical opposite.”18 By comparing Crusoe’s rejection of his father and subsequent wandering to the Fall, Defoe calls down a whole host of associations that complicates Crusoe’s “antisocial” nature, and highlights the Crusoe trilogy’s ambivalent attitude towards trade. Although Crusoe’s time as a planter in Brazil and his taming of the island would appear to endorse proto-colonialist attitudes and a concomitant economic imperialism, the trilogy’s latter volumes “deliberately reject[] the

16 Greene, 404.
18 Richetti, 14.
interlocking discourses of ‘psychological realism,’ economic self-sufficiency, and one-size-fits-all models of European colonialism” that Crusoe appears to embody in the first novel.  

On the heels of the protagonist’s famously abrupt description of his marriage and wife’s death at the end of Crusoe, the sequel, Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719), details Crusoe’s decision to become a “private trader” to the East Indies with his nephew. Crusoe explicitly rejects the colonial model his island represents, declaring “I have now done with my island, and all Manner of Discourse about it … I never so much as pretended to plant in the Name of any government or nation; or to acknowledge any Prince, or to call my People Subjects to any one Nation more than another; nay, I never so much as gave the Place a Name.” Crusoe’s farther adventures take him to the East Indies, China, and Siberia, and while such travels continue to assert “an economic dream of self-reliance” because the Indies and China offer the possibility of extravagant riches, they also, like most travels, present unique threats to English identity that force Cruse to “seek to counter nightmare visions of an embattled English identity in a hostile world.” Crusoe, in fact, rejects commerce as the primary mode of self-definition, instead embracing violent and radical religious fanaticism as the ultimate guarantor of Englishness, represented most clearly in Crusoe’s juvenile destruction of a pagan idol in Siberia. Turley posits that the fundamentally unstable character of Crusoe comes to view his wandering as religious inclination, and as a way to “negotiate the conflicting demands of society that

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20 Given the state of the Dutch spice monopoly and the British East India Company’s jurisdiction over Britain’s paltry share of the Eastern trade, Crusoe may actually mean he intends to become a “separate trader” or smuggler. Defoe, Robinson Crusoe, ed. by Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 256-57.
22 Markley, Far East, 178.
equates identity with the desire for property and marriage, or domestic stability.”23 Religion—particularly English Protestantism—becomes the ultimate signifier of Crusoe’s identity.24

That the tense triangulation among psychological realism, possessive individualism, and domestic desire (or lack thereof) present in the *Crusoe* trilogy can be reconciled only by a deference to religion provides a fitting example for Gabriel Cervantes’s claim that “discussions of the form of the novel need[] to account for the ways in which such texts mobilize other forms of discourse within themselves,” and suggests that Defoe, in particular, presents “multiple ideologies [that] are engaged and yet not necessarily harmonized in the way modern readers expect them to be.”25 Critics overlook Defoe’s Pacific novels because they are not easily assimilated to prevailing teleological readings of the eighteenth-century novel that emphasize the closure of a “homecoming,” represented by domestic ideologies of psychological realism, land ownership, and heteronormative desire.26 Instead, they provide what J. Paul Hunter calls “anti-essentialist” readings; they typify the novels that, Hunter writes, use digression and resistance to closure as part of their ideological power—the idea that “the potential exists to develop an aesthetic model based on historical and cultural values rather than on preconceived essentialist

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23 Turley, 130.
24 For a complete explication of Crusoe’s Christian identity in the *Farther Adventures* and *Serious Reflections*, see Turley, 128-158, and Markley, *Far East*, 177-204.
26 Nancy Armstrong makes the bold claim that domestic fiction like Samuel Richardson’s “helped to produce a subject who understood herself in the psychological terms that had shaped fiction.” Armstrong links this privileging of psychological interiority to, among other things, the creation of a household, and argues that Richardson found more success than Defoe because “the triumph of female virtue proved infinitely reproducible.” Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987): 23, 29. As I will later argue, Defoe’s conception of masculine heroism does in fact prove “infinitely reproducible,” as evidenced by the sea-change in voyage literature that Defoe inaugurates.
ideas.” These historical and cultural values, I argue, are defined by a commercial ethos that privileges masculine autonomy and the mobility of character.

Resisting the telos of Protestant redemption and homecoming, these novels activate the commercial ideologies of Dampier that justify the amoral activities of outlaw-heroes by recasting their non-territorialized identities as fundamentally commercial, and thus moral (or at the least state-sanctioned). *Singleton* explores the materialist origins of trade, and Captain Bob’s homecoming is not about rekindling affective bonds or experiencing domestic bliss through heteronormative relationships. Rather, the novel examines how the Pacific functions as an effective—if problematic—site of reformation, enabling “illicit wealth [to] reappear[] as legitimate property.”

Although Singleton does find a “home” and domestic bliss with Quaker William, this reformation still proves transgressive because of its homosocial nature; the pirate Singleton “expresses a myth of total individualism” which Richetti asserts “is hardly a theory that Defoe’s narratives can endorse specifically or explicitly.” But in justifying the ethical and discursive generation of commercial exploitation as both a trade practice and as an imaginative projection onto the world of the conditions that would sustain an infinitely profitable trade, Defoe also imagines the conditions that would make piracy (and thus the need for moral reformation) obsolete. *New Voyage* goes even further, celebrating how that individualist, materialist bent might function when freed from imperialist trade restrictions, and, more importantly, when freed from the necessity of conforming to the generic expectation of an English “hero.” Defoe’s “story” works on two levels, making “real” Dampier’s only-imagined

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28 Ahmed, 59.

29 Richetti, 70. Turley reads Singleton’s homosocial turn as an endorsement of male friendship over heterosexual marriage.
visions of commercial wealth in the South Seas and Far East, while simultaneously modeling the proper masculine identity needed to exploit these riches. Free from Crusoe’s fears of “original sin,” this new model of the masculine hero proves of greater “use” to projectors, speculators, and armchair travelers than do tales of spiritual reform. Defoe’s portrayal of a masculine identity free from affective ties to “home” paradoxically constitutes a coherent model of national identity, albeit one contingent upon mythical lands and fantasies of infinite wealth.

I. No Dishonor to Be a Pirate

In Captain Singleton, Daniel Defoe consistently confronts his readers with the ambiguous morality of legal commerce through the character of his pirate hero, whose actions in the novel underscore the slippage between piracy and legitimate trade. On a raiding cruise in the Dutch Spice Islands, Quaker William, Singleton’s first mate, confidante, and later life partner, asks, “Wouldst thou … rather have Money without Fighting, or Fighting without Money?” Singleton replies, “The first of the two, to be sure” (153-154). This moment illuminates one of the core problems of Singleton because William’s exhortation suggests that men must adhere to a strict binary, choosing either piracy or legal commerce. Defoe complicates this binary, however, because Singleton sometimes equates legitimate trade with piracy, and sometimes juxtaposes legal trade and piratical acts. To muddy the waters further, the infamous pirate Singleton operates as a legitimate merchant only under an assumed identity in the Indian Ocean and South Seas, in what he calls “the only trading Voyage we had made” (255). But the “trading voyage” still involves stolen goods, and the pirates only pretend to be traders. This episode reveals how Singleton, like a legitimate merchant, is “constructed by a desire for profit,” and the ways in
which Defoe “is on the verge of depicting trade as a kind of state-sanctioned piracy.”  Defoe exposes the underpinnings of (most) legitimate trade as piratical in nature because the motivation for both legitimate trade and piracy remains the same—materialist greed—and the ambiguities with which Defoe confronts his readers emphasize the problematic relationship England has with the piratical activity necessary for her economic expansion.

As an outlaw, the pirate simultaneously functions as marginalized outcast and analogized representative of the commercial lifeblood of empire. In *Captain Singleton*, piracy functions as the naked representation of trade, a vision of economic imperialism in which the emperor has no clothes. The realities of scarcity that prompt the darker side of economic imperialism—theft, slavery, murder, and mineral exploitation—clash with a vision of national identity that portrays the English as honest defenders of Protestantism and as shining examples of civility, diligence, and profit. Singleton paradoxically acts as both a subversive threat to these traditional characteristics of civility and diligence and as a foil to reveal piratical commerce as a normalizing, civilizing force. The realities of trade in *Singleton* must be disguised, in this regard, because they threaten this complex vision of English national identity, even as they uphold it.

Rather than trying to reconcile this fundamental impasse, Defoe explores its origins by connecting conceptions of national identity and what he terms “infinite advantage.” “Infinite advantage” comes from Defoe’s 17 July 1711 *Review of the State of the English Nation*, his periodical supporting the chartering of the South Seas Company. Defoe supports the Company’s charter on the grounds that its trade in the South Seas “may be settled to infinite Advantage.” For my purposes, infinite advantage will refer to what Markley calls “two related fictions,” that

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30 Turley, 117, 119.
“capital itself is sufficient to generate wealth and the nature [capital] exploits is inexhaustible, its resources infinite.”

Markley, *The Far East*, 212. Markley analyzes at length the importance of the “infinite” in Defoe’s writings, showing that a concept of infinite advantage evinces a fantastical belief in an inexhaustible amount of trade wealth in the East Indies, the Americas, and elsewhere (224). Markley develops Glyndwr Williams’s argument that the South Seas served more as a site of these fantastic projections than as the point of any serious thrust of national policy. He says, “The sporadic incursions of English adventurers into the South Seas between 1670 and 1750 were of negligible importance; but in terms of interest roused, speculation excited, and projects advanced, they form the essential preliminary to the upsurge of British activity in the Pacific in the late eighteenth century.” Williams, “‘The Inexhaustible Fountain of Gold’: English Projects and Ventures in the South Seas, 1670-1750,” *Perspectives of Empire: Essays Presented to Gerald S. Graham*, ed. by John E. Flint and Glyndwr Williams (London: Pearson Education, Ltd., 1973): 53.


To bolster this anticonquest discourse, the author yokes Singleton to a patriotic tradition of scientific discovery by exploiting the generic conventions of voyage literature, thereby conflating Singleton’s identity as high-seas pirate with the patriotic privateer or the buccaneer-naturalist. This emphasis on the privateering tradition enables Defoe to perform some of the ideological equivocations that illustrate how predatory trade practices underwrite English commerce. In Singleton, Defoe gladly conflates these high-minded motives with what they really were—thinly-veiled forays into commercial reconnaissance. Singleton’s march across Africa and his imaginative portrayal of the fauna and flora the crew find there reveals Defoe’s fascination with the uncharted interior of the continent in what Peter Knox-Shaw refers to as “a feat of precovery.” But the eastern side of the continent also intrigued Defoe, and it remained relatively uncharted at that time. Singleton’s march begins in present-day Mozambique, an area that Defoe describes as a site of European imaginative desire: “European nations, that would be so curious, might be found Rich of many Productions, especially of Drugs, Gums, Minerals, Skins of Wild Beasts, &c.” Although relatively “known” in relation to broad swaths of the Pacific that remained inaccurately or entirely unmapped, Africa still functioned as a site of imaginative projection for Defoe—particularly the interior Singleton traverses.

Of even greater promise, however, is the fabled Northwest Passage. When at sea, Singleton and his crew hope to discover this waterway, which Singleton describes as potentially “one of the most noble Discoveries that ever was made, or will again be made in the World, for

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35 I do not intend to address the long and complicated relationship among privateering, commerce, and state economic interests (chapters two and three of Turley’s book are particularly pertinent to this discussion), but merely want to point out that many of the popular travel narratives of the late 17th and early 18th centuries were written by privateers and buccaneers who claimed (like Dampier) that they were on missions of ethnographic discovery, rather than plundering ships and towns.
the Good of Mankind in general” (203). On a previous voyage, Quaker William learns from an itinerant priest about a group of thirteen English sailors shipwrecked on the northern shores of Japan who claimed to have sailed there through the passage by way of Greenland and the North Pole. Singleton and the crew eagerly search for the source of the tale ostensibly to find the sailors, but the real concern lies with the lost opportunity of discovery. Defoe, of course, rarely separates “the Good of Mankind” from a chance to improve commerce. His *Atlas Maritimus and Commercialis* (1728) describes the situation directly: “It must be acknowledg’d, that could a Passage be found either of those ways, the Voyage would be much shorter both to Japan and China, as also to the Moluccos and any Parts of India beyond the Bay of Bengal.” The “Good of Mankind” takes the imaginary form of a more efficient route in securing luxury items from the South Seas and East Indies. Defoe lays open the opportunistic “science” of anticonquest as a rationalization for establishing new trade routes and trade networks, just as the buccaneer ethnographers like Dampier did. As the narratives Defoe modeled *Singleton* on show, Captain Bob stands to gain fame, prestige, and a pardon upon his return to England—all of which he eschews in favor of returning to sea.

Singleton’s charting of the African continent and efforts to discover the Northwest Passage promote the notion that scientific discovery can improve trade with great benefit to all people. Yet the novel’s association with voyage literature and its pirate protagonist gives scientific discovery the taint of self-interest, which suggests a continuum of piratical acts. Defoe suggests that, at one end, predatory commerce is demonized as self-interested and at the expense

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38 Daniel Defoe, *Atlas Maritimus and Commercialis* (London, 1728), 279. Defoe here lumps together the Northeast Passage (around northern Asia) with the fabled Northwest Passage. Each route would have cut significant time from voyages to the East Indies and South Sea, respectively.

39 Much like his reading of the South Seas, Glyndwr Williams reveals that quests to discover the Northwest Passage were based on fantastic visions of wealth. James Knight’s 1719 voyage carried a huge cargo of empty chests “to bring back gold.” More “practical” speculators argued that British merchants could tap into the endless wealth of western North America, “where the maps still marked the imaginary countries of Cibola and Quivira.” Williams, *Voyages of Delusion: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 4, 49.
of the public good, but he also acknowledges that it sometimes works to England’s advantage. In these terms, the role infinite advantage plays in defining England begins to look more sinister, as is the case in Captain Singleton where visions of infinite advantage abut the brutal realities of Hobbesian scarcity. In the novel, property is consistently stolen and pirated; capital accumulation looks more like an exercise in who steals more effectively, rather than who establishes or invigorates trade networks. The ideology of infinite advantage seems repeatedly undermined, but paradoxically reinscribed. Infinite advantage might be more aptly described as an ideology of the infinite exploitation of resources and people. Thus, Defoe foregrounds the exchange between nations as a distinctly Hobbesian ethos of accumulation at any cost, much like Singleton’s vacillation between pirate and legitimate trader to gain wealth. Timothy Blackburn points out that “Defoe had only to look to Hobbes … to find the historical aptness of Singleton’s piracy.” Hobbes declares that “Amongst men, till there were constituted great commonwealths, it was thought no dishonor to be a pirate, or a highway thief; but rather a lawful trade.” Defoe exploits the paradoxical relationship between piracy and trade to rehearse the anxieties surrounding the ambiguous morality of economic imperialism. Singleton’s trading (and pirating) missions overcome the anxieties of scarcity that seem ever-present in Africa and the South Seas, and Defoe thus leaves his readers with visions of commercial plenty, both in terms of resources and the natives’ desire for “consumer goods,” or the bits of glass and scrap metal that the pirates trade them. Defoe appears to secure the moral innocence of unethical—if strictly legal—piratical trade by coloring it in terms of infinite advantage, thereby qualifying such a system as a surer and less morally problematic way of making money than illegal piracy or war-time privateering. Of course, infinite advantage suggests that commerce is just piracy by

41 Qtd. in Blackburn, 129.
another name, and Singleton appropriates this ideology to paper over fears of “a kind of state-sanctioned piracy” by stressing visions of commercial wealth that will overcome the realities of scarcity and render piratical commerce obsolete. In doing so, Defoe explores the ethical and discursive generation of infinite exploitation as both a trade practice and an imaginative projection onto the world of the conditions that would sustain an infinite trade.

II. Allegorical Pyrates

Defoe connects predatory trade and piracy in their violation of polite business practices. Despite early beginnings as a mercantilist, Defoe later championed what we might today think of as a free trade, as the majority of his theories of polite commerce rest in the circulation of labor and goods. Maximillian Novak states, “Defoe believed that by passing through a multitude of hands, goods and money would enrich the nation.”42 In his Atlas, Defoe describes the nature of trade as a “strange Circulation … which begins and ends with Great Britain: so that here it may be truly said, the French proverb is made good, That one Hand washes t’other Hand, and both Hands wash the Face.”43 In the earlier General History, Defoe describes free trade as divinely ordained: “The wise Disposer, has separated all those valuable things, by vast Oceans, unknown Gulphs, and almost impassable Seas, that he might joyn them all again, and make them common to one another, by the Industry of Men, and thereby propogate Navigation, Plantation, Correspondence, and Commerce to the Universal benefit of every part of the World.”44 Defoe promotes international trade because it supplies all parts of the world with wares, creates employment, motivates new discovery, and fosters diplomacy and cross cultural exchange. This

43 Defoe, Atlas, 328.
emphasis on mutually beneficial trade defies the classic Eurocentric mercantilist model that privileges a balance of trade, and recent scholarship by Andre Gunder Frank, Geoffrey Gunn, Frank Perlin, and Kenneth Pomeranz argues against this mercantilist model, showing that Europe was, until the mid-19th century, in many ways economically and technologically inferior to Far East nations such as China and Japan. Markley has extended these economic arguments to the literature of the time, where he elucidates Defoe’s anxiety regarding England’s inability to wedge itself into profitable trading networks in Spanish America and the East Indies. Part of Defoe’s “fantasy of commercial prosperity” relies on unfettered and uninterrupted access to markets that leads to a free circulation of trade.

The vision of a “universally beneficial” trade, Defoe laments, often falls prey to an inordinate desire for wealth, which in turn leads to trade’s interruption. Greed disrupts an ideological notion of commercial prosperity. Defoe addresses this anxiety when he blurs the line between piracy and legal commerce in his 18 October 1707 issue of the Review. His harsh criticism of piratical commerce anticipates his own paeans to the salving effects of infinite advantage, particularly when he exposes the realities of legal trade: “It would make a sad Chasm on the Exchange of London, if all the Pyrates should be taken away from the Merchants there, whether we be understood to speak of your Litteral or Allegorical Pyrates; whether I should mean the Clandestine Trade Pyrates, who pyrate upon fair trade at home; the Custom-stealing Pyrates, who pyrate upon the Government; the Owling Pyrates, who rob the Manufactures; the

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46 Markley argues, “The confrontation of English writers with China and Japan became a catalyst for their recognition that the discourse of European empire was an ideological construct—part self-conscious propaganda, part wish fulfillment, and part econometric extrapolation to sustain fantasies of commercial prosperity, if not imperial conquest.” Far East, 9.
privateering Pyrates, who rob by Law.” The equation of literal and allegorical marauders suggests that piratical principles operate at the core of English commerce rather than on its fringes, and the almost inevitable slippage of infinite advantage into infinite exploitation reinforces the connection between literal and allegorical pirates. Novak ascribes to Defoe’s work more generally an underlying economic morality that suggests “there is nothing more moral” in the acts of the allegorical pirates than the literal ones. Or, as Carl Fisher suggests, “The paradox of business as crime and crime as a business was a driving force behind almost all of [Defoe’s] fiction.” Singleton engages in relatively few legally-defined acts of piracy, although his ambiguous “trading” missions are often morally tainted. When acts of piracy do occur, Quaker William often rationalizes that these acts are morally acceptable, as he does when he and Singleton embark on their “trading voyage.” Erin Mackie points out that the eighteenth century experienced a proliferation of pirate stories and literature, and she argues that yoking piracy and legitimate trade as Defoe does in Singleton “seems largely linked to the ways these [texts] are used discursively to rationalize and mobilize economic imperialism” and “equivocate piratical accumulation.” By eliding the distinctions between acts central to English commerce and piracy, Defoe places strictly legal trade on an uncertain continuum with piracy. And in revealing the central economic institutions of London as akin to piracy, Defoe can deploy the ideology of infinite advantage under the guise of fair trade, even as he castigates its hypocrisy.

What connects both the literal and allegorical pirates is not a proto-capitalistic sense of profit or accumulation, but materialist greed. Although merchants are emerging capitalists in the

48 Novak, Economics, 108.
sense that they invest and reinvest their money, often in long-term ventures such as overseas trading voyages, pirates’ behavior is antithetical to these principles. What money they have they immediately spend on drinking, gambling, and whoring, as Singleton does when he first returns to England from Africa. Singleton displays a naïve understanding of money, admitting, “I had no Notion of a great deal of Money, or what to do with my self, or what to do with it if I had it. I thought I had enough already, and all the Thoughts I had about disposing of it, if I came to Europe, was only how to spend it as fast as I could, buy me some Clothes, and go to Sea again to be a Drudge for more” (132). Money has no final end or teleological purpose; Singleton is so divorced from the idea of bourgeois domesticity that money holds meaning only in the ephemeral sense of wanton pleasure. Defoe’s 19 July 1709 Review states, “When every Branch of a Nation have their proper Work, they help, assist and rejoice in one another; and this Variety is what I have so often call’d the Circulation of Trade—But when you clash in your Labour, and fall into one another’s Business, you grow Thieves and Pirates in Trade, you prey upon one another, and joyn in crushing your general Interest.”

“Legitimate,” predatory trade like that practiced by Singleton is charged with masquerading as a higher order activity of national and self-improvement, when it in fact grossly breaches trade etiquette by placing self-enrichment above the public good.

Roughly the first half of Captain Singleton comprises the “African” section of the novel, which begins by describing the first years of Bob Singleton’s life. Defoe quickly moves his protagonist from infancy to a seventeen-year old scoundrel, marooned on Madagascar with twenty-three other crew members for their part in an attempted mutiny. These men eventually build crude boats seaworthy enough to make their way to mainland Africa, where they resolve to set out across the continent on foot in hopes of finding a merchant vessel on the western coast.

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51 Defoe, Review 6: 46, 184.
that might take them back to Europe. The crew’s adventures take them deep into Africa’s interior where they discover, among other things, vast fields of gold and boneyards full of ivory. With the descriptions of such riches, Defoe rehearses his emphasis on infinite advantage that later culminates in *New Voyage Round the World*. In Singleton’s Africa, Defoe deploys a vision of infinite advantage as commercial plenty, and the pirate gang exemplifies the civilizing effects of trade, as well as the exploitative practices undergirding it.

As Singleton and his company first embark on their African journey, he describes the land they encounter as “… the most desolate, desert, and unhospitable Country in the world, even Greenland and Nova Zembia it self not excepted, with this Difference only, that even the worst Part of it we found inhabited, tho’ taking the Nature and Quality of some of the Inhabitants, it might have been much better to us if there had been none” (47). Passages such as this one tap into deep-seated anxieties that colored views of Sub-Saharan Africa as a fallen, corrupt place, a site of human savagery and the hostility of nature itself. Peter Knox-Shaw points out the tendency in the eighteenth century to represent Africa as the stereotypical “heart of darkness,” noting the “common practice … to fashion an African soul, metonymically, out of jungle.”

Defoe plays up this conventional view of Africa’s desolation and its barbaric inhabitants only to deconstruct it, emphasizing the civilizing potential of trade and the untapped wealth of the African continent. His *Essay Upon the Trade to Africa* (1711) details the continent’s savagery, but the threats to trade interestingly tend to come from European trading rivals rather

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52 Knox-Shaw, 946.

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than the natives. He fumes over these European threats and “the Necessity of Possessing the Coast of Africa, by Forts and Castles, and the Settlement of Factories, for the Management and Security of the Trade.” These fortifications, Defoe writes, protect trade more from “the Depredations of Interlopers and Separate Traders,” Europeans and other English merchants who violate the Royal Africa’s Company monopoly, than they do natives. Singleton confirms this suspicion of Europeans, because many of the hero’s encounters with the natives focus on the Africans’ primitivism, not their hostility. The first group of natives Singleton encounters “stood wondering and staring at us, as if we had been Monsters” (46), but once Singleton’s gang teaches the basics of trade to this tribe, they warm to the crew, even displaying an understanding of the ad hoc sign language the pirates use to communicate. The desolation the narrator describes gives way to an appreciation of the agricultural abundance of the land. Adhering to a familiar trope, however, Singleton gives the Africans junk in exchange for an abundance of food and provisions. Gold and silver are of little or no value to the natives, but, Singleton says, “Our Cutler went to Work, and as he had saved some Iron out of the Wreck of the Ship, he made an Abundance of Toys, Birds, Dogs, Pins, Hooks, and Rings … [and] they brought us all Sorts of Provisions they had, such as Goats, Hogs, and Cows, and we got Victuals enough” (47).

Encounter after encounter produces similar exchanges: “Our artificer shewed [one “very frank, civil, and friendly” tribe] some of his Trinkets that he had made … They had so much Judgment

56 Real attempts to use sign language with indigenous populations often failed, as Glyndwr Williams recounts. Upon landing on Elizabeth Island (within the Strait of Magellan), Captain John Narborough “engaged in an amicable but ultimately futile dumb show” in an attempt to discover if the natives had any gold or copper. Williams, The Great South Sea, 78. Markley connects an understanding of the dumbshow to an understanding of mineral exploitation and trade. He says, “Narborough’s dumbshow could work only if the values and assumptions of mercantile self-interest already had been interiorized by the natives of Patagonia.” Markley, Far East, 215. By this logic, the natives Singleton meet have internalized this discourse, revealing their potential for exploitation at the hands of Singleton.
as to chuse that of Silver before the Iron, but when we shewed them some Gold, we found they did not value it so much as either of the other” (107). Trade, or at least a primitive understanding of exchange values, behooves a series of complex efforts to assign and negotiate value across cultural divides.

Understanding trade value and a desire for consumer goods supports Defoe’s insistence that trade equals civility, a view to which Dharwadker adheres when equating the construction of national identity with material, cultural, and spiritual exchange. Defoe’s portrayal of trade value and its cogent application to formations of national identity also signal Great Britain’s transition towards the ethos of a “polite and commercial people.”

Singleton and his crew take advantage of the one-sided exchange offered by the “uncivilized” tribes, but even the act of trading assigns the potential to be civilized and, more importantly, “civility” dictates that one drives a hard bargain. Roxann Wheeler maintains, “Civility is determined through willing interaction and trade with Europeans, yet civility also connotes shrewd trading, even boldness in a colonial context.”

In a later encounter with “a more fierce and politick People … not so easily terrified with our Arms as those, and not so ignorant, as to give their Provisions and Corn for our little Toys” (122), Singleton and his men treat the tribe members with great respect because they are too experienced to accept trinkets in exchange for provisions. Not surprisingly, this tribe has had previous trade encounters with Europeans. Furthermore, rather than supplying an abundance of goats, pumpkins, and beef, this tribe lays claim to an immense treasure of ivory that “they took and carried about sixty or seventy Miles South, where other trading Negroes usually met them, and gave them Beads, Glass, Shells, and Cowries, for them, such as the English and Dutch and

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other Traders, furnish them with from Europe” (123). Although this tribe and Singleton’s crew have different ideas of exchange value, the tribe displays a pragmatic understanding of trade, albeit one that benefits Europeans.

Of course, Defoe champions wealth in the form of gold and ivory over agricultural goods, reinforcing his preference for the establishment of trade factories over plantation-style colonies, as well as his pervasive, Lockean imagining of a world free from ecological constraints. In the Essay Upon the Trade to Africa, Defoe evaluates African wealth as “how many Negroes, they sent to the English colonies in the West Indies; and how many Thousand Ounces of Gold they brought into England, beside the Export of Foreign Goods by Debentures, and the Import of many Thousand Pounds Sterl. in Wax, Elephants Teeth, Drugs, and valuable commodities,” which Defoe stresses as essential to “the Growth of the Country there, and necessary to ours here.”59 This fabulous influx of commodities also necessitates a connection between infinite advantage and the slave trade. An ideology of infinite advantage cannot exist in Africa or elsewhere without an infinite source of labor power to mine, gather, and help transport these raw materials. Defoe views slave labor with an instrumentalist rationality or what Virgil Nemoianu calls Singleton’s “innocent inhuman practicality.”60 The mutineers display some moral qualms about slavery, but Singleton solves the problem: “At last I proposed a Method for them, which, after some Consideration, they found very convenient; and this was to quarrel with some of the Negro Natives, take ten or twelve of them Prisoners, and binding them as Slaves cause them to travel with us” (51). This plan, while duplicitous, absolves the Europeans of guilt, for Singleton says that “by the law of arms … we secured about sixty lusty young fellows” (emphasis mine) (54). Paula Backscheider describes Singleton’s actions as the “neutral choices” of a man “intent

59 Defoe, Africa, 9.
on telling his story without excuse or self-justification,” which for the most part rings true.\textsuperscript{61} Singleton does not try to hide the fact that he takes slaves, but he equivocates, echoing John Locke’s contention in his \textit{Second Treatise} (1690) that slavery is “nothing else but the state of war continued, between a lawful conqueror and a captive.”\textsuperscript{62} Captain Bob sees men as beasts of burden necessary for survival and lawfully obtained, much the same way Defoe views slaves as necessary for England’s economic prosperity in his \textit{Essay}.

Once the slaves have been taken, Singleton reinforces their subjugation by introducing them to European technology. Early in the march, Singleton’s slaves marvel at the use of gunpowder. Rather than explaining the science of the firearms, Singleton and his gunner perpetuate the mystery by telling the leader of the slaves, a “Black Prince,” that guns speak their own language. The gunner says to Singleton, “Tell them they shall see that [gun] in his Hands speak in Fire to one of those Beasts, and make it kill itself” (65). Ascribing linguistic agency to the rifle is odd enough, but Singleton extends this agency in even more sinister terms. Suspecting that his slaves have slaughtered a village of women and children on the journey, Singleton recounts how he threatened that “if [the slaves] had kill’d any Body, we would make them kill themselves, too” (69). Singleton, in reality, is describing how he would execute the slaves with firearms, but the way he words the threatened punishment warns that the natives would be forced to commit suicide. Although his explanation of gunpowder technology mockingly grants the slaves the power to kill themselves, the rifle strips the slaves of agency and freewill, ultimately reducing them to the level of the beasts they have just witnessed being shot.

The ominous narrative points to the Africans’ internalization of a European-style command and control structure, as the pirates begin indoctrinating the indigenous populations

\textsuperscript{61} Paula R. Backscheider, \textit{Daniel Defoe: His Life} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 441.
with discipline as well as trade practices. In this particular scenario, the natives are unknowingly stripped of agency even as they appear to be granted it. By ascribing punishment to the natives themselves, Singleton attempts to absolve himself and his crew of guilt. Just as Singleton justifies taking slaves via the law of arms, the threatened murder is mediated, distancing the executioner from his act. The executioner merely holds a gun which commands death, but not even the gun is truly responsible because the slaves murder themselves. The embodiment of this discourse—the slave is literally and metaphorically responsible for his own execution—exemplifies the ideology of anticonquest, as the Europeans secure their innocence even as they consolidate their hegemony.

As if this bizarre scenario of internalized European discipline were not enough, Defoe explicitly links this technology/discipline dyad to trade. Although many of the tribal peoples that Singleton and his men encounter prove docile, some are not. Encountering one tribe of “fierce, barbarous, treacherous People,” Singleton boastingly asks the slaves if his gun “could not make a Thousand of those naked Creatures die at one blow?” (73). He orders his men to load the muskets with “small shot” in addition to the regular charges. This sort of improvised grape shot proves sufficiently lethal to drive off the offending tribesmen, but more interesting is the construction of the small shot, which echoes almost exactly the cutler’s earlier fabrication of money or tokens of exchange: “Our small Shot was made of Bits of Lead and Bits of Iron, Heads of Nails, and such things as our diligent Artificer the Cutler help’d us to” (76). The similarity of the composition between ammunition and the “money” that the Africans prefer suggests links

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63 In the next chapter, I discuss eighteenth-century conceptions of “discipline” onboard naval vessels, which differed from “punishment.” Discipline, in the way of managing crews (or in this case the natives), was defined more by maintaining the proper social order than by harsh regulations. Both captains and crew were expected to observe their proper role as reenactors of a social order borne out on land. To breach “discipline” was to upset the delicate balance characterized by the reciprocity of dependence and paternalism. In the case of the natives, Singleton’s rifle enforces the “proper” performance and hierarchy of civilized and uncivilized.
among technology, trade, and discipline. Just as the natives must internalize an idea of discipline wherein punishment is ultimately deserved and self-inflicted for a breach of the civil-commercial contract, so, too, must they internalize the capitalistic discourse of trade. In this scenario, currency becomes the literal means of discipline, in that the bits of iron used to make the money-like ornaments are fashioned into bullets and used against the indigenous populations. And, in this case, a refusal to trade results in the literal internalization and embodiment of European discipline and mercantilist discourse. Put simply, the natives are shot full of money. Aside from the physical threat, the natives are left in a precarious catch-22. The message Singleton and his crew present is clear: “Trade with us, or be shot and killed with the money you would have received.” Of course, from the slaves’ points of view, the dilemma reads as follows: “We must trade with the Europeans, or we will be commanded to kill ourselves by their guns, and promptly comply.” Defoe connects the refusal of trade with the uncivilized African body, and the refusal of trade is coded as both economic and bodily suicide. By contrast, the only African who masters an understanding of gold’s value, the Black Prince, is set free by Singleton at the end of the march. The Black Prince’s apprehension of use and exchange value “brings him into the circle of European identity and generates the rhetoric of friendship and camaraderie,” further suggesting the equation of civility and trade.64

Singleton’s taking of slaves comprises the novel’s most obvious example of what Laura Brown calls the “necessary violence of imperialist ideology,” and by using the piratical figures to represent this “necessary violence,” Defoe reveals how even labor shortages can be overcome through a principle of infinite exploitation. Just as the land gives up fabulous amounts of gold,

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the continent also supplies a seemingly endless supply of labor power in the form of slaves. The slaves in Singleton prove one of those troubling moments where Defoe confronts the reader with clashing ideologies. On one hand, he seems content to let this atrocity occur, folding the actions of slavery into a narrative of infinite advantage. Simultaneously, Defoe reveals the brutal discipline and control that lies at the heart of such an atrocity. In a move typical of Pratt’s definition of anticonquest, Defoe uses his character Colonel Jack to claim that harsh treatment of slaves “was not owing to the Tyranny, and Passion, and Cruelty of the English, as had been reported [but] … to the Brutality, and obstinate Temper of the Negroes, who cannot be manag’d by Kindness, and Courtesy; but must be rul’d with a Rod of Iron.” More to the point, Defoe justifies slavery from a purely economic standpoint: “No Negroes; no Sugars, Gingers, Indicos, &c.” Using the pirate to illuminate the necessary violence that accompanies even visions of commercial wealth, Defoe can maintain an ironic distance from the inherent evils of the trade projects he endorses. The slaving episode also proves significant because it undergirds an ideology of infinite advantage through the potential market value of slave labor. Cows, goats, and pumpkins—agricultural wealth—are not the type of trade goods that Defoe envisions when thinking of inexhaustible wealth; real value lies in the gold, ivory, and slaves captured along the coastal areas. The journey across the interior recuperates the fallen vision of Africa as a lawless wasteland not through a vision of colonial, plantation-style agriculture, but through a vision of trade.

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67 Defoe, Review, 9: 44, 89.
68 One of the few concessions the South Seas Company received from the Spanish after the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) was exclusive rights to the asiento, or the right to supply the Americas with African slaves. Marcus Rediker notes that the slave trade proved a viable alternative to privateering, because its monies “proved a more dependable way to exploit Spanish wealth.” Rediker, Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 24.
When his title character meets a mysterious white factor deep in the jungle, stark naked but wondrously civil, Defoe again reveals how survival depends upon economic exploitation. Singleton says, “We found his Behavior the most courteous and endearing I ever saw in any Man whatever” (121-122). The white factor speaks eloquently to Singleton, but the pirate captain remains most impressed by his understanding of the realities of trade. Stationed by the English Guinea Company at Sierra Leone, or “some other of their Settlements which had been taken by the French,” the white factor “had been plundered of all his own Effects, as well as of what was intrusted to him by the Company” (123). Abandoned by his comrades, the white factor decided to join with those very “separate traders” or smugglers who robbed him, and, finding himself soon out of their favor, he “traded on his own Account” (124). The white factor deliberately echoes a common phrase used to describe piracy, suggesting that the interruption of trade caused by these “separate traders” creates a condition of scarcity and therefore incivility.

Yet, in effect, the Hobbesian realities of legitimate trade have reduced the white factor to his state of abjection. His actions and what he endures illustrate the fundamental, Hobbesian nature of predatory capitalism. The breakdown of the rule of law allows others to plunder him, but lawlessness becomes business as usual on the African continent. Having twice been robbed of all he owned, the white factor is forced to “several times chang[e] his Landlords.” Singleton describes his wanderings as “sometimes … carry’d by Force, sometimes hurried by Fear, as Circumstances altered with him … till at last he had wandered beyond all Possibility of Return, and had taken up his Abode where we found him” (124). Living in a Hobbesian state of nature where his property is constantly under threat, the white factor has little sense of security, although he is not lost geographically. Singleton says, “He perfectly informed us where we were, and which was the properest Course for us to steer” to the west coast of the continent.
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(122). The certainty of geographic location then suggests that the white factor is “beyond all possibility of return” culturally. Defoe depicts the white factor’s victimization at the hands of dishonest traders as an impetus for his move beyond the reaches of civilization, where the inability to trade presents an existential threat signaled by his nakedness and refusal to return home. The white factor survives only by alternately receiving the benevolence of others and by pirating property.

The white factor, however, has not gone completely native, because he still possesses one quintessential European quality—the desire to accumulate capital. When first meeting the Europeans, he immediately converses in terms of infinite advantage, informing Singleton and his men of vast fields of gold close by. Examining just a single clod of earth, Singleton says, “I believe there was between two and three Pound Weight of Gold Dust” (127). This country of ivory and gold ultimately enables Singleton and his crew to return to Europe as extravagantly wealthy men, but only through an exploitation of slave labor. Rather than simply letting the crew gather up gold themselves, Singleton masterminds “set[ting] our Negroes all to Work for us, [to] receive equally the Fruit of their Labour” (95). Singleton again echoes Locke, reading the production of his slaves’ labor as his own property. As the crew and their slaves gather up the gold, the white factor blithely remarks, “If we stayed but one Month, we should see Thousands of Savages spread themselves over the whole Country, to wash the Gold out of the Sand, for the European Ships which would come on the Coast” (135). The crew need not use their slaves, because “thousands” of Africans are willing participants in this international trade network. The white factor stokes a vision of infinite advantage, and Singleton declares “the evident Prospect of so much Advantage, could not well be resisted” (135). Gold and the means of amassing it literally become part of the landscape, and an important aspect of English identity.
By meeting Singleton, the white factor appears to reclaim some part of his lost identity defined by the desire to accumulate wealth and a European understanding of gold’s exchange value. He also seems to display at least a renewed interest in capital investment, given that he attempts to return his share of the gold to England. When it falls prey to French pirates, however, the white factor becomes so dejected he dies of grief.

Such a prospect of advantage is confirmed by the fact that no other Europeans come foraging for gold, letting the natives gather and transport it to the coast where they then trade it for junk. Thus, Defoe judges wealth not just by the gold on the ground, but also by the ostensible efficacy of civilizing the natives to trade for it, which really means teaching them to exchange it for shells, beads, and glass. Singleton supplies a vision of plenty that cuts across both national and class boundaries—enough gold for England, Holland, Spain, and France, and enough gold for both pirates and gentlemen. The fields of gold energize an English understanding of Africa—and by extension the Americas, the Far East, and the mythical Terra Australis Incognita—as continents which hold inexhaustible supplies of wealth, if only the English commit to establishing trade networks there. In this sense, Defoe supplies his readers with a normative reading of the purposes of investment in joint-stock ventures like the Royal Africa Company and the South Seas Company—“one should not have to work to make money.”

Defoe’s description of African wealth, however, and its method of procurement do little to distance his ideology of a “polite” version of infinite advantage from the practices of the allegorical pirates on the Exchange in London, more so because of Defoe’s ambivalent portrayal of anticonquest. In Africa, Defoe implicitly suggests, infinite exploitation is the key to the accumulation of wealth.

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69 Markley, Far East, 221.
III. Litteral Pyrates

The novel’s “African” section culminates with Singleton’s return to England as a rich man, only to detail how he loses his fortune by partaking in “all Kinds of Folly and Wickedness” (138). The second, “Pacific” section begins when Singleton once again takes to the seas out of necessity, foments a mutiny, and goes on the account. While Defoe’s focus on the civilizing power of trade provides the novel’s two disparate sections a thematic coherence, the Pacific section deals more explicitly with how roving and mobile property might be reconciled to larger constructions of “Englishness.” By describing Singleton’s decision to return to sea, the Pacific section begins with the hero’s conspicuous rejection of a more traditional masculine identity based on bourgeois domesticity, or marriage and land ownership. This section thus signals Singleton’s “search for an identity,” given that, despite his accumulation of the capital necessary to sanitize his pirating past and secure a new, gentlemanly identity, he “literally misses his chance to buy into English society through marriage and property.”70 Scholars like Backscheider, Novak, and Anna Neill have all pointed to the rootless nature of Singleton and how his itinerant childhood and distance from England make him the ideal candidate to turn pirate; Singleton’s turn to literal piracy in the Pacific section articulates “a continuation of [Singleton’s] aversion to restrictive identity.” 71 The Pacific provides an apt arena for Singleton to rehearse alternative identities, where an invigoration of trade networks there enables “a fantasy of power and joyous acquisition” that overcomes the problem of the bourgeois, economic subject articulated in Robinson Crusoe. Or, the Pacific allows Singleton to circumvent the “narrative problem” of Crusoe: the ability “to achieve and enjoy freedom and power without violating the restrictions of a moral and religious ideology which defines the individual as less

70 Turley, 112-113.
71 Richetti, 88.
The novel’s Pacific section demonstrates how the unbridled autonomy of the pirate can paradoxically be reconciled to larger concerns of national identity, and how those new modes of identity might be privileged over and against more traditional conceptions of masculinity.

The visions of commercial wealth contained in the African section of the novel give way to more realistic portrayals of scarcity in the novel’s Pacific section. Defoe maintains his focus on materialist greed, but capital accumulation takes place primarily through actual piracy. The distinction between allegorical and literal pirates becomes ever more blurred after we finally meet William, the Quaker-turned-pirate who joins Singleton and the crew, and, through his shrewd trading practices, quickly rises to Singleton’s first mate. William walks the fine line between piracy and legitimate trade, acting as a front for the pirates, selling or fencing many of their stolen goods as an honest merchant. William and the pirates, for instance, discover a ship of mutinous slaves. When the crew proposes killing them outright, however, William rightfully (and opportunistically) declares that “the Negroes had really the highest Injustice done them, to be sold for Slaves without their Consent” (157). He then oversees their illegal sale, which results in Singleton’s encomium that he is “a very honest Fellow” (165). The Hobbesian element remains embedded within the character and values of even an ostensibly pacifist Quaker.

William’s black market sale of the slaves makes a large sum of money for the pirates, but also underscores the point that the slave trade, while a nasty, piratical sort of business, is necessary to imperialism and capital accumulation, as Novak succinctly points out: “While pirates could not claim to be engaged in legally sanctioned commerce, they were still trading in commodities.”

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72 Richetti, 63.
economic libertine Singleton, tacitly endorses the cynical rescue of the slaves for their resale value. More generally, Quaker William embodies, in his shifting identity between pirate and trader, the uncertain moral continuum between predatory trade and piracy. His ability to move freely between these assumed identities typifies that “trade becomes—for Defoe as it does for Singleton—the logical extension and evolutionary end of piracy.”

“Honest” William serves then to rationalize all sorts of dubious activities, although his presence also begins the gradual, if problematic, transformation of Singleton to “honest” trader.

As Singleton and William’s cruise extends further into the East Indies, their aims signal a more coherent interest in a regional economy wherein trade promises to civilize not just indigenous populations, but also the pirates themselves. Singleton explicitly states, “My long-projected design now lay open to me, which was to fall in amongst the Dutch Spice Islands, and see what mischief I could do there” (190). Such a plan in some ways reenacts the actions of privateers of the previous century, but Singleton’s decision to prey on Dutch shipping seems more an avatar of British expansionism in this trading arena than it does any sort of bloodlust. Gone are easy, fantastic visions of slaves collecting gold by the ton, and Singleton’s interest in the rich cargoes of nutmeg, mace, cloves, and pepper, coupled with his wayward fascination with the Northwest Passage, signals Defoe’s enduring interest in the region. In the Far East, no European nation maintained a hegemonic trade presence before the mid-nineteenth century, but without question the Dutch maintained the strongest one. English trade efforts had been

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severely hampered after the humiliations of Amboyna, where twelve English merchants were massacred by the Dutch East India Company in 1623. The event effectively blocked the English ventures, except for those of the privateers and pirates like Singleton. Yet when the crew meets a Dutch junk bound for Amboyna, the reminder of national humiliation hardly rattles the unflappable Singleton, who avers, “I had much ado to prevent our Men murthering all the Men, as soon as they heard them say they belonged to Amboyna, the Reason I suppose any one will guess” (191). While the crew clearly feels an especial hatred for these Dutch because of the Amboyna massacre, Singleton himself remains motivated solely by money—not revenge. The goal at hand is capital accumulation by any means necessary.

Singleton’s “mischief” may ultimately make him a rich man, but he also finds that the Pacific proves the only trade arena in which he can find William’s elusive “money without fighting.” After amassing two-hundred tons of luxury items from his various predations, Singleton declares, “I resolved now that we would leave off being Pyrates, and turn Merchants” (199). The rest of the novel details Singleton’s entry into the complex Asian intra-regional trade, and this turn to legitimate trade finally leads Singleton to admit “Now we were really very rich” (255, emphasis mine). Gold acquired through Pacific trading far outstrips gold acquired through African gathering—only one of Singleton’s “trading” voyages nets him “Fifty Thousand Ounces good Weight” (201), much more gold than he ever collected in Africa. Defoe’s portrayal of Pacific trade remains dependent, however, on a number of imaginative projections akin to infinite advantage, and Defoe juxtaposes this episode of profitable trading against the tale of the English sailors who had supposedly found the Northwest Passage. Singleton finds willing trade

University Press, 1990), 109-112. Finally, Jonathan Israel succinctly outlines Dutch military force in the region, noting that the Dutch monopoly was held with “around twenty well-garrisoned fortresses strung out from Pulicat to the Moluccas and around forty fighting ships.” Israel, Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 103.
partners in the Chinese, who desire, aside from spices, English linen and woolen manufactures. In reality, China maintained tightly controlled markets and displayed little interest in European goods other than silver bullion. Singleton’s reformation—unconvincing as it may seem—proves dependent on Defoe’s belief that the English could become direct trading partners with the Chinese and Japanese, and that the discovery of the non-existent Northwest Passage could facilitate this direct trade, circumventing the established Pacific trade routes controlled by the Spanish. Although the wealth of trade displays the power to civilize even the most hardened pirates, that “civility” must come under question as its own sort of Pacific fantasy.

Amidst this focus on the cool rationalism of trade and accumulation, Defoe does insert one episode that recalls the “civilizing” force propagated by trade in the African section of the novel. Quaker William and the pirates once again display the beneficial effects of trade when they rehabilitate a Dutchman who has gone native on the island of Ceylon, exemplifying the imperialist practice of “making” Englishmen, as Crusoe did with Friday. The Dutchman has gone native in a world that lacks trade and capitalist accumulation, and, as a result, Defoe codes him as corrupted and absolutist. William, after much convincing, persuades the Dutchman to leave the Ceylonese. In this episode, Defoe recasts the historically true story of Robert Knox, who was prisoner of the Ceylonese for twenty years and managed to escape. Rather than bowing to their customs, Knox maintained his English, Protestant identity and published the account of his captivity in 1681.\(^\text{76}\) Defoe seems particularly interested in Knox’s reading material. According to Defoe, Knox’s only “comfort” was reading Charles Bayly’s \textit{The Practice of Pietie, Directing a Christian How to Walke that He May Please God} (1620) and Richard Rogers’s \textit{Seven Treatises Leading and Guiding to True Happiness} (1603) (242). Knox later obtains a

\(^{76}\text{Robert Knox, An Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon in the East-Indies: Together with an Account of the Detaining in Captivity the Author and Divers Other Englishmen Now Living There, and of the Author’s Miraculous Escape} \text{(London: Richard Chiswell, 1681).}\)
Bible from a young boy by trading a knit cap for it. Although Knox’s connection to Defoe’s conception of civilization remains these religious texts, the equation of the Bible with knowledge of trade customs suggests that a good Christian also knows how to be a savvy trader: Knox obtains the Bible for a price far below its actual value. He literally bargains his way into maintaining his hope, faith, and English identity.

When the Dutchman asks what Singleton and the crew plan to do with him, William responds, “We would make a Man and a Christian of thee again” (229). Defoe treats the Dutchman’s rejection of a trade society not only as a betrayal of the Protestant faith, but of civilization itself. This re-conversion narrative again points to the larger transition Defoe signals towards a “polite” society, where the discursive practices of imperialism remain intertwined with a normative theory of trade that must be taught to the Dutchman once again. Rightfully so, the Dutchman is apprehensive about how a crew of English pirates will treat him, until William tells him, “I will be thy Surety Body for Body, that thou shalt be a Freeman, and go whither thou wilt, tho’ I own to thee thou dost not deserve it” (234). The legal and economic language of “surety” illustrates how William literally embodies the civilizing trade ethos, even to the point that he gracefully bestows mercy on the undeserved. As surety, William risks his own safety, but considering how far the Dutchman has fallen, or how native he has gone, William also risks his manhood and soul; if the Dutchman fails to reform, William’s reputation as a man and a Christian are also at stake.

William’s legal bond for the prisoner ostensibly illuminates the way a trade society operates by laws. But the sudden turn to legal language out of the mouths of pirates depends on the reform of Singleton himself, and the ways in which his actions embody trade’s role in an English national identity. William, in this respect, acts not only as the guarantor of the
Dutchman, but also of Singleton. When Singleton finally reforms, it is only because of William, and he can only do so with William by his side. The last trading adventure Singleton and William make is technically legitimate, but they can sell their cargo only by costuming themselves as Quakers. This trading voyage, however, reveals one of the necessities of trade that Defoe continually stresses: disguise. As a nationalist project, the realities of predatory trade must be disguised, or they threaten the virtuous vision of English national identity. Infinite exploitation has to be represented as infinite advantage, and this trading voyage accomplishes this via the literal and metaphorical conflation of trade and piracy. The “trading voyage” still involves stolen goods, and the pirates themselves must pretend to be traders.

Singleton’s spiritual reform, then, is linked to material reform because the stolen goods and money must be laundered like Singleton’s soul. Singleton’s turn to “legitimate” business is genuine but obviously troubling, mainly because he can only achieve this transformation through stealth and guile. Moreover, his “homecoming,” or his return to the stable identity land ownership and marriage provides is sketchy at best. Singleton says that upon his return to England he “should purchase something of a refuge for my self, and a kind of Centre … for really a Man that has a Subsistence and no Residence, no Place that has a Magnetick Influence upon his Affections, is in one of the most odd uneasy Conditions in the World” (276, emphasis mine). While he seems poised to buy into a life of marriage and property that he once rejected, his vision of a country seat is a vague approximation, a “kind” of home where he marries William’s sister only to expunge his former criminal acts. Stable identity, rather, is achieved through the affective bonds of commerce and male fraternity Singleton finds with William.77

77 Greene ultimately reads masculine friendship as the solution to the problem of solitude that Defoe grapples with in numerous works. For a fuller account of male fraternity and its role in the creation of a stable domestic sphere, see Stephen Gregg, “Male Friendship and Defoe’s Captain Singleton: ‘My every thing’, ” British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies 27 (2004): 203-218.
This problematic reform “refuses both facile conversions and the seamless incorporation of capital accumulated sinfully outside the nation back into it.”\(^78\) Spiritual reform is directly linked to material reform, or spiritual reform lies more in the *potential* access to morally justifiable riches through invigorating new trade networks in the Far East and circumventing the Dutch spice monopoly. If piracy and trade exist on an uncertain continuum, then it is trade that ultimately overcomes Hobbesian self-degradation by eliminating fears of scarcity and inducing Singleton finally to find a “home” with honest William. The Pacific becomes an imaginative space of abundance where an inexhaustible supply of trade goods from China, Japan, and the Spice Islands carried through Singleton’s Northwest Passage would make piracy obsolete.

Even so, William conveniently rationalizes their final voyage. When Singleton questions him about how they can expect to atone for years of thievery when they have not made remuneration for all their stolen goods, William points out that “we can never come to the Knowledge of the Owners” to return it all, and suggests instead that they “do what Right with it we are able” (266-267). The Quaker turns the exploitations of piracy into the stuff of Robin Hood legend, a rationalization that stretches long back into England’s conflicted history with privateering. By licensing William’s dubious rationale, Defoe implicitly connects the successful privateering missions of Sir Francis Drake and Thomas Cavendish and the wild profits accrued by Singleton and his crew.\(^79\) Turley, Mackie, and Aravamudan all point out that Defoe, at times, equates piracy with legal trade, but Mackie goes further, arguing that “piracy is disavowed by legitimate power only at the risk of a hypocrisy that denies the power’s indebtedness to it.”\(^80\) As far back as the 1570s, when Sir Francis Drake plagued Spanish shipping in *The Golden Hind*,

\(^78\) Ahmed, 53.
\(^79\) For a full account of the exploits of privateers such as Drake, Cavendish, and others, see Williams, *The Great South Sea*, 13-48.
\(^80\) Mackie, 131.
privateers maintained a shaky legal status because secret “letters of marque” from the crown licensed their high-seas robbery. Only this shadowy document, one that often arbitrarily was extended or revoked by the crown, differentiated privateers and pirates, and many sailors extended their raiding cruises long after their letters of authorization had expired. These sailors played a crucial role in England’s ascendance as a maritime state, underwriting the nation’s economic and imperial aspirations with profitable spoils, and contributing to English seacraft with navigational maps and charts from cruises and circumnavigations of the globe.

While Defoe portrays discourses of anticonquest as window dressing for commercial reconnaissance, he also lambasts the hypocrisy of celebrating predatory trade practices (like those rationalized by William) the greater public then forgives. Years before Singleton, Defoe’s Review points out this English tendency towards selective memory: “When [pirates] get Estates in Jamaica or Barbadoes, or any of our Colonies or Factories abroad, when they have got Estates, they seek to come home and spend them; in order to this, they soon lay off the Out side, adjourn the Thief, and putting the Badge of Gravity on, they come home for great Merchants, and live unquestion’d.” Aside from the notoriety Drake and Dampier garnered, the famous buccaneer Henry Morgan was even made lieutenant-governor of Jamaica. Singleton fits this mold, for he, too, performs scientific research (even if only the fictional “pre-covery” of Africa), in the sense that his journey takes him across parts of Africa completely unknown to Europeans. And, after acquiring great wealth through devious methods, he and William live out their days in England as “great Merchants.” Situating Singleton within these discourses of anti-conquest performed by legally sanctioned pirates and buccaneers-turned-scientists, Defoe explores the hypocritical

81 Williams notes the “dubious legal validity” of letters of marque, which he says were usually outdated, and could be purchased from just about any enterprising foreign official. Williams, The Great South Sea, 83.
82 Defoe, Review, 4: 107, 426.

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rationalizations of science and national improvement that buttress piratical commerce. The conventions of the travel narrative affords Defoe an ironic distance from his pirates, as he fashions them as cynical agents of anticonquest rather than marauding thieves.

Just as the privateer or buccaneer fashions himself as patriotic hero to downplay his rapacious actions, Singleton and William put on the badge of gravity and fashion themselves as legitimate merchants. When they arrive home, Singleton sets down these dictates: “Why first,’ says [Singleton], ‘you shall not disclose your self to any of your Relations in England, but your sister, no, not to one. Secondly, we will not shave off our Mustachios or Beards, (for we had all along worn our beards after the Grecian manner) nor leave off our long Vests, that we may pass for Grecians and Foreigners. Thirdly, That we shall never speak English in publick before any body, your sister excepted. Fourthly, That we will always live together, and pass for brothers” (277). The homosocial and homoerotic turn in the exhortation is apparent, but even more vivid is the focus on assumed identities. Singleton’s assumed identity, however, suggests that Defoe himself remained troubled by the complex relationship among infinite advantage, piracy, and national identity, since his protagonists rely on deceptive methods to be accepted as merchants and pass for brothers. Singleton and William’s return to England illustrates that the realities of scarcity and predatory commerce that accompany a Hobbesian ideology of trade are not socially accepted in English society.

Just as a pirate has to turn merchant to reintegrate himself into polite society, the ideology of infinite exploitation and its Hobbesian undertones must be coded as infinite advantage. That Defoe recognizes the hypocrisy of this transformation in no way dampens his nationalistic fervor to exploit the wealth of Africa and the Americas. He simply disproves of what he sees as the unnecessarily predatory practices employed to do so, activities like stealing from the white factor
or outright piracy, which result in an interruption of trade. More to the point, he uses the text to stoke the imagination of the English reading public and admiralty by emphasizing the Pacific as a lucrative site of future economic expansion where these problems might be circumvented. Even with the collapse of the South Seas Bubble in 1720, Defoe’s belief in the region remained unwavering, and his decision to exclude the presence of joint stock companies from both Pacific novels self-consciously erases the economic threat organizations like the South Seas Company represented. The reality of East Indian piracy fades before the potential of East Indian trade, and, for Singleton, “the mutually constitutive discourses of trade and civility [function] as a means for the hero to secure a stable, if secretive identity.” The Pacific functions as a transitional locale for Singleton, precipitating the (incomplete) move from piracy to legitimate trade unavailable to him after the conclusion of the novel’s African section. Despite the wealth of African gold, the Pacific in fact functions as the location of infinite advantage—a trade arena capable of reforming pirates through its vast wealth and supplying England with the luxury goods of the Far East through the Northwest Passage or via South America, as Defoe makes clear in New Voyage.

IV. New Inexhaustible Funds of Commerce and Wealth

*New Voyage* extends the economic potential of the Pacific that *Singleton* introduces by presenting a fully actualized picture of infinite advantage, free from the taint of piracy. Consequently, *New Voyage* strategically eliminates the need for spiritual or material “reform” that troubles the ending of *Captain Singleton*. Defoe links this elimination of spiritual and material reform to his final novel’s elimination of a homecoming. If *Singleton* asks what might constitute virtue for an individual whose identity is not tied to a narrative of future redemption

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and homecoming, then *New Voyage* supplies readers with an answer. Defoe envisions the Pacific not only as an inexhaustible source of lucrative trade goods, but also as a site where traditional ideas of masculinity can be ignored and the outlaw-mariner is free from the necessity of maintaining a normative masculine identity. *New Voyage* relies on a nameless narrator to subordinate a psychological and even religious conception of character to economic gain, coded as service to the nation. Significantly, *New Voyage*’s unnamed narrator has no family or historical origins. A new “hero” emerges who Defoe uses to celebrate the character traits downplayed by Dampier a quarter century earlier and that *Crusoe* framed as “original sin”: individual autonomy, mobile property, and non-territorialized notions of self and home.

Defoe overcomes the narrator’s conspicuous lack of psychological interiority by eliminating the sort of self-reflection or spiritual reformation that comprises a defining characteristic of many eighteenth-century novels. And unlike Crusoe and Singleton’s problematic “reform,” the narrator of *New Voyage* has no need of undergoing a change because “the integrity of the self can be secured only as a back formation, judged paradoxically from an imaginary future of individual prosperity.”  

Defoe’s New Voyager thus avoids what Richetti calls “the individualist dilemma,” wherein other Defoe protagonists are confronted with “an implicit grasp of the tangled relationships between the free self and the social and ideological realities which that self seems to require.” The absence of a religious and psychological construction of character is replaced by the ethos of commerce itself, in that a character’s identity is stabilized and justified by commercial speculation and success. The new “hero” who Defoe constructs displays an uncanny ability to subordinate his sense of character “for the betterment of

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86 Richetti, 17.
ship, investors, self, and nation,” and thus reap the Pacific’s commercial harvest. New

Voyage’s narrator enacts the fantasy that personal and national benefit seamlessly coincide, and thus this new “hero” becomes a figure who activates commercial ideologies that reframe the way mariners and merchants think about overseas trading. The stable marker of identity is itself profit.

To craft this imaginative vision as a reality, however, Defoe must rely on a number of ideological fantasies. Defoe’s New Voyager embodies conceptions of national identity predicated on an ethos of economic expansionism, but the realization of Defoe’s Pacific expectations remains contingent on the existence of the long-sought, unknown southern continent Terra Australis Incognita. Thought by enterprising projectors and cartographers to lie south-southeast of New Zealand, Terra Australis Incognita functions, for Defoe, as the linchpin of a new British global trade network. He decries the current state of English trade, wherein “our East India trade is all carry’d on … by an exportation of bullion in specie … and a return of foreign manufactures … either trifling and unnecessary … or injurious to our own manufactures” (130). In contrast, Spanish merchantmen are able to exploit a logical Pacific trade network, sailing to the New World with European manufactures, selling them for silver from the mines there, sailing west across the Pacific via the Manila galleon to purchase luxury goods, returning to New Spain in the Acapulco galleon to sell china, silk, and spices for even greater quantities of silver, and then finally returning to Europe after having reaped enormous profits. The English were effectively shut out of this trade with the Spaniards, and had little success breaking up a Dutch monopoly in the Spice Islands of the Indonesian archipelago and outlying eastern islands. There was little the English had to offer in these foreign markets aside from silver.

Markley, Far East, 228.
Defoe’s curious subtitle *By a Course Never Sailed Before* provides an imaginary solution to Defoe’s fears that China and the East Indies existed only as a silver sink. Defoe’s New Voyager rehearses a fantasy of Pacific wealth by defying established trade routes, instead sailing the wrong way around the world, a route that can only be made profitable were *Terra Australis Incognita* actually to exist. Imagining the unknown continent as densely populated, of temperate climate, and having “no manufactures,” Defoe speculates these conditions would necessitate the natives “taking off a very great quantity of English woolen-manufactures, especially when civiliz’d by our dwelling … and in return for these manufactures … we should have gold and perhaps spices, the best merchandise and return in the world” (131). Merchants could sail from England with holds full of wool and trade them for gold and spices, circumventing Spanish and Dutch monopolies altogether. *Terra Australis Incognita* creates Great Britain as a self-sufficient nation with a self-perpetuating source of wealth and luxury goods.

In imagining *Terra Australis Incognita* as the means for Britain to carry on an independent, self-sustaining trade, Defoe thus creates something new and of use for readers of voyage literature. The “use” of the new voyage is found in the imaginary trade route this imaginary continent might engender, and which would recast Great Britain as the center of a global economic system. Despite the repeated promises of a “new voyage” from numerous mariner-authors like Dampier, Woodes Rogers, and, George Shelvocke (to name a few), most of these accounts in one way or another reenact the privateering exploits of Sir Francis Drake. They remain fundamentally episodic, lacking a narrative coherence because the voyages themselves often aimed only to loot Spanish ships and towns. Defoe’s tale proves new because it details an unknown eastward circumnavigation, and because it delivers a new and elusive—yet also accessible—hero that exists only in the novel. Defoe need not recount the day-to-day
realities of seafaring, instead “harness[ing] tales of Pacific adventure to larger generic and ideological ends.” Complementary novels like Singleton and New Voyage prove an apt stage for “new” voyages, rehearsing how discoveries like the Northwest Passage and Terra Australis Incognita necessitate new trade routes, how these new routes might dramatically alter the economic power of both European and East Asian nations, and how a breed of New Voyagers can make these discoveries and their exploitation a reality.

Defoe emphasizes this aesthetic and ideological re-visioning when he justifies the New Voyager’s decisions to pursue a “course never sailed before.” He critiques previous “new” voyages, pointing out that these westward circumnavigations are mere repeats of Drake’s voyages, and that the mariners who undertakes them “think it deserves to be recorded like Sir Francis Drake’s” (29). Defoe writes that the westward circumnavigation is “now a common Road,” and that “we no more look upon it as a mighty thing, a strange and never heard of undertaking” (29)—a sentiment with which sailors like Anson and Cook would no doubt disagree! Just as Defoe promises that his narrative will contain a new sort of “use,” he downplays the achievement of those who followed in Drake’s footsteps. Defoe openly mocks Drake’s navigation of the tortuous Strait of Magellan: “Going thro’ it, gave birth to that famous old Wives Saying, viz. That Sir Francis Drake shot the Gulph; a Saying that was current in England for many Years, I believe near a Hundred after Sir Francis Drake was gone his long Journey of all; as if there had been but one Gulph in the World, and that passing it had been a Wonder next to that of Hercules cleansing the Egean Stable” (30). If “the Voyage round the World, be in it self of no Value” (30), Defoe then obviously means that a “strange and never heard of undertaking” relies directly upon a new conception of character that can break with established models of both trade and heroism. Defoe establishes the South Seas as an accessible

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88 Markley, “Southern Unknown Countries,” 199.
arena of English speculation because “shooting the gulph” and circumnavigating the world are no longer Herculean tasks, having been accomplished by “near a hundred.” Defoe grossly over-exaggerates (eleven circumnavigations had been completed by British, Dutch, and French sailors), most likely in an effort to render the circumnavigation a journey as commonplace as the annual voyages of the Manila and Acapulco galleons. If the English commit to a more robust presence in the Pacific, then they stand a much greater likelihood of wresting this wealth from Spain. But Defoe also diminishes the heroic masculinity of Drake, whose once spectacular feat he reduces to a common accomplishment, and whose Pacific route has proven unprofitable for English merchants unable to compete on well-established Spanish routes. Like Hercules’s cleansing of the stables, Defoes suggests, tale after tale of westward circumnavigations has left readers with only an epic pile of horse manure. The true hero explores the eastward circumnavigation taken by Defoe’s New Voyager.

This new heroic conception of identity, however, only works when supported by the ideology of infinite advantage. In this manner, Defoe’s Singleton and New Voyage once again function as complimentary texts. While Singleton explores the materialist origins of trade and how concepts of infinite advantage overcome fears of Hobbesian self-degradation, New Voyage rehearses a Lockean ideology of infinite resources that can be secured by exploiting nature’s bounty to invigorate trade networks. In Chile, the narrator befriends a Spaniard who tells him “there is more Gold at this Time in the Mountains of the Andes, and more easy to come at, than in all the World besides … there is more Gold every Year wash’d down out of the Andes of Chilli into the sea, and lost there, than all the riches that go from New Spain to Europe in twenty years, amount to” (173). New Voyage also builds upon a devaluation of labor. Singleton does not dismiss the need for labor, but reveals how infinite advantage also relies on an infinite supply
of labor provided by African slaves. The narrator of *New Voyage*, however, is struck by the way this wealth almost magically circumvents the problem of labor. He tells the Spaniard, “You live in a golden Country, seignior … my men are stark mad to see so much gold, and no-body to pick it up” (216). This circumvention ultimately allows the vastly profitable goals of *New Voyage* to succeed. The new heroism of the eastward circumnavigation overcomes fears of scarcity because of economic expansionism, and it reiterates the aristocratic ideology that people (or at least upper-class males) should not have to work to make money.

This Lockean ideology proves so important because it carries with it the ability to make real an imagined event. Defoe’s final novel creates a subject who desires capital accumulation above all else, but does so from a morally privileged position. The New Voyager’s discoveries make him not simply a desiring subject whose wandering and drive to accumulate must be reformed like Singleton’s, but a *deserving* subject rewarded for being able to make real what remained only a promise to so many of his voyage literature forbears. Infinite resources create the ability to predicate an identity completely on the basis of trade. This basis of identity, however, necessitates an imaginary construction of a global economy defined always in terms of *future* potential, thereby defining commercialism by future social, political, and ecological values that would make it possible. This trade-based identity means that the future conditions of trade must be always imagined lest the entire vision fall apart. And, as such, the nameless New Voyager himself becomes a cipher onto which these values can be continually written and re-written.

By recasting the new maritime “hero” as one who can subordinate domestic and national affiliation in the name of global commerce, Defoe creates a character in the mold of Diderot’s
traveler: “Those men who traverse so many countries, and who in the end belong to none.”

These men “reduce the particularities of place to homogenous commercial space,” privileging no one habitation or latitude. Yet, the New Voyager paradoxically reinscribes British identity in the Pacific via the discourses of imaginary discoveries like the Northwest Passage and *Terra Australis Incognita*. This autonomy also functions as one the “new” aspects of Defoe’s voyage, given that the New Voyager’s actions do not have to be generically sanitized or placed under state jurisdiction. Defoe again turns the generic constraint of voyage literature on its head, rendering the New Voyager’s autonomy “not … as a simple heroic assertion” that signals a dangerous, antisocial nature, but which “manages to produce a version of the world which is perfectly aligned with itself and its desires.” By recasting the sea as “home,” Defoe deftly avoids the problematic lack of a reformative homecoming present in *Crusoe* and *Singleton*. *New Voyage*’s homecoming is, in fact, a celebration that promises a return to sea. After amassing exorbitant wealth through clandestine trading with the Spaniards in the Philippines and discovering “new inexhaustible Funds of wealth and commerce” (131), the narrator returns home to find the voyage’s implausibly singular major investor—rather than a joint stock company—conveniently dead. This narrative twist allows the narrator to keep the lion’s share of his money, while also circumventing the problematic taint of scandal associated with the 1720 bursting of the South Seas Bubble, and, by extension, the predatory and cannibalistic images of the South Seas trade this economic disaster produced. This voyage is free from the ominous metaphorical presence of stock jobbers and scheming investors, endorsing the economic adventurism of the investor and new voyager; English daring and ingenuity discovers this profitable trade route before some “set of [Dutch] merchants … from the New Austrian Netherlands” beat them to the

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89 Quoted in Neill, 14.
90 Neill, 14.
91 Richetti, 23.
punch (258). Moreover, Defoe avoids the problem of “laundering” morally tainted wealth that his protagonists like Moll, Crusoe, Jack, Singleton, and Roxana face. Defoe’s Pacific thus creates the conditions under which capital can either be seamlessly integrated back into the nation, or used by the self to perpetuate a never-ending series of infinitely profitable trade ventures. Commerce becomes a fantastic intersection of personal, public, and moral interest in the economic expansion of the British empire. The good of the nation is the result of economic individualism, wherein personal gain and national interest are one. If heteronormative desire and marriage are the “predictable outcomes to a novelistic life” necessary to cleanse the “‘dirty’ mercantilist origins of capital,” *New Voyage* forgoes this conclusion, instead suggesting that a more flexible and enduring notion of identity—domestic and national—is based up the mutually reinforcing networks of masculine heroism, trade, and autonomy. A successful nation, Defoe suggests, will be the result of a new breed of successful “heroes” willing to divorce themselves from antiquated notions of identity based solely on civic life that are secured more by looking to the past rather than imagining the future.

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92 Greene, 416.
In her now seminal study of the origins of eighteenth-century English imperial identity, Kathleen Wilson calls attention to the way imperial endeavors were “conceptualized as an antidote to perceived national effeminacy and corruption … [where] an austere, forceful, disciplined and martial manliness could restore national spirit and power.”¹ If the joint projects of exploration, territorial acquisition, and economic imperialism combatted “national effeminacy,” they also, as Antoinette Burton and Tony Ballantyne have argued, “were frequently believed to throw white male bodies into crisis.”² This dialectic, where the masculine body serves as a site of both celebration and anxiety, also typifies the voyage literature genre, whose protagonists’ extreme individualism similarly manifests itself as both heroic action and a profound threat to social order. Pacific voyages, in particular, subjected sailors to overwhelming cultural disorientation and psychological and physical stress; lasting three or four years, they posed a host of dangers largely absent from comparatively short Atlantic crossings. Scurvy and its litany of physical and psychological symptoms embodied this ambivalence by exposing the physical decay and fragility of the body, calling into question the viability of a national identity based on traditional notions of masculinity. Consequently, voyage literature, mostly ghostwritten or heavily edited from sailors’ journals and ships’ logs, had to perform the cultural work of discursively reintegrating even the heroic voyager within the bounds of polite society to compensate for the

masculine crises effected by the physical and cultural stresses of Pacific travel. As Philip Edwards, Jonathan Lamb, Anna Neill, and Glyndwr Williams have illustrated, ghostwriters employed any number of narrative strategies to rewrite, at least retrospectively, the crisis of white male bodies as a form of national spirit and power, though most often by exploiting prevailing scientific and commercial discourses. In this chapter, I examine one of the most significant, but critically neglected, voyage narratives of the eighteenth century: *A Voyage Round the World, in the Years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV. By George Anson* (1748).

The official account of Anson’s circumnavigation differs from the vast majority of voyage literature because of the form that narrative compensation takes in the text. Begun by the ship’s chaplain Richard Walter and later completed by the mathematician Benjamin Robins, the *Voyage* actually emphasizes the crisis of the male, English body, lingering over the near destruction of Anson’s powerful squadron rounding Cape Horn, the ghastly outbreaks of scurvy on Anson’s flagship the *Centurion* (some of the worst ever recorded), and a series of humiliating encounters with the Hong merchants at the Chinese port city of Canton. Dispatched at the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession, the squadron was the first collection of British warships ever in the South Seas, and had unrealistic goals: seize the twin termini of Spain’s profitable Manila and Acapulco trade route, pry open China to British trade, and foment rebellion against the Spanish amongst the various Amerindian tribes, thereby enabling England to use this newly acquired territory and wealth to become the new economic power of Europe.

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3 The authorship of the *Voyage* is problematic. Walter was present only for part of the voyage, leaving the *Centurion* at Canton in 1742. Glyndwr Williams asserts that Robins, absent from the entire circumnavigation, most likely penned large sections of the narrative under the direct supervision of Anson. James Wilson, who posthumously edited some of Robins’s mathematical treatises, maintained that Walter was responsible only for gathering materials such as journal and logs, a charge which Walter’s widow vigorously disputed. Williams notes that Anson was rather dissatisfied with Walter’s work, and planned on Robins writing a revised and expanded version of the official account. For a complete account of the narrative’s authorship, see Glyndwr Williams, “The Problem of Authorship” in *A Voyage Round the World in the Years MDCCXL, I, II, III, IV. By George Anson*, ed. Glyndwr Williams (London: Oxford University Press, 1974): xxi-xxv.
The voyage, in fact, would have been a complete failure if not for the capture of the Spanish Acapulco galleon the Covadonga in 1743. This annual ship plied the Pacific, carrying Spanish silver from the New World to Manila, where it was traded for the luxury goods like tea, silk, and porcelain. Anson and his men made away with the princely sum of £490,000 in silver bullion, and the capture catapulted Anson, the son of minor gentry, to celebrity status, a peerage, and later the coveted role of First Lord of the Admiralty. Only after taking the galleon, however, did Anson write to his patron Lord Hardwicke, sheepishly explaining his past four years of silence because he was “ill satisfied” with the voyage: the lost ships, men, and limited success raiding Spanish shipping off the coast of Chile, writes Anson, “gave me an uneasiness I could not express to your Lordship.”

Why, then, would this narrative so grip the public imagination, amassing 1,800 subscribers, five new editions within its first year, and fifteen new editions less than twenty years later, even outselling the year’s most popular novels, Clarissa and Tom Jones? Scholars have largely read the Voyage through a historicist lens, reconstructing the “real” voyage against the fictional one presented by Walter and Robins, which offers a rather straightforward answer: the text functions “as an apologia for Anson’s own conduct rather than as an impartial memoir of the expedition,” rewriting Anson as a “second Drake” and giving Britain a national hero to rally behind during the otherwise grim and inconclusive War of the Austrian Succession.

This position certainly has merit, and while the action against the Covadonga unquestionably helped to compensate for the otherwise catastrophic expedition (which, incidentally, achieved none of its strategic aims), the official account pays relatively little attention to this episode (one short chapter), and the Covadonga alone cannot overshadow the

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5 Williams, Documents, vii

6 From the London Evening Post, 21-23 June, 1744, in Documents, 235.
text’s near-obsession with the abjection of the English body, nor the continued specter of Britain’s marginalization at the hands of China. I argue that the Voyage needs to be examined through a more distinctly literary lens; while undoubtedly an apologia, the text also illustrates the contested, variable conditions of nation and selfhood, exemplifying how these categories function as “distinctly literary critical problems, premised on the claim that the subjects and objects that populate English culture are literary innovations.” Rather than trying solely to reconstruct the “reality” of Anson’s circumnavigation, this chapter explores how Walter and Robins attempt to assert a stable definition of English selfhood among a confluence of pivotal, transitional discourses: a reignited Admiralty interest in the Pacific and Pacific exploration, access to the China trade (which was always the aim of Pacific missions), and the role China and chinoiserie played in English self-definition.

The “empty” Pacific had long functioned rhetorically as blank canvas on which authors might paint their own commercial speculations and imperial ideologies. By the mid-eighteenth century, this blank space on the map had become a laboratory for British identity, much like it was for earlier buccaneers, where more generalized discussions of commerce, gender, race, nation, and empire could be theorized and mediated. Before Cook’s voyages and Hawkesworth’s narratives codified Tahiti in the English imagination as a sort of male, adolescent fantasy land of free love and natural abundance, the hopes of accessing tightly-controlled Far East markets dominated the thought and intention of any European captain who sailed in the Pacific. Economic historians have debunked the myth of a monolithic eighteenth-century West at the center of a global economy, pointing instead to the dominant role China played in world markets (and where England was only a marginal player). Kenneth Pomeranz argues against the

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notion of a Eurocentric world trade, writing “only after nineteenth-century industrialization was well advanced does it make sense to see a single, hegemonic European ‘core’. “8 Andre Gunder Frank emphatically agrees: “Europe was not hegemonic structurally, nor functionally, nor in terms of economic weight, or of production, technology or productivity, nor in per capita consumption … In no way [was] eighteenth-century Britain ‘hegemonic’ in world economic terms. Nor in political ones … In all these respects, the economies of Asia were far more ‘advanced’. “9 Holden Furber simply states, “Our view of the West as ‘rich’ and ‘developed’ and most of Asia as ‘poor’ and ‘underdeveloped’ would have been incomprehensible to [an eighteenth-century English person].”10 While the East India Company maintained a rather precarious position at Canton, the British were otherwise largely excluded from the riches of the China trade, and, further afield, the Dutch-controlled spice trade in the East Indies.

An interest in Chinese markets, of course, was not simply limited to the commercially minded, because the exotic goods of the Quing dynasty comprised an integral part of English self-fashioning in the eighteenth century. Robert Markley, David Porter, Chi-ming Yang, and Eugenia Zuroski-Jenkins have all pointed to the role China and the discourses it engendered played in defining English subjectivity, which Markley summarizes as “a crucial set of challenges to Eurocentric conceptions of cultural, personal, and national identity.”11 Similarly, Zuroski-Jenkins argues that Chinese luxury goods, in fact, formed the basis of a Restoration and early eighteenth-century aristocratic identity defined more by its cosmopolitan ability to accommodate foreign cultures than by a chauvinistic rejection of them, leading her to conclude

that “cosmopolitan Englishness ultimately serves as a transitional category for literary considerations of English selfhood.”

Writing that “the dominant idiom for the ascendance of a newly powerful England on the world scene paired commercial cosmopolitanism with national identity,” Zuroski-Jenkins points to the paradox that “the most stable version of ‘Englishness’ is one founded on principles of multiplicity, change, and difference.” Essentially, the privileging of cosmopolitanism over patrilineal birthright made material an identity that was once innate; if manners, consumerism, and fashionable taste defined class status more than birth—“the relocation of Englishness from the body of the nobleman to the mind of the individual”—then traditional, embodied notions of masculinity defined by hereditary privilege and its attendant signifiers like land ownership, heterosexual desire, religion, and history are also undermined.

This shift, however, from a traditional, embodied identity to one commercially inflected encountered myriad opponents (many non-aristocratic) who decried its unsettling social change. Chi-ming Yang writes that the burgeoning merchant class was thought to erode “established ideals of aristocratic honor and civic ideals by introducing the competing bourgeois virtues of exchange and sociability.” Eastern trade goods and especially chinoiserie stoked these anxieties, posing a challenge to long-settled ideals of class and gender and their aesthetic components, culminating in what David Porter calls a “profound ambivalence” towards China and the Far East. Over the next fifty years, the “craze” for chinoiserie came to be associated “with a contagious effeminacy that threatened to eviscerate the strength and honor of the

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12 Zuroski-Jenkins, 3.
13 Zuroski-Jenkins, 17, 19.
nation.”Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace points out that specifically the female consumer and her appetite for silk, tea, and china “drew [her] into a national debate about the debilitating effects of a home economy indebted to foreign trade.” These trade goods also conferred the female consumer a sense of agency based on “the newly found freedom to create eclectic, individualized living spaces and to imagine the subjects who inhabits them as capable of a degree of self-determination.” Chinoiserie thus encourages its own “experimental self-fashioning,” signaling the creation and consolidation “of a distinctive new form of aesthetic subjectivity” associated primarily with women and the domestic sphere, and challenges the foundational myth that classical, Western civilizations—and their males—operated as “the sole original forebear of English aesthetic culture.” The uproar over chinoiserie exemplifies just how contested the question of identity remained, particularly in terms of embodiment, which brought to the fore the problem of “natural” versus “artificial” definitions of the self and the body politic.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the ambivalence that Britain experienced about its culture and the potentially effeminizing effects of luxury items were projected onto China specifically. That cosmopolitanism might function as “a culture’s canny way of laying imaginary claim to a world that it does not yet materially possess” or “the metonymic displacement of the lust for empire” itself comprises a compensatory narrative where the celebration of polite taste masks England’s commercial inadequacies. Walter and Robins tap into these discourses, ironically revealing the startling instability of English identity, and their images of English abjection only exacerbate the shocks, both literal and metaphorical, to which the seafaring body was heir.

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17 Yang, 151.
Paradoxically, Walter and Robins employ the etiology and symptoms of scurvy, which literally rots the body from the inside out, to compensate for the perceived effeminacy connected to cosmopolitanism and the affront of a home economy indebted to Chinese trade goods. On the one hand, Walter and Robins describe scurvy’s ghastly effects on the body in distinctly feminized and racialized terms, thereby bringing into focus how the cultural accommodation associated with cosmopolitanism has fundamentally weakened the British male body and made it unsuitable for imperial endeavors. On the other, distant Pacific landfalls like Juan Fernandez and Tinian quickly restore Anson and his men’s health; given that one of scurvy’s causes was thought to be homesickness, this reconstitution registers the Pacific as part of Britain’s wider global empire and a place where a true English masculinity can be rediscovered. Imagining the uncharted Pacific as part of the British Empire also allows Walter and Robins to displace anxieties about the home economy’s indebtedness to the China trade with a vision of British control over a vast ocean thought to hold access to untold riches, including the fantastical continent of *Terra Australis Incognita*.

Consequently, the “new” Anson represents a nostalgic model of Englishness divorced from aristocratic cosmopolitanism and effeminacy, which Walter and Robins then use to rewrite the tense stand-off at Canton harbor as Anson’s chauvinistic assertion of techno-military and cultural superiority over his “effeminate” Chinese and East India Company counterparts. Anson’s figurative mastery of Pacific space and its most dreaded disease renders him the model of English masculinity necessary for carrying the signifiers of country and culture across the empire, thereby allowing readers to lay psychic claim to the still uncharted Pacific while compensating for an Englishness threatened by the realities of global commerce and acculturation. Rewriting the Pacific and China as the conjoined, but contested, ground where
this negotiation of identity is carried out, Walter and Robins ironically use embodiment as a way
to “purge residual forms of aristocratic power from modern forms of English subjectivity.”22 By
dismissing the older notion that only aristocrats function as a nation’s cultural representatives,
the Voyage functions as a transitional text, illustrating one of the nascent moments in a much
later subjective turn to Orientalism, and by redefining embodied identity not as the entitlement of
a European aristocracy, but as the common birthright of the white, British, and imperial man.

I. New Wars, Same Directions

Although we now think of the military, scientific, and commercial aspects of empire as
fundamentally intertwined, Anson’s voyage represents one of the earliest examples of the state
attempting to use direct military intervention to secure commercial interests, rather than through
the intermediaries of crown monopolies or errant privateers.23 The privateer’s primary purpose
was to harass and destroy enemy merchant shipping during a time of war, although privateers
often strayed outside the letter’s legal purview into actual piracy.24 Privateering displays the
periodic nature of interest in the Pacific; voyages, for the most part, were privately sponsored,
and interest in the South Seas and the Pacific had largely ceased after the collapse of the South
Seas Bubble.25 Yet influence peddlers and financial backers of Anson’s voyage eagerly and
optimistically revived South Seas fever, even as the Admiralty conceived of the voyage as an
opening salvo against Spain during the early months of the War of the Austrian Succession.

22 Zuroki-Jenkins, 13.
23 Glyndwr Williams argues that Anson’s voyage represents “the first time British warships were to be used as
instruments of commercial imperialism.” Williams, The Great South Sea: English Voyages and Encounters 1570-
1750 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997): 220. Although the British had long been active in the Pacific,
Anson’s were the first naval vessels undertaking what had previously been limited to more shadowy state actors like
buccaneers or privateers, who operated under often falsified or expired letters of marque.
24 In chapter one, I discuss the rhetorical strategies buccaneers and privateers used to reconcile their illicit activities
and dangerous autonomy to state interests.
25 Williams, “English Projects and Ventures in the South Seas, 1670-1750,” Perspectives of Empire, ed. by John E.
Although Britain’s 1739 entry into the war ostensibly motivated Anson’s military expedition, a familiar set of Pacific goals nevertheless informed his mission. The War of the Austrian Succession might better be defined as a series of smaller, continental conflicts that embroiled the powers of Europe in shifting alliances and bloody, costly continental campaigns over the better part of a decade. M. S. Anderson points out that any examination of the War of the Austrian Succession proves inherently difficult. Its difficulty, he writes, “lies in its lack of unity of theme, in the fact that it does not centre around any one clearly defined and predominant issue.”

For the British, however, there were central points of concern. Mainly, the British and Spanish clashed over *mare clausum* and *mare liberum* policies around Latin America. This tension, Anderson argues, led the British to view war as an opportunity: “Trade between nations was [still seen] as a zero-sum game. War therefore allowed Britain to expand its commercial life and increase its commercial profits faster than it could in time of peace.”

Spanish losses were British gains; when hostilities broke out, the Admiralty intended to send two squadrons into the Pacific. One would sail around Cape Horn in hopes of seizing Valdivia, the Spanish silver mines at Lima, and eventually Acapulco, and one would sail around the Cape of Good Hope to dislodge Spain from Manila in the Philippines. Anson was meant to command the latter expedition, although a lack of ships, supplies, and enthusiasm quickly resulted in the ambitious Manila plan being scrapped.

Anson instead was given command of the Cape Horn expedition. His orders, at first glance, sound like a tired reiteration of buccaneer objectives, to the point that O. H. K. Spate describes Anson’s voyage as “the last flare of the old privateering tradition.”

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28 For a discussion of these various plans, see the “Origins” section of William’s *Documents*, 3-44.
Anson’s orders do little to dispel that notion: “You are to use your best endeavors to annoy and distress the Spaniards, either at sea or land ... by taking, sinking, burning or otherwise destroying all their ships and vessels that you shall meet with ... [and] in case you shall find it practicable to seize, surprise, or take any of the towns or places belonging to the Spaniards on the coast that you may judge worthy of making such an enterprise upon, you are to attempt it.”30 These boilerplate instructions, however, give way to a more Defoe-like view of economic potential, and stress the need to establish trading outposts and trade alliances in Latin America and the Pacific. The orders assert “there is reason to believe that the said Indians may not be adverse to join with you against the Spaniards in order to recover their freedom, [and] you are to endeavor to cultivate a good understanding with such Indians as shall be willing to join and assist you.”31 These instructions, in fact, constitute a radical departure from “the old privateering tradition,” and suggest fomenting rebellion among Spanish Creoles, establishing treaty nations, securing religious liberty (even for Catholics), and even hint at abolition for slaves in the New World. The optimistic tone continues when the orders outline how the Creoles and Spaniards themselves “have long had an inclination to revolt from their obedience to the King of Spain (on account of the great oppressions and tyrannies exercised by the Spanish Vice-Rois and Governors).”32 At the time, Williams notes, these suggestions were “incendiary” in their thinking.33 Only after scurvy and shipwrecks decimate the squadron does Anson resort to the “old privateering tradition.”

To that end, the Admiralty drew up an additional manifesto which Anson could produce if needed. The document’s guarantees of personal and religious liberty, however, operate on the

30 Instructions to Commodore Anson, 1740 (S.P. 42/88, ff. 2-10), in Documents, 35.
31 Instructions, in Documents, 35.
32 Instructions, in Documents, 36.
33 Williams, Great South Sea, 218.
dubious assumption that Indians, Creoles, and Spaniards, “having a general inclination and
desire to set up a new form of government [to] become a free and happy people, and enjoy the
same liberty and freedom as we do, under our glorious monarch,” would receive English
Protestants with open arms. Anson was to “assist and protect” the population should they choose
to “to set up a new form of government.”34 The Admiralty Lords even considered using freed
slaves as a way to overthrow Spanish rule: “In case the inhabitants should not come to our terms
a publication of freedom might be made to all mulatto and negro slaves that should come over to
us.”35 Although the Lords eventually elected to strike abolitionist statements from the final
manifesto, Anson’s orders imply that those in the circles of government were now aware that
“the most promising openings for British merchants would come if Spain’s American empire,
with or without British help, moved towards independence.”36 Viewed in this light, Anson’s
voyage represents a far cry from the buccaneers of old who aimed at annoying and distressing
Spaniards for self-enrichment. Anson’s orders represent one of the first serious attempts to
extend the British Empire into the Pacific, and signal the beginning of sustained governmental
interest in those waters. Far more ambitious than previous pamphleteers who encouraged the
settlement of Juan Fernandez, Anson’s orders envision wresting a large portion of Spain’s
empire from its grasp.

By capturing the Manila-Acapulco trade route and aiding an Amerindian overthrow of
the Spanish, Anson’s expedition would pave the way for enterprising merchants to expand
England’s commercial footprint, presumably wresting the South Seas from the Spaniards. Sir
Charles Wager, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir John Norris, Admiral of the Fleet, wrote
Anson’s orders in concert with former South Seas Company factors, Hubert Tassell and Henry

34 Heads of a Manifesto, 1740 (Add. MSS. 19,030, ff. 470-2), in Documents, 40.
36 Williams, Great South Sea, 218.
Hutchinson, and James Naish, a former East India Company supercargo with extensive experience in the seas around China and the Philippines. The correspondence and journals of these men paint an obsessive picture of trying to create a Pacific, British Empire in the mold of Spain’s. Tassell and Hutchinson sent letters to both Robert Walpole and the Duke of Newcastle arguing for a military force to seize control of strategic ports on the western coast of South America. Norris’s journal outlines his hopes of establishing a Pacific base in Manila that would be beneficial both as “a way of carrying on a trade to the South Seas that Spain could not well prevent” and as a way “to open better trade to China than we have at present, and make our commerce by degrees superior to any European nation.”

Naish’s marginalia in his copy of A Voyage Round the World reenacts the spurious latitudinal logic of Dampier, citing that “the southernmost of the Philippines will undoubtedly produce the same spices as the Dutch now supply the whole world with from the Moluccas.” In an effort to interest the Chinese in British manufactures, Naish devised a scheme to smuggle wool into the colder climates of northern China as diplomatic “gifts” during trade embassies, hoping that “by [courtiers’] approbation of our woolen manufactures the court and the army would soon be clothed with them.” By doing so, Naish writes, the British could supply “every commodity the Chinese have usually had from Europe and India, or that they may hereafter desire to have from thence … and ships and vessels may leave Manila, and stretch over to several ports and places on the coast of China, and other parts, to supply them with whatsoever they may want, or desire to supply their neighbors with.”

38 James Naish, Comments by James Naish on the Proposed South Sea Expedition of 1739 is the marginalia from his copy of Walter and Robins (British Museum, B.M. 10025, F. 8, pp. 1-13), in Documents, 31.
39 Naish’s Comments, in Documents, 31.
Planners even made room in Anson’s regular cargo for £15,000 worth of trade merchandise to be used in the Philippines.\footnote{Given the relatively limited cargo capacity of warships compared to East Indiamen, and the duration of the voyage, the decision to include trade goods over extra fresh water and provisions would have been worrisome to any able naval commander. The inclusion also signifies an arrogant assumption on the part of the English regarding foreign interest in wool, a cloth generally thought of as too heavy for the Philippines and southern China, where all the trade entrepots were located.}

Anson was suspicious of the last-minute addition, thinking that “whatever colours were given to this scheme, it was difficult to persuade the generality of mankind, that it was not principally intended for the enrichment of the Agents” (24), but Naish predicts that the Emperor’s preference for wool will free British merchants from the stringent trade restrictions imposed upon other European countries, and allow the government to establish a direct, sustainable trade at Chusan and Leampo (current-day Ningbo), rather than through the East India Company and intermediary Hong merchants at Canton. The commercial aims of the voyage effectively reenact the plan proposed by Defoe in \textit{New Voyage Round the World}: export native manufactures like wool to trade for spices and other expensive Eastern goods, including tea and porcelain, through intra-regional trade networks, and all without dispatching shiploads of bullion to pay for such goods.

Scurvy, foul weather, and shipwrecks disrupted these best laid plans, although Anson hypothesizes “had the squadron arrived in good order … we might doubtless have appeared before Baldivia in full strength, and in a condition of entering immediately on action” (255). What follows is mostly an account of the numerous Spanish towns and ports up the coast that would have been sacked. This show of force “should doubtless have awed the most distant parts of the Spanish empire,” resulting in the desired outcomes outlined in the orders and manifesto: “The Indians would have been ready to revolt, the Spaniards disposed to mutiny, and the Governors enraged with each other, and each prepared to rejoice at the disgrace of his
antagonist” (259). Anson’s hypothetical scenario culminates with his assertion that there “were
[no] circumstances which could have prevented us from giving law to all the coast of South
America” (262). The reality is quite different. The squadron had been beset by foul weather and
disease rounding Cape Horn, forcing two of the largest fighting ships, the Severn and the Pearl
to turn back. The Wager, which held all of the equipment for land operations, was wrecked on
the rocky shore of Patagonia.

Although Anson’s voyage failed in these larger strategic aims, the Commodore remained
optimistic about their viability for the rest of his life. After being promoted to Rear-Admiral and
assigned to the Admiralty Board in 1745, Anson obtained “His Majesty’s Pleasure that Two
Sloops should be forthwith fitted to be sent on discoverys in the Southern Latitudes.”

Accounts do not specify what in particular Anson hoped to find, but it could very well be that he had Terra
Australis Incognita in mind. The plan was later scrapped in the face of Spanish opposition (at
this juncture Britain actually wished to avoid war), but Anson continued to push for voyages of
exploration into the Pacific. In 1748, he proposed sending ships into the Arctic to search for the
Northwest Passage. Williams surmises that the East India Company blocked these schemes to
protect their monopolies in Far Eastern waters. Anson’s proposals rehearse many of the same
voyages, real and fictitious, of the early eighteenth century, while also laying the groundwork for
the momentous voyages of Captain Cook. Anson’s “southward” scheme parallels almost
directly the path Cook later sailed to the Society Islands, and John Byron, who was to chart the
coast of California during a 1765 voyage, deviated from his orders, caught the Pacific trade
winds, and reenacted Anson’s aborted 1745 plan by searching for the Solomon Islands and Terra

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42 Alan Frost and Glyndwr Williams, “The Beginnings of Britain’s Exploration of the Pacific Ocean in the
*Australis Incognita.* Williams suggests that Byron, who sailed in Anson’s squadron as a midshipman in 1740, received no formal reprimand for precisely this reason.

These plans complement speculations in Walter and Robins’s 1748 account, no doubt inserted at Anson’s insistence. Anson elucidates detailed plans for the settlement of the Falklands, as well as a rather self-serving section on “what might have been expected from our squadron, had it arrived in the South-Seas in good time.”

Like many who ventured into the South Seas, Anson makes the case that voyages “must ultimately redound to the emolument of Great Britain,” whether from “the more accurate delineation of the coasts, roads and ports already known, or by the discovery of new nations, or new species of commerce” (96). He recommends establishing a base at Pepys’s Island, where he boasts “a thousand sail of ships might ride at anchor in great safety” (97). First “discovered” by Dampier’s sometimes-sailing-companion William Ambrose Cowley in 1683, Pepys’s Island subsequently was never seen again. The island proved a complete fabrication. In the Anson narrative, a more realistic plan to survey the Falklands follows, which John Byron eventually performed during his 1765 circumnavigation.

Never wavering in his endorsement of the original two-pronged attack plan of 1739, Anson’s continued agitation for further Pacific voyages emphasizes his belief that an enterprising young captain might repeat his voyage to its designed end. Moreover, Anson sees his plan as a bulwark against future continental conflicts, arguing that Spain, France, and the Catholic powers of Europe can only wage war because of Spanish American silver. Wrestling control of the New World and Philippines from Spain, Walter and Robins write, “might secure to us that wealth, which formerly by the House of Austria, and lately by the House of Bourbon, has been most mischievously lavished in the pursuit of universal Monarchy” (99). With the Austrian War

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43 This optimistic account is the subject of Book II, Chapter XIV in Walter and Robins’s *Voyage*, 255-264.
clearly in mind, Anson suggests that British dominance in Latin America and the larger Pacific world would cripple Europe’s Catholic nations by eliminating their ability to wage war. By cutting off these traditional land powers from their source of wealth, the British navy would emerge as the dominant military force in the world, effectively securing British trade superiority around the globe.

II. Scurvy and the Leaky Vessel

Considering that “the health and happiness of the colonies was taken to be a barometer of the effectiveness and legitimacy of domestic political institutions,” Walter and Robins ironically uses scurvy to signify the reconstitution of the heroic male body, decayed by years of war, “effeminacy,” and unprofitable colonization, and to signify the reconstitution of a healthy body politic in the Pacific. Anson’s squadron, however, experienced an appalling mortality rate. The commodore left Spithead in 1740 commanding six ships and two supply vessels manned by 1,900 sailors. Only the flagship Centurion returned, and, of the original complement, only 145 sailors remained; four had been killed in action, but roughly 75% of the crew, or 1,400 men, had died from scurvy. Scurvy represented, as Lamb writes, “the greatest impediment to extensive sea travel, both with respect to the management of ships and the conduct of the self.” Yet Walter and Robins re-create the Pacific to reconstitute “Anson” and his men, both to give form

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45 Scholars interpret these numbers differently. Glyndwr Williams provides the generally accepted statistic: 1,900 sailors and 1,400 deaths from scurvy. Williams, The Prize of All the Oceans: The Triumph and Tragedy of George Anson’s Voyage Round the World (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1999): xvii. Eleanor Gordon speculates the numbers were 1,955 men and 1,300 death from scurvy. Gordon, “Scurvy and Anson’s Voyage,” American Neptune 44.3 (1984): 155-166. O. H. K. Spate puts the number at 1,410 deaths with 997 from scurvy, noting that of the original complement, scurvy accounted for 73% of all deaths. Spate, Paradise Found and Lost (Canberra: Australia National University Press, 1988): 191. Scurvy has a peculiar etiology (as will be discussed below); calenture fever also afflicted Anson’s crew, so these discrepancies most likely arise from differing interpretations of what constituted “scurvy” as opposed to “tropical fever.” Scurvy would have, however, made sailors more susceptible to all kinds of maladies.
to the impregnable masculinity of the British explorer and to portray Pacific landfalls as sites that restore rather than erode British identity.

Walter and Robins’s representation of scurvy constituted the first thorough account of the disease popular with the reading public, and later served as James Lind’s inspiration while he investigated the disease and published his findings in *A Treatise on the Scurvy* (1757), which he dedicated to Anson. Lind proved the disease to be primarily dietary, but even then the preventative lemon juice was not standard issue onboard ships until the end of the eighteenth century. Lamb considers scurvy as a material example of the degeneration of the self at sea, arguing that public fascination arose from scurvy’s “dramatic symptoms of physical corruption … its puzzling etiology … [and] its effect on the mind.” Walter and Robins address all three of these characteristics in detail, although they also include descriptions of recovery on the islands of Juan Fernandez and Tinian that verge on the wondrous.

Particularly on longer Pacific voyages, where landfalls were uncertain and far between, the lack of fresh food and reliance on salted beef rations created the severe vitamin deficiencies, particularly vitamin C, that caused the disease. Although regulations dictated that sailors ate relatively well (approximately 4,500 calories per day, better than the average British laborer), the diet was poor in green stuffs (usually only dried peas). Spoilage cut into daily rations, and naval pursers, who often pocketed requisition funds, were notoriously cheap. Cramped living spaces, the physical and emotional stress of Pacific voyages, and hard labor also exacerbated ascorbic acid deficiencies that effectively caused the body to rot. The text, for instance, describes sailors

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suffering from “large discoloured spots dispersed over the whole surface of the body, swelled legs, putrid gums, and above all, an extraordinary lassitude of the whole body” (104).

In addition to these symptoms, the authors note that “the scars of wounds which had been for many years healed, were forced open again by this virulent distemper” (106). They mention specifically a veteran of the 1690 Battle of the Boyne, whose broken limbs have fractured once again. Walter and Robins rarely assign a specific identity to the victims of scurvy, but this case marks a subtle connection between dissolution, reconstitution, and national identity. At the Boyne, William III led the forces which repelled James II’s abortive, French-supported invasion force in Ireland, ending the Stuart threat to retake the crown. The authors’ decision to emphasize the Boyne draws a connection between Anson and the monarch who ushered in (even if unwittingly) an era of parliamentary monarchy and the creation of a national bank, and those patriots who repelled the forces of absolutism and suffered for it at the Boyne. More surprising is the presence of a veteran from a battle over fifty years ago, who would obviously be too old to go to sea. But Anson’s marines were raw recruits who had never even shot a rifle and a group of Chelsea hospital pensioners (as was this man), most of whom could not even walk.

In a rare moment of honesty, Walter and Robins admit “All those [pensioners] who had limbs and strength to walk out of Portsmouth deserted, leaving behind them only such as were literally invalids, most of them being sixty years of age, and some of them upwards of seventy” (23). Not one of these conscripts would survive the voyage, prompting this grimly ironic Horace Walpole sneer: “[Anson] sets out with telling you that he had no soldiers sent with him but old invalids without legs or arms; and then in the middle of the book there is a whole chapter to tell you, what they would have done if they had set out two months sooner; and that was no less than
conquering Peru and Mexico with this disabled army.\textsuperscript{48} That grim reality, however, foreshadows the experience the rest of the crew must soon undergo, and the dramatization of political fracture vis-a-vis the veteran’s literal fracture suggests that masculine, national identity is revealed \textit{in extremis}. The veteran’s fractured bones figuratively embody his loyalty and martial virtue, and this embodiment also situates the Pacific as a sort of imperial proving ground, where the martial masculinity embodied by a past generation is once again revealed. The ghastly circumstances of this revelation equate Anson’s sailors with the soldiers who repelled the forces of Catholicism and absolutism at the Boyne, even as it calls into question the ability to display this masculinity at home. In the vein of the Wilson quote which opens this essay, why is this martial manliness rediscovered only on the far side of the world, and not in the pubs and parlors of England like it was a generation ago?

At the time, however, the etiology of scurvy was uncertain, and preventing the disease while at sea was not often connected to the provision of fresh food. Many physicians linked the malady to non-physiological factors such as mood, and especially homesickness.\textsuperscript{49} Scurvy, for instance, caused “a strange dejection of the spirits … and a disposition to be seized with the most dreadful terrors” (105-106). These symptoms eventually came to be known as “scorbutic nostalgia,” and manifested themselves (to varying degrees) as homesickness, longing for land, and heightened sensory perceptions that found strange pleasure in varying textures, shapes, and colors.\textsuperscript{50} In his journal, the \textit{Centurion’s} purser Lawrence Millechamp describes the weather’s tendency “to alter the appearances of the land and ships in an odd manner, and so as to have a pleasing dreadful effect. The land sometimes would appear of a prodigious height with huge

\textsuperscript{49} Lamb, 120.
\textsuperscript{50} Lamb, 123.
broken mountains … The ships underwent the same transformation, sometime appearing like huge ruinous castles … We really seemed to be in the midst of enchantments.”

These sublime feelings of wonder and dread, we now know, were the psychological symptoms of scurvy. Lamb theorizes that this amalgam of symptoms created the utopian visions of deserted islands: “The reason that the terra incognita was so often represented as a utopia or a paradise owed less to the long literary tradition that had located immortal commonwealths in the New World and the South Seas … than to this pathological state of the nerves, keyed up to overreact to any stimulus after long voyages. Any land was paradise; all earth showed fair.”

Approaching Juan Fernandez, Walter and Robins write, “it is scarcely credible with what eagerness and transport we viewed the shore” (112). Although even healthy people cooped up for months on a fetid ship might view any island with “eagerness and transport,” the disease, in this regard, had a profound effect on the way the ocean and its distant islands were textually represented to a reading public, because scurvy fundamentally altered perceptions of land and self.

Many of scurvy’s symptoms are reconfigured by Walter and Robins as a gendered and racialized threat to the coherence of the masculine, English body. Described as “Inconstant and innumerable, and its progress and effects extremely irregular,” scurvy’s symptoms manifested themselves in a “proneness to swoon” (105). This characterization of the disease echoes the misogynistic trope of female inconstancy employed by many eighteenth-century authors, while fainting spells suggest an effeminate susceptibility to emotional or physical shocks. The effusion of bodily fluid—blood, pus, and urine—caused by scurvy functions as the material expression of this effeminizing weakness, and aligns sailors with another misogynistic trope—the “leaky vessel.” Before Anson, the ocean itself was represented as both vector and victim of the sailor’s

51 Lawrence Millechamp, Journal of Lawrence Millechamp (N.M.M. 9354/JOD 36), in Documents, 74.
52 Lamb, 125.
contagion, and the oozing, pus-filled sores of advanced scurvy were read analogically as the condition of the ship and sea. Richard Hawkins describes being becalmed at the Azores for six months, during which time “all the Sea became so replenished with several sorts of gellys, and forms of Serpents, Adders, and Snakes, as seemed wonderful: some greene, some blacke, some yellow, some white, some of divers colours, and many of them had life.”53 The Pacific fouls the management of ships by inducing scurvy in crews, but the sea itself carried various species of sea worms that could quickly eat through the bottom of a ship’s hull. Anson himself writes to James Naish that scurvy has severely hampered shipboard labor: “We have been hard put to it to keep a leaky ship above water.”54 Lamb analyzes the 17th century account of Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, who writes, “The ship was so open in the dead wood that the water ran in and out … when we sailed on a bowline.”55 Voyage literature authors draw analogies between the metaphorical “leaky vessel” of the body and the actual “leaky vessel” in Pacific transit. Just as a ship must be in good condition to complete its voyage, the sailor’s body is of no use if it falls prey to a disease that enervates and feminizes it, meaning that scurvy represents a threat to the entire imperial enterprise.

The Centurion’s mathematician Pascoe Thomas adds another level of abjection to the disease by racializing scurvy. He describes spots spreading over his entire body, “till almost my legs and thighs were as black as a Negro” (142), and Williams describes how the Centurion’s surgeon Henry Ettick found the bones of scurvy victims to be black.56 The racialized threat to white, British masculinity carries a host of associations. Turning “black as a negro” aligns

54 “Anson to James Naish, Canton, December 1742” (private possession of C. G. Pitcairn Jones, Commander Royal Navy, Retired), in Documents, 152.
55 From The Voyages of Pedro Fernandez de Quiros. Qtd. in Lamb, 118.
56 Williams, Prize, 60.
Thomas with many of the native populations the British sought to exploit, and even challenges hierarchies of rank aboard ship. With only 145 original sailors surviving Anson’s voyage, the undermanned *Centurion* had to be crewed by any variety of racial “others” of Asian, African, and Indian descent, picked up in the major port of Canton. The ostensibly good health of these racialized others suggests an inherent immunity to the effeminizing symptoms that afflicted English jack tars, thereby upending taxonomic hierarchies of racial superiority. Furthermore, when Thomas turns “black as a negro,” he reveals his own insecurity that an innate “whiteness” does not exist. The disease proves most fearful when it reveals the fiction of racial and gendered difference, because it represents a form of disembodied identity, similar to cosmopolitanism. Scurvy’s realignment of shipboard management suggests identity can simply be performed, and forces men like Thomas to interact with, acclimate to, and reveal themselves to be carriers of cultures and races other than their own. Moreover, scurvy undercuts the ability to assert a martial masculinity at the very moment it is most needed, an anxiety that Thomas can only articulate by displacing his shame onto any number of racial others.

The lack of healthy seamen meant that Anson and his officers often had to perform the menial tasks and hard labor of the rawest recruit pressed into service, further endangering hierarchies of rank. Walter and Robbins describe the disease as “havoc” (266), calling attention to its indiscriminate nature. With “no day passing in which we did not bury eight or ten, and sometimes twelve of our men” (273), Anson himself was forced to operate the ship’s pump “for want of hands to work her” (275). The Commodore also worked at other tasks, “pulling or hauling rope” (387). After arriving at Tinian, almost 400 miles north of their planned destination, Anson ordered all but a skeleton crew ashore for recovery, during which time the *Centurion* was disastrously blown all the way to Guam by a storm. The small crew needed three

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57 Williams includes this detail in his explanatory notes for Walter and Robins.
weeks to wrestle the ship back to harbor. Fearing the worst, Anson organized a work party to lengthen their small cutter and attempt to make it sea-worthy. He announced he “would share the fatigue and labour with them” (291), and “cutting down trees, and sawing them into planks … being the most laborious task, the Commodore wrought at it himself for the encouragement of his people” (294). Throughout the ordeal Walter and Robins describe the men as “cool and orderly” (294), although Pascoe Thomas’s account says that “most of the common People had resolved to desert us in four or five Days more if the Ship had not appear’d in that Time, and to have built themselves Huts in the Woods, and run the Risk of staying on the Island, rather than venture themselves to China in that bark” (159).

Neither account, however, disputes the hard labor of Anson himself.

The commodore’s labors illustrate how hierarchies of command are linked to male embodiment. Scurvy constituted a threat to the management of ship and self while at sea, but the disease also revealed “a preoccupation with the relationship between social, moral, and physical order and well-being.” N. A. M. Rodger’s revisionist history of the Georgian navy suggests that sailors and officers saw themselves as “far more bound by mutual ties of dependence and obligation than separated by divisions of class” represented by rank. Shipboard management in the Georgian navy then was linked to the “most valued modalities” of eighteenth-century society on land—“patronage, paternalism, and reciprocal obligation.” Captain Cook, who would eventually be credited with “disciplining” scurvy, employed a model known as the Cook Method, which the Admiralty was ultimately forced to reject on the grounds that it was too

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58 Williams quotes the same passage in the explanatory notes for Walter and Robins, 388.
61 Lawrence, 82.
paternalistic to be replicated in larger merchantmen and warships.\textsuperscript{62} In the case of the \textit{Centurion}, scurvy disrupts command hierarchies by forcing officers to work as common crew, but its disruption of shipboard life also challenges the efficacy of these land-based virtues. By revealing the inherent tensions of shipboard life, scurvy poses an existential threat to the fundamental conceptions of command drawn from civil society, disrupting the reciprocal networks of trust that officers and crew used to manage ships.

Take, for instance, the experience of the \textit{Wager}, one of Anson’s storeships which wrecked off the southern coast of Chile, and her commander, Captain Cheap, who functions as the anti-strophe to the \textit{Voyage’s} Anson. Anarchy ensued almost immediately after the shipwreck, throwing into disarray the naval discipline that Anson had so scrupulously preserved: “Being drunk and mad with Liquor, [the sailors] plunder’d Chests and Cabbins for Money and other Things of Value, cloathed themselves in the richest Apparel they could find, and imagined themselves Lord Paramount.”\textsuperscript{63} Anarchy was precipitated by a complete inversion of the ideology of class, wherein common sailors parodied their social betters. Tensions came to a head when Cheap shot the unarmed midshipman Henry Cozens at point-blank range for insubordination, and then refused him medical treatment as he slowly died over the next two weeks. The murder, in Walter and Robins’s estimation, “did yet, for a considerable time, awe [the sailors] to their duty, and rendered them submissive to the Captain’s authority” (144). Yet this defense of Cheap sounds half-hearted. In contrast to Anson, who derives his authority from natural affection and personal leadership, Cheap can only, like an unfeeling deity, restore order by “aweing” his men with unconscionable violence. Cheap’s actions suggest ideologies of rank

\textsuperscript{62} For the analysis pertaining to Cook, see Lawrence, 86-93.
\textsuperscript{63} John Bulkeley and John Cummins, \textit{A Voyage to the South Seas, In the Years 1740-1. Containing, A Faithful Narrative of the Loss of His Majesty’s Ship the Wager} (London, 1743): 19.
and class are arbitrary and secured only by force, thereby exploding the commonly practiced paternalistic model of shipboard management.

After Cozens’s murder, Gunner John Bulkeley and ship’s carpenter John Cummins led a party southward, which eventually reached home in 1743 after a harrowing journey back around Cape Horn in an open boat. Upon their return to England, Bulkeley and Cummins published an account of their journey in the earlier vein of the voyage-literature tradition: a “justification and vindication” in defending themselves against the charges of mutiny by the murderous Cheap.64 Cheap experienced his own abjection in Patagonia, however, as recorded by then midshipman (and grandfather to the poet George) John Byron in The Narrative of the Honourable John Byron (1768). One of Cheap’s few loyal officers, Byron and the captain were imprisoned by Spaniards and repeatedly sold as slaves. Byron describes how the ordeal left Cheap physically and mentally shattered:

I could compare his body to nothing but an ant-hill, with thousands of those insects crawling over it; for he was now past attempting to rid himself in the least from this torment, as he had quite lost himself, not recollecting our names that were about him, or even his own. His beard was as long as a hermit’s; that and his face being covered with train-oil and dirt, from having long accustomed himself to sleep upon a bag, by the way of pillow, in which he kept the pieces of stinking seal … His legs were as big as mill-posts, though his body appeared to be nothing but skin and bone.65

64 Philip Edwards, The Story of the Voyage: Sea-Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 63. Bulkeley and Cummins were acquitted of mutiny, although on a technicality. Because the pay of sailors ended when a shipwreck occurred, they argued they were no longer under Cheap’s command. The Admiralty begrudgingly agreed, although it did amend its code to extend pay and thus naval obligations to shipwrecked mariners.

Cheap’s ghoulish figure rehearses the nightmare scenario of self-degradation linked to Pacific exploration, but Edwards also notes that Byron’s account is meant more to castigate the “enfeebled Cheap” for “complacently accepting the Indians’ acknowledgment of his superiority, allying himself with the new power-structure and assenting to the maltreatment of his own officers.”66 This abject figure still plays an important ideological role, both as a representative of the dehumanizing effects caused by cultural accommodation (in Cheap’s case), and as the exemplum of rejecting this accommodation. As Hulme argues, Patagonia and by extension the Pacific function “as land[s] of mythic experience where ordinary mortals might well undergo abjection … only for the young men to rise again and show their ability both to regain their status and to help place the Patagonians where they properly belong in the newly emerging hierarchies of racial taxonomy—right at the bottom.”67 The mental and physical breakdown of Cheap highlights, by contrast, the ability of an officer like Anson to maintain a stable racial and gendered identity in the face of hardship. Cheap’s deterioration offers a realistic portrait of shipwrecked mariners, but must be written out of Anson’s narrative.

For readers in England, the instability of male embodiment precipitated by scurvy could be read analogically; if masculinity and shipboard management can be revealed as fundamentally unstable, then the signifiers of masculinity and social order at home might just as easily become unraveled. Part of the reason Walter and Robins ascribe such devastating power to scurvy, therefore, is to illustrate the durability and triumph Anson’s command. Although reality suggests otherwise, Anson’s ability to overcome scurvy situates him as the model of masculinity necessary for the expansion and maintenance of empires. Similarly, if scurvy represents a threat to British national interests, then Pacific islands are rewritten by Walter and Robins to reaffirm

66 Edwards, 75.
embodiment—and thus a stable British identity—rather than undermine it. Lieutenant Piercy Brett made a number of sketches during the voyage, and the illustration of Anson’s tent on Juan Fernandez displays the aesthetic qualities of an English estate. The official account “despair[s] of conveying an adequate idea of its beauty,” although Brett’s draft depicts a symmetrical, open space of the kind popularized by the landscape gardens of Capability Brown. On Juan Fernandez, the fecund soil gives forth abundant vegetative growth, and Anson, “for the better accommodation of his countrymen who should hereafter touch here, sowed both lettuces, carrots, and other garden plants, and sett in the woods a great variety of plumb, apricock, and peach stones: And these last he has been informed have since thriven to a very remarkable degree” (118). Anson’s Juan Fernandez plantation has gardens and orchards, and even game and livestock: goats are “venison,” seals are “lamb,” sea-lions “beef.” What we recognize as the resources that will alleviate the symptoms of scurvy, Walter and Robins envision as its ultimate antidote: a slice of home.

The authors’ description of Tinian is even more romantic: “The prospect of the country did by no means resemble that of an uninhabited and uncultivated place, but had much more the air of a magnificent planation, where large lawns and stately woods had been laid out together with great skill, and where the whole had been so artfully combined, and so judiciously adapted to the slopes of the hills, and the inequalities of the ground, as to produce a most striking effect, and to do honour to the invention of the contriver” (277). This glowing picture is complemented by descriptions of “large lawns, which are covered with a very fine trefoil … and are skirted by woods,” while “the turf of the lawns is quite clean and even … and the woods themselves usually

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68 Incidentally, the Arbor Day Foundation credits Anson with introducing the Moor Park apricot to England from China—in 1688. Despite the chronological error, this variety of apricot is thought to be named for the Anson estate Moor Park in Hertfordshire. The virtues of the Moor Park apricot provide the subject of one of the more oblique discussions of estate management and empire in Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*.
terminate on the lawns with a regular outline … as if laid out by art” (280). Even the ancient temples become the picturesque ruins that complete the prospect of an English gentleman’s country home. By comparing the natural landscape of the island to the artifice of English country estates, Walter and Robins re-create the island in the very image of British wealth and power. Following Lamb’s logic, it is reasonable to assume that Tinian appeared as it did because of scorbutic symptoms, but this utopian island is also self-consciously stylized as Great Britain.

Anson and his men so quickly felt “the salutary influence of the land” because they were no longer homesick (279); they were “home.” Anson’s proper management of his “estates,” at least as represented by Walter and Robins, reinscribes the Commodore within eighteenth-century networks of paternalism and obligation that comprised the bedrock of civil society, and signify that scurvy, finally, can be held at bay by Englishness. In this regard, Anson’s leadership capabilities, his ability to nurse his men back to health, and his proper land management ape the signifiers of embodiment traditionally associated with his social betters—obligation, paternalism, and landed property—and shun newfangled, “artificial” methods of self-definition.

The aim of reconstituting a masculine, national identity—plugging a “leaky vessel”—is to make the male body a reliable imperial actor. Lamb points out that “with scurvy rampant, discipline, cartography, measurement—and the dreams of commercial and scientific progress depending on them—all suffer because the eye, and the ‘I,’ can no longer be trusted.” Such a rendering of male embodiment functions reciprocally; the health of the male body is directly linked to its ability to perform effectively its scientific, commercial, naval, and, ultimately, imperial duties. Overcoming scurvy and maintaining the shipboard management it literally threatened maximized profits and opportunities for discovery, commercial or otherwise. But the *Voyage* also signals a sea-change in the voyage literature genre, where mariners like Anson carry

69 Lamb, 128.
their culture with them, imposing it on others, rather than being imposed upon and in need of social reintegration. Defeating this metaphorical threat that scurvy posed to a coherent English masculinity lays the ideological foundation, I argue, for all imperial activity to follow, because Walter and Robins rewrite the Pacific not as a location that throws white male bodies into crisis, but one that ultimately safeguards Englishness. By returning national identity to a discourse of embodiment, Walter and Robins reassert the essentialism of white, male, English bodies and their role as the only vessels suited to carry their culture and expand their empire across the globe.

III. Confrontation at Canton

The rewriting of Anson’s cultural crisis is nowhere more apparent than in his two visits to Canton harbor. Although the outbreaks of scurvy and the visits to Canton comprise the Voyage’s most compelling and widely studied narratives, scholars have examined them in relative isolation to one another. I argue, however, that these narratives should be read as fundamentally linked. The re-embodied masculine form of Anson and his men reinscribes English identity in the Pacific, whereby the duly reconstituted Anson displaces fears of cosmopolitanism and effeminacy by a chauvinistic, nationalist display in the bustling, transcultural port city. After leaving Tinian, Anson made for Macao and then Canton, and landed in 1742 in need of stores and refitting. He returned in 1743 after the capture of the Acapulco galleon for the same reason, and to offload prisoners and dispose of the galleon itself. Both encounters created tense standoffs between Anson, the East India Company officers, and the Chinese Hong merchants

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(who were the only Chinese legally allowed to trade with foreigners). The popularity of the *Voyage* and the virulence of its anti-Chinese rhetoric contributed to an alteration of British perceptions regarding the Qing dynasty, which “culminated in the widespread denigration of China and all things Chinese by the early nineteenth century.” But as recent scholarship by Markley and Williams has shown, rival accounts of the encounter, like the unpublished manuscript of an East India Company supercargo named Edward Page and the Chinese perspective offered by poet Yuan Mei, challenge the official narrative. Both of these accounts portray Anson as a chauvinistic boor who misunderstood the complex negotiations of economic and national identity in the cosmopolitan port city. Setting the official account in relief against these texts sheds light on the ideological work the *Voyage* performs.

The great irony is that Walter and Robins link embodiment and nationalism in ways directly indebted to a hagiographical tradition of English authors who cast China as the ur-model of all civilization. The earliest Jesuit missionaries to China recognized there “an idealized embodiment of the principles of historical continuity and patriarchal lineage that underwrote most justifications of the socioeconomic, moral, and political systems of Western Europe.” The “patriarchal lineage” speaks directly to issues of embodied identity; Walter and Robins’s rejection of cultural accommodation and cosmopolitanism springs from the fear that the innate nobility associated with hereditary privilege was being undermined by Chinese trade goods. Porter similarly argues that China occupied a unique hybrid role, given that the country “both delimits and guarantees the privileged space of European modernity,” and because “rapidly changing economic conditions had permitted luxurious novelty to displace hallowed antiquity as

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72 Markley, “Anson” 218.
the pre- eminent marker of social status.” The hybrid identity of “ancient and modern” uniquely expressed by China complicates the way Walter and Robins envision English identity, because they must balance a critique of the “effeminate,” modern Chinese against an entrenched understanding of China characterized by “the transformative awareness that there existed, on the far end of the globe, a highly advanced civilization with a rich and unbroken cultural heritage of over four thousand years.” Chinese trade goods paradoxically undermine a notion of embodied, aristocratic identity based, in part, upon English perceptions of the Chinese civilization stretching back thousands of years.

Walter and Robins seek to return England to an idealized vision of national identity secured, however, not by the symbolic body of the aristocratic male, but the physical and cultural integrity of the masculine, imperial actor. Zuroski-Jenkins’s reading of John Webb’s An Historical Essay Endeavoring a Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language (1669) exemplifies how the qualities most often used to define China are deliberately projected onto the new Anson. In Webb’s essay, Chinese national identity is represented by its language, “a pure, authentic, autochthonous language and culture given to man by God and unaltered by history,” which might serve as a model for recovering a lost English past corrupted by the cosmopolitan gentleman and his “Latinizing, Italianizing, Frenchizing … Refinizing [and] Non-sensizing” of the English tongue. From purity of language and custom, Webb extrapolates a model of national purity reflected in an unadulterated citizenry. While Webb is suspicious of the role commerce plays in “non-sensizing” English history and the

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73 Porter, Chinese Taste, 22.
74 Porter, Chinese Taste, 21.
75 Zuroski-Jenkins, 38.
76 Webb, qtd. in Zuroski-Jenkins, 38.
language, China serves as a model civilization whereby outside cultural influences are safely subsumed.

Thus, China’s great national quality, like the new Anson, is its “ability to assimilate foreigners and eliminate all forms of difference within national borders.” By appropriating this Chinese nationalist discourse, Walter and Robins license an Orientalist turn of mind, not just in their sinophobic tenor, but also in the way that their text enacts a figurative assimilation of Chinese culture. In other words, Walter and Robins’s construction of Anson as a figure impregnable to the physical and cultural threats of Pacific travel assimilates and re-appropriates these Chinese discourses to British imperial ends. Effecting a radical revisioning of Chinese nationalism, Walter and Robins use their “Anson” to appropriate the embodied discourses of Chinese national identity as the proprietary marks of Englishness, which in turn form the basis of an aggressive, expansionist imperial policy.

The nature of the confrontation at Canton primarily stems from the reality of Chinese customs in the port versus Anson’s need to assert his own cultural authority and sovereignty as a representative of the British Crown. In contrast, the East India Company officer Edward Page’s primary concern was the facilitation of trade and securing returns for investors at home, rather than any symbolic performance of British superiority. At Canton, performing this task satisfactorily meant accommodating himself to Chinese trade customs, which included an elaborate ship measuring ceremony, where duties were levied according to how much cargo a ship could carry (Europeans typically taxed the goods themselves), and elaborate gift rituals. Europeans participated in these gift rituals, but frequently misunderstood them, cynically presupposing that they created an obligation for the Chinese to reciprocate with trading

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77 Zuroski-Jenkins, 40.
privileges and, more importantly, stimulated the desire for European goods.\textsuperscript{78} In actuality, the Chinese read these rituals as a form of tribute from lesser nations, in exchange for which the emperor allowed some foreign trade, although it was tightly controlled and limited to Canton.

Anson’s misunderstanding of both events—Markley suggests “willful misinterpretation”—caused the problem, because the Commodore adamantly insisted no British warship would undergo either ritual: “The Commodore thought it would be derogatory to the honour of his country, to submit to this duty in China” (318). Walter and Robins emphatically repeat this point, pointing out customs duties “were doubtless calculated for trading vessels only, adding, that no duties were ever demanded of men of war, by nations accustomed to their reception” (350). The British interpret the levies as a grievous affront: “The Commodore, who was resolved never to establish so dishonourable a precedent, took all possible precaution to prevent the Chinese from facilitating the success of their unreasonable pretensions” (357). A compromise was eventually reached where Spanish prisoners from the Covadonga were handed over to the Chinese as a form of payment. The Chinese took the prisoner exchange as a sign of tribute, while Anson was then able to procure his supplies without paying measuring fees. The authors thus conclude the matter of ship fees with the celebratory exclamation that Anson set “the authentic precedent established on this occasion, by which his Majesty’s ships of war are for the future exempted from all demands of duty in any of the ports of China” (365). This “authentic precedent” proves a one-time exception just to remove Anson from the harbor, because the next British warship to sail into Canton, the Argo in 1764, performed the ceremonies and paid the fees with no fuss.

While East India Company officers understood these rituals simply to be the nature of doing business in China, Anson felt his position entitled him to “a deferential respect from the Chinese that [would] overcome their self-interest and mercantile calculation.” To complicate matters, Anson threatened to blockade the port if his demands for sovereignty and supplies were not met, a plan the *Voyage* gleefully endorses, citing that Anson might move freely in and out of Canton even “if the whole power of the Chinese Empire had been brought together to oppose him” (317). The Chinese poet Yuan Mei, however, presents a different version of events. According to his account, the mandarins discuss whether they should simply ignore the British or “annihilate them,” carefully weighing “which course would best further our national interests.”

Yuan Mei also upends Walter’s picture of Anson’s unassailable masculinity, portraying the commodore himself as a “leaky vessel,” openly weeping when his stores are depleted, his ship near sinking, and the mandarins still immune to his pleadings. What the anecdote does emphasize, however, is the way China viewed Britain as a tributary state and Anson as a vassal refusing to pay proper deference to his mandarin lords.

Page, of course, views Anson’s blithe arrogance as likely to wreck the trade the East India Company maintained, which Williams describes as “a delicate enough plant to be uprooted by any display of force.” Anson was well aware that his actions impeded the departure of three East India Company ships, which Page speculates would have “brought the king two hundred thousand pounds” from excise taxes levied by England’s own custom houses. Returning the harbor to business-as-usual becomes Page’s top priority, even if it means indulging the petulant

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81 Arthur Waley, Yuan Mei’s translator, notes that the poet’s account “is of course not to be taken as sober history,” but instead as a tale with strong resemblances to the generic conventions of Chinese drama.
82 Williams, *Great South Sea*, 240.
83 Edward Page, *A Little Secret History of Affairs at Canton in the Year 1743 When the Centurion, Commodore Anson was Lying in the River*, November 18, 1765 (MS 2894 Oregon Historical Society, Portland, OR): 13.
Anson. Otherwise, he writes, Anson’s continued agitation might lead to “the ruin of our private fortunes, the loss to the nation of our trade, and the insults and calamitys that might fall upon the English in general, of which [Anson] himself might possibly have had a share if he had executed his menaces against the port.”

Page’s manuscript relates that the Chinese merchant Seuqua saw Anson as a nuisance, a “little man” whose presence forced the merchants to deal with “a foolish business” and to “neglect[] their real business.” According to Page, Seuqua sees through the performative nature of Anson’s protests, taking to task his hollow performances of British sovereignty: “To you it is all one as to see a play, but to others it gives much trouble and vexation.”

Page also complains that Anson’s capture of the treasure galleon deprived Canton of its primary source of bullion for the year and severely skewed one of the world’s primary trade routes. He exaggerates to some extent, given that the Acapulco bullion would disperse from Manila into several intra-regional trade networks, but imagine the Chinese merchants’ reaction when they saw Anson hauling the Covadonga into port with their silver, “the Spanish silver … which would else have been brought to Canton to purchase their manufactures.”

While Anson may have seen the seizure of the Acapulco ship as a way of redirecting circulation from Spanish to British coffers, his actions severely disrupted Chinese trade practices and threatened the fortunes of the Hong merchants depending on the bullion.

Before the capture of the Covadonga, Anson senses his unwelcome presence with a healthy, if well-founded, paranoia: “The Chinese merchants and all the Europeans (except the English) were against me for a reason you know, viz. … my keeping the great ship at

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84 Page, 48.
85 Page, 4.
86 Page, 4.
87 Page, 2.
The conflicting conceptions of the “state actor,” as seen through the eyes of a naval captain and the trade factor Page, illustrate how imperial identities can be destabilized according to differing aims. Anson, who as a commissioned officer derives his authority directly from the Crown and thus views himself as its sacred representative, bristles at what he interprets as an encroachment on British sovereignty, not just by the Chinese, but by unhelpful, downright unpatriotic, East India Company officials. Page and his colleagues, on the other hand, think of themselves “not as servants of the Crown but as actors within complicated networks” who see the uninterrupted flow of trade as Britain’s only goal in China. The conversation tilts on the point of sovereignty versus commerce, and which will define the Englishman abroad.

The Voyage, in fact, displays little concern with commercial opportunity, a usual stalwart of the voyage literature genre. When commerce is addressed, it is usually equated with cultural accommodation. Although of no aristocratic descent, Page nevertheless functions as a convenient stand-in for the corrupted masculinity caused by cosmopolitanism and acculturation to which the Voyage responds. Walter and Robins’s unflattering portrait of the East India Company men, described as “extremely apprehensive of being embroiled with the Government, and of suffering in their interest” (359), aligns them with materialist greed rather than patriotic service. The authors also contend that “[Anson] was fully convinced … that his great caution not to injure the East-India Company’s affairs, the regard he had shown to the advice of their officers, had occasioned all his embarrassments” (321). The official account obliquely goes so far as to equate Page and his comrades with the French, because the “[French] officers were apprehensive, that any distinction granted to Mr. Anson, on account of his bearing the King’s Commission, would render them less considerable in the eyes of the Chinese … and I wish …

88 “Anson to James Naish,” in Documents, 153.
the fear of sinking in the estimation of the Chinese … had been confined to the officers of the French ships only” (328). The text’s portrayal of Anson’s dealings with both the East India Company and the Hong merchants, like most British diplomatic missions, belie an attitude towards the Chinese concerned “less about global economic growth and progress and more about the means through which to mediate assertions of and anxieties about cultural superiority.”

Walter and Robbins’s relative indifference to trade shifts the primary goal of the state actor abroad from commerce to culture, and their critique of the East India Company centers on the monopoly’s willingness to betray its home country for material gain.

Fear of cultural inferiority is obliquely articulated by Walter and Robins. On sailing into harbor, the authors note that “[The Centurion] might reasonably have expected to have been considered by them as a very uncommon and extraordinary object … yet they did not appear to be at all interested about us” (313, emphasis mine). This Chinese disinterest works on two important levels. One, it reveals the fundamental disregard the Chinese had for any goods the English might have to offer (other than silver), speaking to England’s marginal role in China and in the larger economic systems of this part of the world. While frustrating for the English, this marginalization was a well-known reality. Two, Chinese disregard also suggests contempt for Anson’s self-perceived techno-military superiority. The fact that humble fishermen are not the least intimidated by one of Britain’s larger, more advanced warships removes one of the few trump cards the English (and many Europeans) held on the far side of the world—bigger guns and more of them. In reality, the Chinese would have been familiar with the formidably armed and much larger (if slower and less maneuverable) East Indiamen sailed by both the English and Dutch East India Companies. Together, the complete disdain for English commerce and technology renders Anson completely irrelevant, warranting Seuqua’s charge that he was a “little

90 Klekar, 88.
man” of no real consequence. Combatting this cultural and military insignificance figures heavily in a narrative intent on asserting the viability of English bodies in the Pacific, first as culture bearers and only then as commercial actors.

At this point, the Voyage takes a predictable sinophobic turn, situating England’s marginalization as the product of China’s own cultural shortcomings. Walter and Robins, for example, “ascribe to this Nation a fraudulent and selfish turn of temper, so contradictory to the character given of them in the legendary accounts of the Roman missionaries” (352), “a strong bias … to dishonesty” (355), and attribute the penal system’s more merciful system of fines (as opposed to capital punishment) as evidence of “the effeminate genius of the nation, and their strong attachment to lucre” (326). Mainly, Walter and Robins sinophobically rewrite the English idealization of China as a civilization unchanged for thousands of years by outside influences as a form of cultural “stagnation.” Just as with scurvy, “stagnation and death” function as the primary descriptors of the China trade in the Voyage. The mandarins refuse to extend Anson any credit, instead making him “pay for every article he bespoke before it was put in hand” (360). This cash-only economy defies Western conceptions of polite conduct, where credit often functioned as the only form of payment, and where credit often acted as the guarantor of gentlemanly identity in networks of dependence and commercial desire. Porter argues that “it is China’s steadfast refusal to conform to this ‘natural’ role and to accommodate Western notions of free circulation that gives rise to the commercialist denigration of Chinese cultural institutions over the course of the eighteenth century.”91 Taken in this light, Walter and Robins’s Anson is meant to right a disrupted “natural” order. Responding to these cash-only demands, Anson delivers a grim witticism playing on embodiment, suggesting that if he cannot purchase stores

“his men should be reduced to the necessity of turning cannibals … [and] would prefer the plump, well-fed Chinese to their own immaciated shipmates” (324). The Commodore’s exasperation suggests that the Chinese impediments to an otherwise healthy circulation of money and goods create conditions which necessitate a devolution to incivility and barbarity. Without trade, the joke suggests, society is reduced to the stuff of Hobbesian nightmare.

Although once lauded for its ability to assimilate foreign cultures while maintaining a pure, original form, later characterizations of China (like Walter and Robins’s) stressed its stagnation as a whole—socially, economically, politically, and technologically. An originary, pure, self-sustaining culture, then, becomes a sign of China’s inability to innovate, and custom becomes a stifling repetition of outdated ideas. The narrative tack Walter and Robins pursue ascribes Chinese disinterest in the English not to the fact that the Chinese viewed themselves as a superior nation politically, economically, and technologically, but to this problematic Chinese characteristic of “stagnation” that has overtaken the once vaunted nation.

The *Voyage* thus systematically dismantles Chinese claims to superiority through a sinophobic rewriting of facts on the ground, rhetorically couching the Chinese as “imitators” of the Europeans. China’s “curious manufactures … eagerly sought for by the most distant nations” are described as the second-rate manufactures of craftsmen “incapable of rivalling the mechanic dexterity of the Europeans. Indeed, their principal excellency seems to be imitation; and they accordingly labour under the poverty of genius, which constantly attends all servile imitators” (366-367). In reality, English attempts to manufacture porcelain were well underway, but had met with little success and the few methods that actually worked produced goods of poor quality.\(^\text{92}\) Militarily, the Chinese are also represented as base imitators defined by a false nature.

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Anson’s threat to blockade the port is met not with an actual show of force, but the ceremonial display of “a soldier of unusual size, dressed in very sightly armour … though some of the observers on board the Centurion shrewdly suspected, from the appearance of his armour, that instead of steel, it was composed only of a particular kind of glittering paper” (366). Conflating the anxieties of technological and military inferiority, the English authors simultaneously rewrite Chinese goods as pale imitations of European ones, which render their consumers “servile imitators,” rather than people of spirit and true genius. Similar to the outward trappings of taste that define a proper, if “artificial,” masculinity in cosmopolitan culture, the military prowess of the Chinese is rendered inherently false, given that it can be located only in ceremony and “sightly armor” that turns out to be paper and nothing more.

Walter and Robins leave us, however, at an impasse. Although they disavow cosmopolitanism, castigating the idea that Englishness can accommodate porous nationalist boundaries, they unequivocally license imperial expansion and “circulation,” the primary mover of the very discourses of commercialism and acculturation that they would seem to oppose. Moreover, if Anson’s embodied identity derives its cultural precedent from China itself, then Walter and Robins must solve the problem of stagnation within their own construction of national and masculine identity. To return briefly to scurvy, I think, offers some possible answers for Walter and Robins’s conundrum. The literal dissolution of the physical body and the threat to codified notions of gendered and racial identity that scurvy threatens would seem to uphold Anthony Pagden’s attention to the common topos of Western literature that registers mobility as a danger to the self.93 Yet Walter and Robins invert this trope, situating “movement” as a primary signifier of individual and imperial health. Movement—particularly the

physiological and economic discourses of “circulation”—becomes necessary for repositioning Britain as the center of a new Anglocentric world economy. Considering that the healthy male body and imperial efficacy reciprocally influenced each other, proper “circulation” became yet another prerequisite of scientific, commercial, and naval success. In the case of scurvy, the diseased body analogically functions as the stagnated, diseased sea or ship, and, by extension, the threat of the stagnated, diseased commercial enterprise. Henry Ettick even attributed scurvy to a condition that “rendered [blood] so thin as to be unfit for circulation, or any other of the uses of life; and being thus deprived of a proper force and vigour, stagnation and death must necessarily ensue.”

In terms of “circulation,” trade may be that which threatens to undermine an embodied identity, but it is also the metaphorical lifeblood of empire. Only on distinctly English terms, however, when the threats of effeminacy, racialization, and acculturation made clear by scurvy are safely dispelled, can trade be this lifeblood. Walter and Robins’s proposed solution to “stagnation,” then, is ceaseless expansion, where cultural hegemony and British men might be scattered across the globe, enacting the metaphorical circulation that signifies the health of both men and empires.

IV. Conclusion

Walter and Robins’s rejection of foreign acculturation in no way signifies a rejection of trade. Rather, it rejects the sublimation of one’s national identity for material, political, or fashionable gain. Valorizing older forms of embodiment both envisions and necessitates a conception of empire distinct from the “seaborne” model, where far-flung trading posts supplied the wants of a metropolitan center, but required an “effeminate” accommodation as in China, and whose goods simultaneously led to a disruption of traditional signifiers of identity at home. To

94 Thomas, qtd. in Williams, Documents, 87.
return to the dialectic of celebration and anxiety which opened this chapter, Anson perfectly illustrates how imperial endeavors do throw white male bodies into crisis, only to reveal an innate, embodied masculine Englishness in extremis. Accordingly, the Voyage rhetorically exploits the anxieties surrounding a national, masculine identity to situate the Pacific as a site of national renewal, seeking to return Great Britain to its “essential” (if imagined) identity as the center of an Anglo-dominated circulation of culture and goods. If, as Wilson argues, “empire was … the means to becoming more independent and self-contained as a nation, rejecting foreign influences and introducing English virtue where the English dared tread,” then the only way to guarantee the efficacy of the male body and the imperial enterprise—to effect a safe “circulation” of trade without the unwanted side effects of acculturation and effeminacy—is to recreate the world in the image of Great Britain, violently or otherwise. And while the narrative suggests that Anson has bested the Chinese by resisting the cultural impositions of their system of trade, this symbolic success occurs because Walter and Robins offer up the Pacific as a site of future speculations, wide open territory, and uncontested encounters where English-style sociability can be endlessly reproduced. In this way, empire might be transformed from a profoundly threatening, acculturating force to one that need not be plagued by the problem of cultural accommodation.

While Anson’s real voyage suggests these optimistic speculations are simply fantasy, Walter and Robins’s riveting and carefully constructed account fictitiously activates these discourses. The success of the fictional voyage creates a “successful” real voyage because the character Anson models an identity that secures the British male as a reliable imperial actor. His and his men’s reconstituted health asserts British commercial ascendancy in the Pacific while reinscribing British identity as a global construction. This global construction of identity

95 Wilson, Sense, 202.
suggests that empire could function as a networked polity that depends on abstract ideals of British identity, extending as far as the idea of rights and personal liberties embodied by other British men could go. Anson became an antidote for a nation fractured by war, political intrigue, and perceived effeminacy, recreating the Pacific as the site of an essential national character—the proving ground for a new ideal of the British hero.
CHAPTER 4

SEEING ENGLAND IN TAHITI:

IMPROVEMENT AND THE ISLAND RACES

In the last chapter, I argued that George Anson’s ghostwriters rewrote the Commodore in the vein of an older, more chauvinistic heroic tradition. Emphasizing military exploits and the defeat of scurvy through a British reappropriation of Pacific space, Walter and Robins’s account exemplifies Kathleen Wilson’s reading of Britain’s imperial ambitions as “an antidote to perceived national effeminacy and corruption … where an austere, forceful, disciplined and martial manliness could restore national spirit and power.”¹ Yet Anson is relatively forgotten, and a much different, more durable sort of hero still grips the popular imagination. James Cook has been called (now pejoratively) “the prototypical hero of European imperialism.”²

Embodying the qualities of the new imperial man—“expertise, humanitarianism, and compassion,”³ rather than military swagger or territorial aggression—Cook and his dedication to the “arts of peace” formed the basis of a hagiographical tradition that represented him as the inheritor and protector of a distinctly English “island race.” Cook’s posthumous reputation as a peaceful explorer has passed to the current day largely intact, only recently coming under scrutiny.

³ Wilson, 19. This sort of rhetoric is employed by numerous Cook scholars, including Smith, Anne Salmond, Nicholas Thomas, and Glyndwr Williams. Smith, for instance, cites Cook’s “professionalism, competence, prudence, thoroughness, stubbornness, patience, [and] a constrained pride in achievement.” Smith, “Reputation,” 168. See also Wilson, who describes Cook’s legacy as a figure who came “to symbolize and embody the combination of intrepidity and humanism that was quickly vaunted as a central feature of Englishness itself.” Wilson, 59.
The construction of this persona relies, however, on a relatively overlooked figure of the Cook voyages: the prickly, German-born Protestant minister Johann Reinhold Forster, who served as a naturalist alongside his son Georg on Cook’s second voyage aboard the Resolution (1772-1775). This chapter argues that Cook’s mythical status as a scion of English aboriginality, as Jonathan Lamb calls it, was due in large part to Forster, whose scientific texts invested traditional forms of identity with new forms of cultural authority. Forster, in many ways, builds on the work of his voyage literature forebears, exploiting an unprecedented expansion in the production of knowledge and its dissemination in polite society. Forster ostensibly provides an accurate portrayal of a “real” Pacific.

His Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World (1778), however, reveals ideological investments similar to the texts of Defoe and Anson, and the style of the book, if not the subject matter, is indebted to John Hawkesworth. In 1773, Hawkesworth compiled the logbooks and journals of four Pacific voyages from 1764 to 1771 into a single work which Hawkesworth narrated in the first person. While critics panned Hawkesworth’s decision to narrate the journeys as a first-person observer, An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere (1773) was nevertheless influential. By subsuming all exploratory experiences under the narrative voice of a “refined English gentleman of sensibility and means,” Hawkesworth rewrites military and commercial adventurism as “cultural sentiment” that privileges “interested reflection and a form of omniscient narration” that suggests “individual experiences can be sifted and combined to discover the truths contained within history.” Hawkesworth downplays commercial ventures in

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4 Jonathan Lamb, Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001): 213. Lamb uses the phrase “Only in aboriginality is there any hope” to explain the prevalence of a backward looking, nostalgic search for English identity that pervaded South Seas voyages.
the Pacific, instead focusing on a sentimentalized cultural exchange. Forster effectively appropriates these rhetorical practices while avoiding first-person narration; the naturalist Forster rewrites his experiences as a disinterested, scientific observer whose word can be trusted, and who focuses on “discovering the truths” contained within history. His narrative exemplifies “a production of truth that went beyond the supply of bare details,” where “authenticity and interest might coexist,” and which replaced a mere eyewitness for a “controlling eye” that totalized and ordered knowledge.\(^6\)

While Cook did represent a shift away from the more militaristic heroic tradition, authors like Forster connected him to the Pacific in ways which obligingly fit the late eighteenth century’s imperial zeitgeist, while also displaying the fraught, ambivalent motivations of Pacific exploration.

Although Forster has long been recognized as a naturalist fundamentally at odds with commercial speculation, his writings reveal a more nuanced attitude, framing both landed and commercial classes as bound by mutual self-interest. Reading Forster’s natural history lectures and *Observations* in the context of eighteenth-century discourses of land improvement, I demonstrate how Forster joins Tahiti and Great Britain in a shared cultural heritage I call “Pacific exceptionalism.” Pacific exceptionalism illustrates how integral components of Britain’s island identity—including cultivation, landownership, and private property—are influenced by and projected onto Forster’s Tahiti. Differing from stadial theorists who aimed to generalize the rise and fall of civilizations, Forster located for Britain and Tahiti a unique trajectory that placed them outside the fundamentally cyclical nature of civilization and time.

Forster’s *Observations* created an image of Tahiti in the popular imagination that served as “an

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\(^6\) Lamb, 101.
epistemological basis … for nationalism,” thereby codifying a process of “mak[ing] what is acquired seem innate.”

At the same time, Forster’s empirical rendering of the Pacific illustrates the British people’s metaphorical investments in these discourses alongside the literal investments of its commercial and naval interests.

I. The Arts of Peace

At war for the better part of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Britain showed renewed interest in the Pacific during a time of relative peace and prosperity in the 1760s. By 1763, Britain’s star was in ascendance following a string of smashing military successes and a victorious end to the Seven Years War; these victories temporarily marginalized its traditional nemesis France and granted Britain undisputed control of the seas. With this turn to peace, Britain witnessed a populist groundswell calling for political and social reform—including the slave trade—that had been largely glossed over during decades of war.

While Cook has his roots firmly in the voyage literature tradition of heroic individualism, he nevertheless represented an imperial persona whose “life story was better fitted to the ideological belief—however distant from the true state of affairs—in a world-wide empire dedicated to the arts of peace.” These “arts of peace,” defined foremost by an emphasis on scientific investigation and discovery over war, formed the basis of a new “inquiring masculinity … striated with national, class and gender prejudices and ideals … eagerly embraced by sailors, servants, and slaves as well as by

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7 Brian W. Richardson, Longitude and Empire: How Captain Cook’s Voyages Changed the World (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005): 133. Richardson examines how Cook’s accurate charts of the Pacific influenced a nationalist subjective turn. I extend this analysis to Forster’s writings. Wilson argues that Cook, despite the scientific nature of his voyages, nevertheless formed the basis of a chauvinistic, imperialist English identity. I extend her discussion by examining Forster’s previously understated role in this identity formation. Wilson, 6.

8 Wilson, 19.

9 Smith, 175. Smith also points out the continued hope that the Pacific might offer a source of raw materials, markets, and commerce free from the moral culpability of African slavery.
officers.” Pacific exploration functioned in part as a logical outgrowth of this popular clamor for a kinder, gentler brand of imperialism, and Cook and his naturalists, with their “inquiring masculinity,” were to be its standard bearers.

With this changing imperialist dogma, Great Britain needed new ways of understanding itself as a people and nation, particularly when the cultural category of “nation” was undergoing its own transformation. During Forster’s era, the nation became “the most accepted and convenient category through which to organize knowledge and consciousness.” That such a cultural category would gain new significance just as Britain’s interest in the Pacific reached fever pitch seems appropriate, because the Pacific itself necessitated a new way of understanding the world. Smith writes that the mysterious ocean offered “a wealth of anomaly and a poverty of theory,” and that the voyages were motivated by a drive to achieve “the physical and emotional mastery of the world.” In a similar vein, Alan Frost argues that the Pacific voyagers, “set … social and aesthetic traditions” that influenced later writers (including the Romantics), while Cook and the Forster’s specifically “described vistas which European aesthetic conventions did not accommodate … [and] began to develop new and less intellectually limited modes of perceiving nature.”

Ironically, these “less intellectually limited modes” stemmed from the removal of an imaginary geography in the Pacific. Cook’s accurate charts created what O. H. K. Spate calls a “positional geography,” that in turn allowed Europeans “not just to traverse the South Seas but to use it.” Spate refers to the increasingly tangible role the Pacific played in world markets versus its often fantastic representation in the novels of Defoe; by recreating the

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10 Wilson, 19.
11 Wilson, 7.
Pacific as a site that might finally be studied, ordered, and mastered, Cook’s explorations epitomized the conflation of popular imagination, nationalism, scientific observation, and commercial exploitation.

These “less intellectually limited modes” intertwined with emerging discourses of nationalism, and Forster consciously draws attention to the limitations of thinking about the nation solely in terms of commerce. He opens the most studied portion of *Observations*, his “Remarks on the Human Species in the South-Sea Isles,” with a direct attack on previous writers of voyage literature, whom he dismisses as cabinet philosophers and pseudo-intellectuals. Attacking his political enemy Joseph Banks, Forster critiques those who “were either too ignorant to collect any valuable and useful observations, or desirous of making a shew with a superficial knowledge have given us their opinions, embellished with surmises, and trite reflections, borrowed from other writers.”

Despite the distinct whiff of stadial theory emanating from Forster’s writings, he draws a clear distinction between Scottish armchair philosophers and naturalists on the ground; illuminating the tension between “an essentializing project, which stipulated the natures of different races, and a comparative one, which emphasized their mutability,” Forster argues for the necessity of keen observation that disrupts simple generalizations. He also rehearses the same criticism Hobbes made of travel literature years earlier. Emphasizing the objective nature of his own pure investigation, Forster draws attention to competing ideas of “value” in natural history. Previous systems of knowledge, Forster argues, “though ever so ingenious, are seldom agreeable to nature,” mainly because these systems are created in a vacuum, or they rely on unreliable reports concerned more with commerce than

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15 Johann Reinhold Forster, *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World*, ed. by Thomas, et. al. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’I Press: 1996): 153. All references are to this edition and will be cited in the text.
anything else. A scientific system designed to serve only that end is inevitably distorted. Therefore, he writes, “It appears indeed, to be the general fault of these writers … to observe no other than highly civilized nations, who have over-run all parts of the world by the help of navigation, and from commercial views; and are more or less degenerate and tainted with vices” (143-144). By divorcing his own observations from “less important pursuits,” like tall tales of commercial speculation, Forster rewrites systems of knowledge both to reveal a Protestant, providential order in the world, and to secure his own observations from the Hobbesian charges of vainglory that plagued all travelers.

A substantial body of scholarship traces the intersections between botany and national or imperial consciousness. Carl Linnaeus defined botany’s role as a scientific discipline, and Forster’s Linnaean training and taxonomies reveal how his natural observations contributed to a project of British nation building. The Linnaean method precipitated a drive to systematize knowledge of all kinds, to distill its essence into readily comprehended units and hierarchies. David Mackay notes that such a method aimed to “produce order and reason where undifferentiated and incomprehensible chaos had previously reigned,” suggesting that the naturalist’s true role might be more organizational than investigative. Michael Dettelbach explores this organizational impulse in greater depth, demonstrating how Linnaeus and his pupils engaged with the natural world through the lens of “oeconomy.” Writing that “until the late eighteenth century, the term ‘economy’ had primarily theological and moral meanings,” Dettelbach argues that Forster was most concerned with codifying “oeconomies of nature” meant

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to discern and perpetuate a Protestant “great chain of being.” 

Investigating the mysteries of the natural world was an important part of Forster’s work, but organization and systematization reigned supreme; by identifying and codifying natural taxonomies, Forster follows a dominant scientific tradition of 17th- and 18th-century natural philosophy, from Boyle to Newton. As a priest of the natural world, Forster discerns God’s divine plan and intention for the layperson, but he also places himself within a Protestant scientific tradition. More importantly, from the naturalist’s work one might extrapolate “oeconomies of nature” in both national and imperial hierarchies and institutions, thereby distinguishing Great Britain’s identity as a nation and its role in the world as providentially sanctioned.

The difficulty for Forster (or any naturalist) lay in the doubled discourse of “oeconomy,” because Forster could not escape the linkage of natural history and commerce. The Linnaean use of the word “oeconomy” elides these distinctions, for “the archaic form stresses that economics and natural history emerged as sciences together,” while Harriet Guest notes that the natural philosopher’s “curiosity,” although “defined by a hostility or distance from commercial views,” was nevertheless dependent upon voyages and navigational advancements made at the behest of commercial needs.

The doubled discourse can be traced back to the literature of Hakluyt and Purchas, where the providential design of nature is conflated with the commercial activities of a people or nation. Both are mutually reciprocal and providentially sanctioned. If Forster reads “oeconomies of nature” as all things that “preserve and perpetuate the chain of being,” he is yet unable to separate natural economies from the nation’s literal economy, nor is he able to separate

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20 Dettelbach, lvii.

the reinforcing roles science and commercial expansion play in the formation of the British nation-state.  

Linnaean taxonomies, in fact, fit hand-in-glove with the already established identity of a Protestant, seafaring nation proud of its commercial adventurism. God’s will dictates an investigation and ordering of the natural world, which requires the development of new technologies of navigation. Guest draws our attention to one of Forster’s later travel accounts, History of Voyages and Discoveries Made in the North (1786), where the naturalist describes the hierarchy of civility signified by commercial desire and curiosity: “It is highly cultivated nations only, that explore distant countries and nations for the sake of commerce. In like manner, as seeking them for the gratification of curiosity, pre-supposes a still higher degree of cultivation and refinement.” Despite Forster’s protestations that exploration for the purpose of commercial gain pales in comparison to discovery undertaken for the expansion of knowledge, he nevertheless makes the tacit admission that commerce and curiosity are intertwined. Curiosity becomes a way of licensing commerce. Exploration and imperialism undertaken for the purpose of commercial gain is simply crass materialism, but disinterested “discovery” expands a knowledge base which might then have commercial uses in the future. Forster cleverly writes into God’s “great chain of being” commercial aspiration, but only when it can be readily discerned as a byproduct of completing God’s will on earth—the discovery and taxonomic description of divine creation.

At the same time, new technologies of observation and a continued reliance on the written word conveyed legitimacy and authority on nationalistic discourses grounded in curiosity rather than commerce. Linnaeus attempted to codify a homogeneous epistemology that might

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22 Dettelbach, lvii.
23 Qtd. in Guest, intro, xli.
secure a universal truth with regard to scientific observation, or to construct what Lamb calls a “scientific self” as “the impartial first person of a universal language, capable of establishing a cognitive superiority over all other eyes and ‘I’s’. This universal epistemology required standardized methodologies to secure the veracity of empirical claims: “Natural history was one set of practices among many, all aimed at making the ship an effective long-distance instrument in colonial speculation and control … It was developed by long trial and negotiation to produce a particular form of stable, consensual knowledge.”

The longitudinal grid, for instance, had long existed as a universal way of understanding space and location (at least to Europeans), but objects like the sextant and the marine chronometer invested this knowledge system with a previously lacking accuracy. No longer would location be defined as a loose, relative construction measured by the proximity to coasts or the even murkier, diametric rendering of space as “close to” and “away from” England. Using these instruments to create the first truly accurate charts of the Pacific, Cook lifted a “psychological barrier” by “making [the globe’s] most distant corners seem accessible and even familiar.” In this sense, we might call Cook an “explorer” or man of “discovery,” and also what Brian Richardson terms a “totalizer” who “reworks … [the Pacific] into a single updated description.” Moreover, if anyone can claim to solve the problem of the Hobbesian mariner, it is Cook. Unlike Walter and Robins, whose reconstruction of Anson in the face of scurvy and East India Company effeminacy functions as a baleful antidote to perceived national weakness, Cook secures British superiority (and identity) via technology designed to guarantee the cohesion of the masculine body.

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24 Lamb, 78.
25 Dettelbach, lxvi. It also required the elimination of scurvy, another technological breakthrough (mis)attributed to Cook.
26 Mackay, 35.
27 Richardson, 6.
The ideological investment in the marine chronometer, the sextant, accurate charts, and the presumed universality of knowledge they created, however, could be fully realized only through the texts written after the mariner’s return. Defoe’s oft-quoted passage from *The Complete English Gentleman* (1730) asserts that any reader can be a traveler, and a philosopher, too: “He may make a tour of the world in books, he may make himself master of the geography of the universe in maps, atlases and measurements of our mathematicians. He may travel by lands with historians, by sea with the navigators. He may go round the globe with Dampier and Rogers, and kno’ a thousand time more doing it than all those illiterate sailors.”

Forster echoes Defoe’s sentiment, writing, “Our art of writing and printing is the most efficacious means of preventing the entire oblivion of many useful observations, experiments, and discoveries, in each branch of human knowledge” (268-269), although Forster hardly would have endorsed Defoe’s celebration of the armchair philosopher. Both Defoe and Forster, however, realize the importance of the written narrative in shaping scientific and cultural knowledge. Just as new tools were required to describe quantitatively human societies, civility, and progress (and thus describe England as a nation), new narrative techniques were needed to convey these findings. As James Hevia has written, “Charting the world in this form had a corollary in writing, a writing which assumed a subject and author who captured the objective world in disinterested prose.”

A narrative like Forster’s goes beyond simply recounting adventures and glorifying heroic individualism; his text exploits the new technologies of observation and recording necessary in an imperial world to make his “eyes and I’s” both believable and accepted as the conveyor of disinterested, objective truth.

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29 qtd. in Wilson, 171. See also Richardson, who argues, “Epistemological strategies and publicity also depend on creating printed books out of the written manuscripts.” Richardson, 6.
Mary Louise Pratt makes the astute point that, previous to Cook, the world had been thought of in primarily navigational terms, and knowledge was organized around the consummate oceanic feat—circumnavigation. She notes that “journalism and narrative travel accounts … were central agents in legitimating scientific authority and its global project,” but this alone cannot explain the shift away from relatively narrow circumnavigational accounts. If “maps and coordinates help create tight containers that support fixed identities, and these identities can be studied,” there must still be a naturalist to “fix” and quantify said identities. Cook’s voyages, with their evidence that the world could be accurately mapped, safely traveled, and properly ordered by men like Forster, usher in a new form of “planetary consciousness,” and that consciousness remains indebted to the epistemological strategies of the written word.

The myriad narratives that surround Cook’s voyages exemplify the conjoining of technological investment and textual practice. Given the eighteenth-century obsession with creating longitude via chronometry, the travel journal, Stuart Sherman argues, “enacts the project’s premise as a textual form.” If chronometry functions as the “arbiter of global time and space,” then narratives help make it so. The presumed universality of time and space created by the chronometer is reflected in the travel narratives of a man like Forster; as a sovereign observer whose autonomy and veracity is guaranteed by scientific authority, he models the proper way of viewing and understanding the world. Richardson’s study of Cook and longitude extends this analysis, pointing out that Cook’s authority is vested not simply within scientific instruments, but the state itself, or “the commonwealth that consolidates the identities

31 Richardson, 193.
33 Sherman, 165.
of its members into a single person.” Hobbesian allusion aside, the confluence of scientific technology, print, and state authority creates a mutually reinforcing network of authority for the traveler different from previous voyages. The chronometer and its accurate time, or what Sherman describes as “the central point of reference within the nexus of science, trade, navigation, and conquest in which Britain was increasingly constructing its identity,” enables these other dominant forms of cultural authority to take root. Appropriating Captain Singleton’s ambivalent observation that home is only “a kind of center” that might be found anywhere, Cook, Forster, and their new observational technologies make everywhere “a kind of center” where British culture and sovereignty might be transported and take root. Forster exploits this coherent persona in the Pacific to provide the essentialized notion of Englishness that becomes an integral part of Great Britain’s imperial project.

Forster’s own history, however, begs the question of an essentialized identity. Drawn to the country’s dissenting Protestant tradition and what he viewed as a shared cultural affinity with the Hanoverian dynasty, Forster considered Britain his adopted country and himself her native son. Born in Prussia, Forster actually descended from a Scottish line which had emigrated after losing most of its property during the years of Oliver Cromwell’s Republican rule. He was a Lutheran minister, although he led a life characterized by dissent and strife that effectively kept him in a constant state of professional turmoil. After working for the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences, he and his son Georg moved to England. Once there, Forster took up a post at the nonconformist Warrington Academy, and in 1772 jumped at the opportunity for him and Georg to accompany Cook on the second voyage after Joseph Banks withdrew as naturalist at the last moment. Although elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society with the support of Banks and his

34 Richardson, 18.
assistant Daniel Solander, Forster made few friends or professional allies. He claimed to have been granted proprietary rights to publish the official account of the voyage upon returning to England, but no one except the Forster’s seemed to remember. Consequently, Forster’s Observations proved relatively unsuccessful, never conferring the wealth or status that he expected to gain from his role on the second voyage. Georg had published his own account of the voyage drawn mostly from his father’s journals in 1777, A Voyage Round the World, which fared better. Both men adopted Hawkesworth’s emphasis on the “truth” of history, but to relatively progressive or even radical ends that emphasized the similarity—rather than difference—between the indigenous cultures encountered and the English. Both of the Forster’s accounts, however, were widely attacked by Banks and Solander, and condemned as outright lies by the voyage’s astronomer William Wales, igniting a pamphlet war. Spiritually and financially broken, the Forster’s returned to Germany where Johann lived out his life in relative obscurity. Georg, however, spent time in Revolutionary France, displaying the radical spirit of his father’s early years as dissenter and nonconformist, advocating for revolutionary change.35

An apparent paradox, Forster contributed to the creation of an essentialized sense of English national identity even as he personally illustrated its dependence on acquired traits and beliefs more than birth. This inconsistency is not effectively accounted for by the text. Particularly, Forster’s connection between native, English liberty and land cultivation is tempered by the presence of commercial discourses in his lectures and Observations. Although he repeatedly avers his dedication to curiosity instead of commerce, the Observations reveal

contradictions or ambivalences that prevent even the high-minded Forster from distinguishing commerce from civility and which his enemies used to try to discredit him.

In this sense, Forster’s account becomes one more in a long list of compensatory narratives. Although Forster strove for veracity in his Observations, he still suffered from charges of vainglory by his own colleagues. William Wales and his assistant William Bayly dismissed Forster’s theories out of hand in Remarks on Mr. Forster’s Account (1778), which then received a sharp reply from the younger Forster in Reply to Mr. Wales’s Remarks. Given that the presence of Forster and the other “experimental gentlemen” disrupted the delicate social relations of the eighteenth-century naval vessel, one might conclude these battles resulted more from bruised egos and petty jealousies than fundamental interpretative differences, and that all of the naturalists were eager to regain some sense of their landed authority and station after being marginalized onboard.\(^{36}\) Too, conditions on board were far from ideal. Plants were almost impossible to maintain; space was cramped; even the chronometers required periodic correction with the cumbersome lunar method.\(^{37}\) Carole Fabricant neatly summarizes this issue: “Throughout Cook’s voyages, the very things designed to elevate the mission above the vagaries and uncertainties of casual observation or mere opinion—scientific calculation and measurement—were less than successful.”\(^{38}\) All of these circumstances contributed to the ominous sense that the problem of veracity had not been, or could not be, solved.

The Pacific voyages belie a continued anxiety concerning British marginalization in the wider world. Forster, in particular, reveals the ever-present tension between the “arts of peace”

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36 Forster repeatedly complains about the goats and sheep being quartered in his cabin during foul weather, and consequently fouling all of his notes and specimens.
37 Another source of contention may have arisen from the handling of the chronometers. Larcum Kendall’s reproduction of John Harrison’s H-4 clock worked admirably until, Forster claims, sabotage at the hands of Wales and Bayly—a serious charge to be leveled against gentlemen of the Royal Academy.
and Britain’s commercial aspirations in the fashioning of national identity. Following Lamb’s analysis of the rhetorical reconstitution of the “civil self,” Guest extends his argument to suggest that Pacific voyages “explore a similar sense of the permeability and even fragility of … British identity … [and] their own progress as a society.” To Daniel A. Baugh, these are voyages undertaken “not in a spirit of fulsome self-confidence, but in the mood that purchases insurance.” The sudden proliferation of exploratory Pacific voyages post-1763 suggests self-doubt about how Britain will define itself as a nation and an empire, how peace will affect its class and political structures, and whether its brand of culture was, in fact, as superior as it claimed. Like the mariner’s civil self, the ideological investments of the “British” nation were in need of constant maintenance, and the physical and emotional mastery of the Pacific served this purpose. Although morally fraught (even in its own time), physical mastery of the world can be explained from a relatively simple viewpoint: either as patriotism or as a materialist will to power driven by the ever-expanding need for resources to build navies, supply (now) standing armies, and fuel foreign trade. The emotional mastery of the world, however, suggests an imperial project better judged by how successfully Britain might export its own culture.

In terms of physical mastery, the British still held a worldview characterized by reading commerce and territory as a zero-sum game; if a country was not expanding its empire, then it was losing it to other countries, and becoming weaker in the process. Too, the proliferation of a bureaucracy designed to fund the “fiscal-military state” meant that even in peace the nation remained on a military footing, and that the government held, in the public opinion, an intrusive

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39 Guest, Empire, 25.
influence over commercial policy.41 The Pacific’s “unknown” status made it a logical location for speculations—both physical and emotional—for an imperial nation that felt pressure to be ever-expanding. While the hoped-for ecological miracle of infinite land and resources articulated by projectors and novels like Defoe’s A New Voyage Round the World never came to fruition, the Pacific still had meaningful, if more mundane, cultural work to perform. Influential thinkers like the Admiralty hydrographer Alexander Dalrymple pushed for Pacific exploration as a way to hedge Britain’s proverbial bets. A strong, increasingly independent-minded group of American colonies could put pressure on the imperial government and create economic hardship, which it of course did.42 In true mercantilist fashion, the aim of Dalrymple and his ilk was British economic independence through dominance, “making Britain independent of other nations in her imperial pursuits, of creating a maritime empire self-sufficient on a global scale.”43 Projectors envisioned a vast world empire by which England might be supplied with both needs and luxuries from British possessions: tea and hemp from India, sugar and coffee from the West Indies, and breadfruit from the Society Islands to feed the slave populations. For the more ambitious dreamers, Tahiti might even provide exotic spices like nutmeg, mace, and pepper to break the long-held Dutch monopoly. The Pacific explorations were undertaken as a form of

41 John Brewer’s seminal The Sinews of Power addresses the fiscal-military state’s creation, and the difficulty (or impossibility) of dismantling the power structures that made it possible. Brewer, The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
42 Baugh, 31.
defensive aggression, a way of shoring up alternative economic systems in the face of potential disaster.\(^{44}\)

Cook’s voyages directly addressed this physical mastery and the hope for new markets, because all three voyages aimed to foster trade with either the mythical Terra Australis Incognita or China. England sold Cook’s first voyage to foreign diplomats and the public as an international scientific expedition meant only to chart the transit of Venus in 1769. Oft-quoted secret orders from the Admiralty, however, suggest differently:

> Whereas the making Discoverys of Countries hitherto unknown, and the Attaining a Knowledge of distant Parts which though formerly discover’d have yet been but imperfectly explored, will redound greatly to the Honour of this Nation … and may tend greatly to the advancement of the Trade and Navigation thereof; and
> Whereas there is reason to imagine that a Continent or Land of great extent …
> You are to proceed to the Southward in order to make discovery of the Continent abovementioned … You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Inscriptions, as first discoverers and possessors.\(^{45}\)

Technically speaking, the Endeavor voyage had science and discovery in mind, but only in the sense that discovery must occur prior to possession and then trade. The transit of Venus mission

\(^{44}\) Baugh, 32. Adam Smith’s laissez faire theory, however, suggested that the zero-sum model was far from monolithic in eighteenth-century minds, and echoed what Defoe had claimed all along—that “international trade was not of finite size but rather could continue to grow to the benefit of all.” Gascoigne, *Science*, 69. Defoe saw the Pacific in a strikingly modern way—a collection of Pacific rim nations by which free trade multiplied wealth geometrically. In Singleton, Defoe even frames the interruption of this free trade as a form of piracy. Nevertheless, free trade principles were often viewed as at odds with the strategic or military imperatives of government.

offered a true opportunity to increase national prestige, proving that the British scientific establishment was in the same league with its formidable French counterparts, but it also offered a plausible explanation for a sweep of the South Seas in search of *Terra Australis*, which many anticipated to be as strategically and economically important as the American colonies.46 Cook’s orders for the second voyage directly concerned *Terra Australis*, as well, which Cook described as “the great object of my researches.”47 Cook’s fruitless searching in the extreme latitudes of the Antarctic and his repeated crisscrossing of the Pacific obliterated the myth of *Terra Australis*, although his endless quest for the fabled continent did not escape the attention of the elder Forster, who berated Cook’s wanderings as “a cruise … shocking to humanity” made only “in order to satisfy interest & vanity.”48 In an interesting aside, Forster projects his own failing health onto Cook’s wanderings, complaining that these commercial speculations have rendered him useless: “I do not live, not even vegetate, I wither, I dwindle away.”49 The third voyage sought a Pacific entrance to the long-elusive Northwest Passage, a navigational chimera that inspired fantasies of direct trade with China and Japan, and which might expedite the long, dangerous voyages to the Far East.50

Although Cook disproved the existence of the southern continent, it had figured heavily into projector’s schemes for both commercial and cultural reasons. *Terra Australis* was meant to be the destination for Britain’s most politically sensitive and economically valuable export—

49 Forster, qtd. in Williams, 57.
50 Although in our current age of satellite imaging it is hard to imagine a major waterway being kept “secret,” the Spanish had effectively kept secret their preferred routes for accessing the Pacific for over one hundred years. For a complete overview of the searches for, and imaginative construction of, the Northwest Passage, see Glyndwr Williams, *Voyages of Delusion: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
wool. Previous voyages like those of John Byron and Samuel Wallis confirmed the obvious fact that most indigenous populations lived in tropical latitudes and hardly needed wool clothing. Cook’s repeated probing of the Antarctic, however, fueled speculation that the cold-weather southern continent did exist, and that its inhabitants would welcome English woolen manufactures. The presence of numerous icebergs was thought to confirm *Terra Australis Incognita*’s existence; seawater could not freeze (according to the prevailing knowledge), and thus icebergs of the size and frequency encountered on the voyage must be evidence of large sources of inland fresh water flowing out to sea. Forster’s discovery that seawater could indeed freeze—the icebergs were part of the Ross ice shelf rather than frozen freshwater—confirmed Cook’s laborious investigations that discounted the continent’s existence. This finding struck down two fantastical birds with one empirical stone, given that seawater’s ability to freeze also effectively discounted the existence of the Northwest Passage during this time.

Although his published text assumes a deferential tone, citing both the Antarctic probes and the presence of frozen seawater as findings that “probably will give my arguments new support and strength” (78), draft-essays suggest Forster had a much more forceful opinion on the matter. He castigates both mariners and philosophers for using the southern continent to advance their own ends. In the case of the mariner, he points out that *any* voyager “was obliged to have recourse to the old method of gilding his former Discoveries in the Eyes of the government, and inferring the vast abundance of Silver and Pearls in a Country where the metal is probably a total Stranger, and the pearls a great rarity.” Cabinet philosophers, he writes, “tortured the

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52 See Forster’s *Observations*, 65-66, for a rebuttal of the theory that seawater could not freeze.
53 Today, however, climate change has created a Northwest Passage navigable for part of the year. Sovereign claims to the seaway remain a point of international contention, particularly among Canada, Russia, and the United States.
imagination to invent mechanical & mathematical reasons to demonstrate the absolute necessity of Land in the Southern Hemisphere, and declared the World could not perform its revolutions without [the southern continent].”\textsuperscript{54} Both critiques reflect what Forster saw as a wider scientific necessity—investigation divorced from commercial influence and naturalists who could assess facts on the ground.

The modern-day editors of the \textit{Observations} suggest that the absence of such forceful rhetoric in the published account reflects Forster’s awareness that his scientific treatise must appeal to “a non-national Linnaean brotherhood … rather than a peculiarly British exploratory venture.”\textsuperscript{55} Forster, however, dismisses the existence of Terra Australis even as he pays oblique political deference to the importance of wool as a national symbol and export. The absence of harsh language, however, might also signal Forster’s political acumen and awareness of the importance placed on the mythical land by powerful men like Joseph Banks and Dalrymple, who would not take Forster’s findings lightly, especially from a man they read as a self-righteous, obnoxious German. Incidentally, both men abandoned Forster upon his return, essentially ending his career by leaving him to flounder for patronage and support for publication. Despite his early support for Forster, Banks effectively sabotaged any future chances for preferment that Forster sought, and the elder Forster was forced to sell Banks his sketches of fauna and flora to alleviate his financial burdens. Banks subsequently had them published in a handsome, full-color folio that made a substantial profit.

While Forster certainly claimed his intentions were free from commercial taint, he nevertheless offers a patriotic stand-in for Terra Australis: New Holland, present-day Australia. William Dampier described New Holland as a barren wasteland, populated by aboriginal savages

\textsuperscript{54} Draft essay Fragment on the History of the Pacific, qtd. in editors’ footnotes, \textit{Observations}, 413-414.

\textsuperscript{55} Thomas, 414.
who had no interest in agriculture or commerce, and thus were unworthy of further attention.

Banks concurred. Forster dismisses this spurious reputation, arguing instead that New Holland was underdeveloped and underpopulated, and boldly states, “I believe it to be very likely to supply the wants of European colonies” (24). Although Forster is careful not to name the British directly, his Australian call-to-arms carries a distinctive “Rule, Britannia” tone: “[New Holland] would invite European settlers; especially such as would be willing to withdraw themselves from the oppressions of growing despotism in Europe. To such sons of liberty this continent would offer a new and happy asylum: by which means it might become the seat of science and arts, happy in its cultivation, the riches of its productions, and the number of its inhabitants” (24).

The text draws clear similarities between *Terra Australis* and New Holland—a population of free Englishmen providing an outlet for wool and other English manufactures, while supplying the “riches of its productions” to the home country. The deliberately vague descriptor “riches” might semantically free Forster from his own arguments against “gilding former discoveries,” but the commercial underpinnings of such an imperial scheme nevertheless remain. At the same time, conjoining “liberty” and “riches” in a fight against “despotism” mark a nakedly patriotic appeal to a readership motivated both by commercialism and a broad, atavistic notion of English freedom. Despite Forster’s emphasis on discerning an objective “truth” from his observations, Forster envisions a world of commercial wealth. In this regard, the nationalist and scientific ideologies that motivated Pacific voyaging influenced not only men seeking to expand the empire, but even comparative progressives like the Forsters. At the same time, Forster’s appeal represents the endurance of the Pacific travel narrative’s generic expectations regarding commercial reconnaissance.
Aligning riches and liberty as a bulwark against despotism, Forster depicts the consequences of rejecting these discourses in his descriptions of the abject indigenes of Patagonia. Forster distinguishes the inhabitants of the present-day Falkland Islands and Tierra del Fuego from the Tahitians based upon their ability to assimilate Western ideas of commerce. The most damning indictment results from a failed commercial encounter where the Tierra del Fuegians show no interest in British woolens: “They were shivering, and appeared much affected with the cold: They looked at the ship and all its parts with a stupidity and indolence, which we had not hitherto observed … and expressed hardly any desires or wishes to possess any thing which we offered, and thought it might become desirable to them; they were destitute of all convenience or ease, shewed no signs of joy or happiness, and seemed to be insensible to all natural, moral, or social feelings” (193). Failed commercialism is reflected in the people and the landscape itself; the land is beset by “the horrors of desolation and the silence of death” (41), the people are “insensible to all that is great and ingenious” and characterized by “a brutish stupidity” (192), and even their primary food source, the seal, is described as an animal “monstrous and misshapen” (129). Once the Patagonians refuse to trade, the land itself, including the wildlife, is rendered effectively useless to and for the British: “The whole creation seems lifeless and torpid, in the frozen climates of Tierra del Fuego, and Staten Land … and even its greatest activity, in the motion of whales, seals and pinguins … is absolute torpor” (98). Repeatedly placing people, places, and animals on a continuum of civility defined by “torpor,” Forster provides a scientific justification for the long-enduring doctrine of res nullius often used to justify British expansion. That the Tierra del Fuegians had no interest in European contrivances, technologies, or goods codes them as “brutishly stupid,” although the real question returns to wool. Forster repeatedly mentions the “shivering” and “cold” Amerindians, as well as
amazement at the lack of “garments … better calculated to defend them against the injuries of the climate” (193). For Forster, clothing does not gauge civility, but the kind of clothing does. The skins of torpid seals signify savagery, with the refusal of British woolens confirming the Amerindians’ incivility. Being the only inhabited climate during Cook’s voyages suitable for wool, Patagonia held especial hopes soon dashed by native disinterest attributed to brutishness, savagery, stupidity, and almost every other negative descriptor Forster might imagine.

We might extrapolate from this (failed) exchange an example where the proper performance of trade confers civility. New Holland, for example, emerges as Terra Australis’s superior because it will be populated with proper, English consumers. If the British cannot find a foreign market for wool, Forster suggests, then they should simply create one, simultaneously begetting civility where before there was none. At the same time, Forster might be writing to calm anxieties about British ill-restraint, given the near-hysteria displayed not only for the sexual wares plied by Tahitian women, but also the island curiosities. In a moment particularly marked by the British tendency to drive poor bargains with islanders (contrary to popular belief), the sailors found one “waggish” Tongan boy who had been selling—quite lucratively—his excrement mounted on the end of a stick.\(^{56}\) The Tongans prove better traders than the British, and “would not even part with the twig of a tree to us without asking something in exchange.”\(^{57}\)

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\(^{56}\) Cook recounts this story in his journal, and Guest read the incident as evidence of Cook’s anxiety towards “unregulated desire.” Guest, 110. Although, to many readers, the exchange of British trinkets for provisions and curiosities appears exploitive, many islander groups read trade and property exchange more as the manifestation of a social bond. Although notoriously hard for non-natives to understand, many island cultures associated these trinkets (particularly from Cook) as an appropriation of British mana, or spiritual power. Gascoigne and Greg Dening have theorized that the Tahitians most likely saw themselves as the ones exploiting the British, who would exchange their spiritual essence at prices so slight. See Greg Dening, *Mr. Bligh’s Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

\(^{57}\) Qtd. in Guest, 110.
In contrast, Cook has to establish an elaborate set of rules for his men, lest they trade essential supplies for sex and junk.\textsuperscript{58}

Forster’s ambivalent, anxiety-ridden portrayal of commerce (and its potential failures) illustrates one underlying motivation for the Pacific voyages, although the ever-crucial maintenance of seapower comprises another. If Pacific voyages were meant to promote the economic independence of the empire, they also had to secure its naval superiority by ensuring that a new generation of highly trained seamen would be readily available when the need arose. Coupled with the surprising fact that “the cost of all the British exploratory voyages of the 1760s was probably less than the cost of one ship of the line,”\textsuperscript{59} it becomes easier to see Pacific exploration as a reasonable investment, not because all hopes were pinned on \textit{Terra Australis}, but because the British need only ensure that the French, Spanish, or Dutch not find it first. A byproduct of Britain’s American dependence was the exponential growth of the colonies’ merchant fleet, and, by Cook’s time, “American” sailors and ships (nationality could be tricky) carried the bulk of the transatlantic trade.\textsuperscript{60} The exploratory thrust for new arenas of trade, noticeably developed by state vessels with handpicked Admiralty men, illustrates the interconnected cogs of exploration and commerce in a larger imperial machine, but the importance of having men to sail those ships and maintain the navy often goes unremarked.

To bolster this seapower thesis, one need only turn to Forster’s hastily tacked-on essay “On the Preservation of Health in Long Voyages.” Concluding the \textit{Observations}, the essay differs greatly from the detached tone of most of the work, oozing patriotic sentiment. Forster credits Cook with saving generations of British sailors from scurvy, describing the importance of this advance in decidedly nationalistic terms: “None of the least sources of human misery, is,

\textsuperscript{58} Smith, 61.
\textsuperscript{59} Baugh, 33.
\textsuperscript{60} Baugh, 33. The impressment of American sailors was a politically sensitive issue well before the War of 1812.
however, exceeded by the loss of thousands of young, hale, and very useful sea-faring men, who, in a great commercial state are an irreparable loss, and must become alarming to the state, either during the time of or on the eve of war” (358). Cook’s shipboard regimen that “defeated” scurvy later came to be known as the “Cook Method,” and was read as a harmonious reflection of eighteenth-century social order, whereby a benevolent, paternalist figure maintained the health and well-being of his tiny floating kingdom.\(^1\) In actuality, Cook’s good fortune resulted more from ample rest and good hygiene rather than any secret formula. The sentimental rendering differs greatly from Forster’s private thoughts, where he describes sailors as little more than lascivious brutes.

Still, by pointing out Jack Tar’s role in the maintenance of the state, through both commerce and war, Forster appoints the individual seaman a place in the hierarchy of a multivalent, Linnaean oeconomy. Forster connects the smooth functioning of the ship, whereby Cook defeats scurvy and maintains order, to the “other parts of the oeconomy of a sailor” (363), and to a larger symbolic economy of science, commerce, and nation that secures British identity on these grueling voyages. Situated within a philosophical text concerned with “the degeneration of nature and humankind in the absence of countervailing forces,” Forster’s final essay proves a fitting end piece, simultaneously reminding readers that the British, too, are subject to the forces of degeneration.\(^2\) These “countervailing forces” manifest themselves in any number of ways. Gascoigne notes the importance of the “moral economy”: “Seamen would put with all manner of barbarities if they considered them justified by tradition or sanctioned by a sort of ‘moral economy.’” If these conventions broke down, the sense of shared identity and

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\(^1\) For a more in depth discussion of the social investments reflected in the “Cook Method,” see Christopher Lawrence’s “Disciplining Disease: Scurvy, the Navy, and Imperial Expansion, 1750-1825,” *Visions of Empire*, 80-106.

\(^2\) Dettelbach, lxxi.
acceptable standards of fairness could be undermined with disastrous results.”

For instance, Cook’s sailors would only eat sauerkraut once they saw their captain and officers eating it.

Simultaneously, this complex moral economy had to be reflected in the real economy of the ship itself, where only “the complexity of social organization … allowed the degree of division of labor and specialization with which to man and navigate [the ship].”

Forster’s emphasis on both moral and literal shipboard economies assimilates theories of social organization both traditional and modern. On the one hand, he suggests that identity can be maintained only by a social order predicated on rigid hierarchies ultimately guaranteed by the state. On the other, he privileges efficiency and specialization, an attitude that would come to undermine that very idea of “ordering” society according to birth and status.

As the interpreter of providential order, the naturalist is indebted to the sailor, who supports “the necessity of sending out men versed in science, and the knowledge of nature on all occasions to remote parts of the world, in order to investigate the powers and qualities of natural objects” (376). Just as the sailor must play his part, performing labor and supporting the ideologically imbued hierarchies of command and state sovereignty, so he also maintains the commercial and military operations of empire, thereby ensuring British dominance. The specific word “oeconomy” reveals Forster’s ideological investment in the British seaman as part of providential design, whereby Britain might attain its rightful role in God’s design as a benevolent ruler of seas, continents, and markets.

Commercial and naval superiority, while difficult to maintain, had a clear blueprint. True emotional mastery proved more difficult, both in theory and execution, because it relied not simply on the dissemination of a cultural belief, like the exceptionalism of the “island race,” but

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63 Gascoigne, Captain Cook, 59.
64 Gascoigne, Captain Cook, 76.
also the ability to interpellate indigenous subjects as part of the myth. Emotional mastery might be compared to Pratt’s “anticonquest,” or “the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony.” 65 Scholars as wide-ranging as Anna Neill, Jonathan Lamb, Philip Edwards, Carole Fabricant, and Glyndwr Williams (to name only a few) have analyzed the various rhetorical strategies by which anti-conquest might take shelter under the aegis of scientific endeavor. In theory, emotional mastery mirrored the arts of peace and a welcome flourishing of Western-style civilization in the Pacific and elsewhere. In practice, emotional mastery provided an intellectually and morally lazy justification for the often nasty realities of imperialism. Forster participates in this emotional mastery, but takes a different tack. Rather than attempting to impose a Western model of civilization whereby science secures the “innocence” of the hegemonic European, Forster stresses the profound similarity between the British and Pacific peoples, particularly the Tahitians. Emotional mastery devolves into a portrayal of Tahiti which provides a tacit confirmation of English “aboriginality” reflected in their Tahitian forebears on the idyllic archipelagos of the Society Islands. In an era where traditional indicators of Englishness were under threat from a growing dependence on foreign trade, and the most English quality of all—liberty—was perceived to wither under the growth of the fiscal-military state, Forster returns England—via Tahiti—to a more nostalgic idea of nation ideologically mirrored in terms of landed classes and their emphasis on land improvement.

II. Cultivating the Nation

Given that Forster’s narrative points to a confirmation of English “aboriginality,” it functions as a compensatory text as much as Dampier’s or Anson’s narratives do. Forster

65 Pratt, 7.
provides a coherent picture of national origins that assuage anxieties of identity in an increasingly global world. Crucial to any narrative of “nation” is the progression from “to think I am requires I was, which needs in turn a narrative of they were.” Although rightfully noted for their profound influence on art and Romantic aesthetics, Forster’s representations of Tahiti, just as importantly, functioned as that crucial “they were.” Although “dividing the human species up into nations was arguably the most widely used category of difference in the period,” Forster makes the relatively progressive argument that all people are descended from a common ancestry, or common race, and thus defined more by their similarities than their differences. His Tahitian descriptions do not focus on the fundamental difference between savage and civilized, or salaciously rehearse fantasies of personal autonomy, and instead examine the progress of Tahitians as a pre-history of Great Britain. In a time when what it meant to be “British” was increasingly under scrutiny and foreign commerce eroded the figurative, nationalist boundaries of culture and self, Forster used the authoritative voice of science to reassert the essentialized, providential distinction of Britain’s island race. He creates an implicit connection between the social sciences and nationalism, suggesting that an emerging national identity can be “specified, studied, and known.”

To understand how Forster naturalizes an English identity and achieves “emotional mastery” via scientific discourses, a brief review of the ideological implications of the interrelated fields of botany and cultivation is necessary. Cook himself participated in this discussion; during his first voyage, he stocked the Endeavor with seeds and used them to plant gardens on Tahiti. James Banks recorded in his journal that Cook brought the seeds with him

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66 Wilson, 3.

67 Wilson, 7.

68 Richardson, 133.
from Gordon’s of Mile End, “sent in bottles seald up, whether or no that method will succeed the event of this plantation will show.”69 This event has invited closer scrutiny of Cook’s motivations. The earliest Cook scholarship, from his Victorian biographers to the magisterial volumes of J. C. Beaglehole, read the episode as one of profound beneficence, designed only to supply indigenous populations with an additional food source.70 A more likely explanation has been advanced by Dulcie Powell, who points out that such gardens were an aspect of naval duty, especially on distant stations where fresh supplies were scarce. Previous voyagers like Wallis and Furneaux planted gardens as a matter of protocol. Captains might extend the reach of the Royal Navy by providing a known and (hopefully) ready supply of fresh food to combat scurvy.71 The travails of Anson served as a grim reminder that scurvy was still a threat, despite the vaunted “Cook Method,” and just as Anson and his men thought Tinian to be a metaphorical extension of Great Britain, so too might these gardens serve the same function.

Rigby, however, points out the puzzling redundancy of planting gardens on Tahiti, an island chosen as a distant waystation specifically because of its preexisting natural abundance. Rigby thus concludes, “Cook’s reasons for planting gardens were therefore primarily medical, but also consciously imperial.”72 Gananath Obeyesekere paints Cook as a cynical imperialist who deliberately constructs a benevolent persona via activities like gardening to disguise the more insidious implications associated with plots of vegetables. Writing that Cook’s “civilizer persona is expressed in a variety of powerful symbolic sequences pertaining to fertility and order,” Obeyesekere argues the Endeavor and then Resolution were “self-consciously recognized as a Noah’s ark,” and that Cook’s gardens functioned as “primarily symbolic, supplanting the

69 Rigby, 81.
70 Rigby provides a detailed summation of the myriad readings of Cook’s Pacific gardens. Rigby, 81-84.
72 Rigby, 82.
disorderly way of savage peoples with ordered landscapes on the English model.” In Pratt’s estimation, gardens were harbingers of slavery and the plantation system, or “massive experiments in social engineering and discipline, serial production, the systemization of human life, [and] the standardizing of persons.” While gardens might have allowed British captains and readers of voyage literature to lay psychic claim to distant lands, the problem with Obeyesekere’s and Pratt’s line of reasoning is that Forster represents Tahiti as fertile, cultivated, and ordered prior to any European encounter.

Forster’s preface echoes Alexander Pope’s charge that “The proper study of mankind is MAN,” with his own assertion that he “has therefore made MAN his principle object” (lxxvii-lxxviii). Despite Forster’s grandiose claim that he has made “MAN” his “principal object,” much of his Observations has nothing to do with people at all. Instead, Forster focuses on the land itself, repeatedly accounting for the development and cultivation of land on different Pacific islands. This emphasis allows Forster to make observations on the nature of sovereignty and property in the Pacific, which in turn functions as the basis of his nascent theory of nation building. By focusing on cultivation as an indicator of civility and emphasizing improvement’s role in a shared cultural heritage, Forster reveals any number of interesting ideological investments held by the English. Cultivation, at least, in Tahiti, suggests a conflicted or contradictory pull for Forster. On the one hand, he reinscribes the social authority of landed elites by making an explicit linkage between liberty and private property. On the other, Forster’s conceptions of “improvement” reveal that cultivation and the commercial acquisition he disavows are inextricably linked.

74 Pratt, 36.
Forster’s teleological rendering of land begins with an examination of the formation of soil, noting that “[by] the excrements of seals, pinguins (sic), and shags, the soil of the country gradually becomes more and more elevated” (43). This gradual accumulation explains why some “tropical isles have all the appearance of a long existence and fertility” (41), but Forster also attempts to explain why other islands like Southern-Georgia and Staten-Land (the present-day Falklands) have lain relatively dormant. These islands exist “in that rude state in which they sprung up from the first chaos” (41). Indeed, this chaotic state does not sound like glorious creation at all, instead characterized only by “the horrors of desolation and silence of death” (41).

Forster goes on, however, to explain how cultivation mirrors the effect of the divine: “But when the surface of a land is clad with plants and diversified with birds and animals, then first we have an idea of the vivifying powers of nature and its great Lord” (41). Something as mundane as soil differentiates between “unimproved, rude lands” and those with “the appearance of a long existence and fertility.” Even in its gradual creation, soil functions as the substance from which all order flows, where decaying plant matter and animal excrement form a future promise: “All this scheming scene of destruction and confusion is one of the oeconomical actions of nature,” Forster writes, “hoarding up a precious quantity of the richest mould, for a future generation of men, who, one day or other, will live upon the rich products of this treasure soil” (43). The creation of order from chaos remains Forster’s primary ideological investment, and the fount from which all of his further observations flow.

For a Protestant minister, however, such descriptions sound almost sacrilegious. Some lands bear the stamp of the “great Lord,” but others remain chaotic, abortive attempts at a perfectly ordered creation. Even long before the Cook voyages, “real knowledge aimed at the status of theodicy,” which in turn justified “exploration and discovery as the completion of the
grand design inscribed by God in nature and time.” 75 In this intellectual climate, there can be no anomalies, no contingencies. If Forster’s Linnaean view of science endorses a grand providential design, then he must account for why God created the world as intentionally disordered. Earlier in the text, Forster obliquely attributes the scattered arrangement of Pacific archipelagos to the greatest of all Judeo-Christian narratives where divine order is restored through destruction and chaos, “a violent flood coming from the south-west that has produced this striking identity of conformation in these lands” (24-25). By suggesting a purposeful chaos, Forster grants the naturalist a sort of divine agency, because the naturalist must create order out of disorder. Moreover, by suggesting that God’s creation is, in some ways, flawed, Forster assigns humanity the divine duty to cultivate the world as a way of completing God’s creation. Thus, South-Georgia and Staten-Land are not disordered, but merely unimproved. They, in fact, hold a great promise for “the future generation of men” who will cultivate their rich soil. Such a view feeds into a (still) prevalent cultural fantasy that the Pacific might ease the ecological constraints of European nations, or that ecological crises can always be solved by some new “improvement.” Finally, it suggests that England’s great “improvers”—its aristocratic landowners—are in fact divinely ordained, both in action and station.

Following this logic, “civilization” functions as a signifier for those who have undertaken this divine charge. Versus the rude and unimproved landscapes around Cape Horn, Forster describes Tahiti as “improved”:

In the Society Islands we found very copious springs … [which] might vie with Horace’s *Fons Blandusiae*. The natives had enlarged it to a fine reservoir, surrounded by large stones, in a rustic manner, blended with pleasing simplicity … The chrystalline stream, constantly running from the reservoir, the verdure of

75 Lamb, 79.
the trees and environs, invited the traveller, in these hot regions, to a refreshing ablution of his wearied limbs, from which he rose with new vigour to support the sultriness of the climate, and to go cheerfully through the duties of life. (45)

Forster repeatedly comments on landscapes scattered through different island groups, but always returns to Tahiti to make specific points about cultivation. He expresses shock at his first landing on Tahiti because of its lack of vegetation, finding “very little bread-fruit, few or no apples, the bananas scarce … the greater part of the vegetables but moderately plentiful, and hogs scarcely to be found at all” and the land “covered in dry and dead herbage … [which] gave the country a barren and dreary look” (80). Returning in early spring, however, Forster observes “trees on the plains bending under the weight of bread-fruit; in the valleys the largest apple-trees were loaded with their excellent fruit; all the shores fringed by innumerable coconut trees, offered a vast profusion of these useful nuts; the valleys … were entirely covered with immense clusters of the horse-plantain, while each cottage was surrounded with considerable plantain-walks of the better sort” (80). In many ways, this effusive description echoes John Hawkesworth, whose Tahitian vision established a prevalent cultural (one might even say adolescent male) fantasy of a land free from labor and scarcity, typified by a sort of eighteenth-century “free love.” The subtle difference, however, hinges upon cultivation. During the winter visit Forster describes Tahiti in roughly the same terms he does Tierra del Fuego, South Georgia, and Staten-Land—barren—except for Tahitian agricultural practices. The “dreary look” proves the result of a controlled burn and letting fields lie fallow, preparing for a more abundant harvest. The rains are collected into reservoirs, where rivulets “the natives stem here and there by wears, made of large stones, in order to water the plantations” (81). The presence of fairly advanced agricultural practices like crop rotation and irrigation further emphasize the central image: “rich
plantations of bread-fruit, apple and cloth trees, and bananas” (81). Far from a natural paradise, the sustainable agricultural practices of the Tahitians transform their island from a lifeless Tierra del Fuego to an Edenic paradise. The providentialist overtones of Forster’s descriptions suggest that Eden can be regained by savvy land management. Moreover, the presence of plantations suggests that the Tahitians, like the English, exploit economies of scale to construct highly efficient agricultural concerns. The only thing conspicuously absent from Forster’s description is labor.

To reiterate the connection between providential order and the “oeconomies of nature,” Forster combines aesthetic description with usefulness. He writes that these “sweet purling streams” are lined with trees whose “shady branches give a coolness to the virgin-water, and thus bring refreshment, and the principles of life into the plains … spread[ing] happiness and plenty” (81). Like the vistas described by Walter and Robins on Juan Fernandez and Tinian, these views echo a distinctly English landscape aesthetic. Forster again stands astride a transitional moment, simultaneously advancing a new, Romantic way of viewing the world that focuses on natural beauty or the sublime over artifice, even as he supports an older, more neo-classical view of the land.76 Improvement, or “happy organization,” is achieved when “the efforts of the best and wisest men” combine with the natural world “by art” to “assist nature” (219). Forster’s description aesthetically transforms an irrigation ditch into the subject of poetry, while also suggesting that the Tahitians, like the lords of great English estates, have the ability to combine use and beauty, or the ability to find that elusive “genius of the place.”77

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76 See Smith’s *European Vision and the South Pacific* for a complete study of the effect Cook’s voyages had on landscape aesthetics and the Romantic turn.

77 Given that Forster’s entire project begins with Pope’s epigram from *An Essay on Man*, perhaps Forster borrowed some of the poet’s thoughts on landscapes, as well. Pope’s “Epistle to Richard Boyle, Earl of Burlington” espouses the importance of contriving landscapes that still seem to be the work of nature—the ironic height of artifice where artifice is eschewed.
A contrasting example of improved lands and the chaos of nature exists between the Society and Friendly islands. While the Tahitians create “sweet purling streams” that “enliven the picturesque scenery,” achieving a platonic ideal for Forster, the natives of the Friendly Islands rely solely on what nature provides them. As a result, they must live close to the shore with “rain water preserved in deep filthy pits and ponds, full of green, slimy, aquatic plants, and stinking from its stagnation” (81). Without the controlled burns employed by the Tahitians, “impenetrable woods cover the surface of these regions; [the] trees are no doubt here and there large and fine, but many are decayed, and still more lying on the ground rotting … the ground below is over-run with briars, and weeds, and climbers … the water stagnates every where, and causes immense swamps, which are unfit to serve either the inhabitants of the land, or those of the water” (99). Forster initially attributes this difference to a crude climatological determinism, concluding “such is the difference in the dispensation of the salutary rains, caused by the different structure of the isles” (81). Only the arbitrary dispensation of rainfall and other natural resources makes one civilization and culture inferior to another, he suggests, yet this does not change the fact Forster uses this dispensation as a way to measure ingenuity, labor and class organization, and cultivation.

Forster gauges civility not by a nation’s access to resources, but what a nation does with the resources it has. Nature’s unequal distribution makes the intervention of humanity all the more important. His thoughts on “Accidental Changes” to the globe begins with the startling (and prescient) assertion that “artificial changes” made by humankind are “not to be the least considerable” when compared to the “accidental causes” wrought by the progression of nature (99). Generalizing “man”—not Western European man—as “the lord of the creation on this globe,” Forster makes the point that on land untouched “there nature seems only to thrive, for in
reality it languishes, and is deformed by being left to itself” (99, emphasis Forster’s). Left to its own devices, nature is chaotic and useless. In essence, nature languishes without its “lord,” who must tend the garden: “as soon as the lord of the creation appears in these regions, he eradicates all those vegetables, which afford no nutriment to him … He preserves those plants, and cultivates those vegetables, which afford food, and other useful productions. All that is broken, decaying, and rotting, he carefully clears away, preserving the air from putrefaction and noxious effluvia” (99). The final result is easily predictable—“meadows … created by the industry of man, and supported by his ingenious contrivances” (99-100). Forster thus undercuts the notion of Tahiti as a terrestrial paradise of infinite plentitude, instead aligning it with a distinctly Western ethos—labor, cultivation, and land management.

III. Cultivation as Commerce

I suggest Forster uses his scientific training to portray Tahiti in ways that might deliberately appeal to English nostalgia, because “natural history participated in the constitution of the nation as a natural unit of analysis and action.” The Linnaean drive to order a disordered world certainly extended to landscapes, and Richardson theorizes Cook’s gardens functioned as a figurative connector between the Pacific and the “idealized countryside of southeast England.” Quoting Eve Darian-Smith, Richardson notes that “cultivation became an important ontological frame, and, through its linkage to the English garden landscape, translated into a visual aesthetics of power.” In the later eighteenth century, Britain’s burgeoning commercial economy and its dependence on overseas trade were read as a threat to the power and influence of traditional, aristocratic families who derived their wealth and status from land. In response, many of the

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78 Dettelbach, lviii.
79 Richardson, 157.
80 Richardson, 157.
temporal lords introduced programs of “land improvement,” whereby technological alterations like canals, enclosures, and new agricultural methods were introduced “for the relief of man’s estate.”

Gascoigne points out that the landed classes showed “a remarkable capacity for adaptation and renewal,” and although some of these improvements surely did benefit local populations, they could only be achieved by the massive capital investments and economies of scale available to large estates. “Improvement” remained directly tied to commerce, manufacturing, and social policy. Cook’s vegetable plots signify a connection between cultivation and civilization, but in this context “civilization” functions not as “an imposition of European model,” but the self-conscious recreation of “an idealized past in England.”

This program contains its own striking resemblance to “emotional mastery” in the Pacific; where emotional mastery sought to excuse imperialism, the landed classes rewrote a retrenchment of wealth, power, and influence as so many social welfare programs.

The confluence of nostalgia and land improvement, like botany and empire, did not escape the influence of Joseph Banks, who returned from Cook’s first voyage laden with flora, fauna, and tales of illicit affairs with Tahitian princesses that made him a celebrity. His great strength, too, lies in his skills as an “oeconomist,” for he organized the Kew Gardens around his collections and used his new-found influence to push for similar missions on subsequent Pacific voyages. Banks published relatively little and made only marginal contributions to a growing base of natural history knowledge, but was enormously influential in terms of the subsequent scientific expeditions to the Pacific and Asia that he organized and for which he secured funding.

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81 Qtd. in Gascoigne, *Science*, 66.
He and his assistant Daniel Solander drew the ire of their former teacher Linnaeus, who viewed them as mercenary careerists, concerned only with profiting financially and politically from their findings. Banks embodied the competing epistemological position that emphasized only “the practical benefits to be gained from scientific knowledge [as] the true measure of its worth,” and a concomitant “rejection of knowledge based on teleological or metaphysical explanations.”

Banks always viewed science as a means to an end: potential commercial and strategic advantages first, and then as a way of increasing British national prestige.

Given his attitude, Banks likely saw curiosity as a crucial aspect of commerce, quite simply because there can be no newfound commercial opportunities in the Pacific without first emphasizing scientific inquiry, which motivates a voyage of discovery. Mackay argues that Banks’s role on Cook’s initial voyage and his continuing role as patron of Pacific exploration was not necessarily about the accumulation of territory, curiosities, or knowledge, but was quite explicitly a form of imperial reconnaissance, particularly in the search for profitable plants similar to the spice trees of the Dutch East Indies and climates where their plantations might thrive. Outside of Spain’s exploitation of Latin America’s precious metals, the most profitable European possessions provided plant-based commodities like spices, tea, coffee, and sugar.

The immense Chinese tea trade, for instance, prompted Banks and others to devise schemes whereby tea might be cultivated in British colonies like India. Britain stood to save up to £700,000 (roughly $840 million today) annually if the scheme had succeeded (it eventually would, but not until well into the 19th century). Banks saw the cultivation of Indian plants like cotton, sago, and dates as a way of weaning Britain off of a dependence on foreign imports.

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85 For an explanation of the feud between Banks, Solander, and Linnaeus, see Dettelbach, lix. Linnaeus viewed Forster as his “purist” replacement, and expressed satisfaction at Banks’s exclusion from the second voyage.
86 Mackay, 25.
87 Gascoigne, Science, 24.
88 Mackay, 28.
while simultaneously supplying goods and raw materials for export to China which might
“annihilate the immense debit of Silver which we are annuely obligd to Furnish from Europe.”

The logic of easing trade imbalances culminated with the cruel logic that launched the most
nefarious of these schemes, when opium from British-India became the primary British import to
China.

The valuable plants Banks sought, however, were hard to come by. Forster notes in the
*Observations* that Linnaeus wanted tea trees for his Uppsala garden, but naturalists were rarely
allowed ashore by the Chinese, and could “much less make any stay in places, which are worthy
of the attention of the curious observer” (126). The savvy Chinese jealously guarded
agricultural trade secrets, regarding naturalists as the agents of commercial espionage. While tea
transplantation proved largely unsuccessful, other projects fared better. Hemp, the primary
material for making rope and hence of great importance to a maritime nation, was long procured
from Russia, until the British perfected hemp plantations in India. Sugar and coffee, themselves
highly valued cash crops, were transplanted to the British West Indies for the same reason.
The introduction of these labor-intensive crops required the importation of slave labor, which gave
rise to perhaps the most famous transplantation scheme of all—Captain Bligh’s ill-fated mission
aboard the *Bounty* to transport breadfruit as a cheap food source for West Indian slaves.

When singing the praises of Tahitian cultivation, Forster suggests that transplantation
should become a standard feature of Pacific voyages. Noting that Cook’s gift of the
domesticated goat to the Tahitians would “enable that brave people to make many improvements
in their domestic life” (235-236), he also suggests that an intrepid “benefactor of mankind”

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90 Rigby provides a concise overview of the obstacles (both natural and bureaucratic) faced by naturalists in China. Rigby, 86.
91 See Gascoigne, 114-118.
might also supply new crops like dates, oranges, and lemons to complete the picture of Tahitian plenty (236). Although the mention of pepper or spice plants remains conspicuously absent, Forster self-consciously eschews the discussion of valuable plants to deflect criticism that he might have been making his own commercial speculations. His lectures and journals, however, reveal a fundamental interest in possible cash crops. For instance, Dettelbach points to a moment when Linnaeus discovered that cinnamon trees were in fact laurels and could be grown outside of the Dutch East Indies. The London Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce offered a prize for planters who might successfully raise the tree in the West Indies, to which Forster responded with a rousing endorsement, citing an end to dependence on Dutch cinnamon and thus a victory for “the spirit of liberty and patriotism.”92 Perhaps more telling, Forster records an instance when (he suspects) natives on Tanna misled him about a particular grove of beautiful, flowering trees. Forster spat on one man and called him “evil,” effectively wrecking any hope of good relations with the islanders. Reprimanded by Cook, Forster flew into a rage, claiming that his scientific work would be disturbed, and demanding that the marines should hold the natives at bay while he completed his surveys. Dettelbach reads this particular instance as an affront to Forster’s “honor and authority as a naturalist, who needs to identify that tree,”93 but another explanation might be that Forster placed especial emphasis on a tree which he suspected (correctly) to be a nutmeg. Forster’s inability to learn more about the nutmegs on Tanna thwarts his best chance at investigating the possibility of large-scale cultivation—a missed opportunity to score a victory, like his tutor Linnaeus’s, for “the spirit of liberty and patriotism.”

92 Qtd. by Dettelbach, lxiii.
93 Dettelbach, lxxiii.
Forster naturalizes the Tahitians as forebears of the English through this ideology of landscape “improvement” and aesthetics. The linkage among curiosity, cultivation, and civilization thus serves as a mirror for an idealized social class of English landowners, defined by their improvement and beneficence. Rehearsing a Lockean, Whiggish reading of civil society, Forster asserts that cultivation leads people “to stipulate among themselves, not to destroy each others plantations … and to give each other mutual assistance” (152). Furthermore, Forster frames cultivation as a symbolic projection of aristocratic hegemony, representing it as a bulwark against monarchical absolutism. For the Tahitians, common labor and “all kinds of dirty work” cause certain parts of the population to “degenerate as it were towards the second race, but always preserve some remains of their original type; which, in their chiefs or Arees, and the better sort of people, appears in its full lustre and perfection” (154). The Arees (or aristocracy) represent a Platonic ideal of humanity whose fitness to govern is signified by their understanding of land management. Although Forster dismisses animal husbandry as “not so much in the power of man,” he argues that “cultivation, or the art of raising [crops] by his industry, care, and labour … is the only foundation of all the felicity which man ever can attain in this life. All vegetables … are moreover, capable of being multiplied in a stupendous proportion, by human industry” (234-235). Cultivation, Forster suggests, can eliminate human want and misery, thereby attaining a “universal peace and order” for all societies and nations. He casually dismisses the fabled Golden Age as more Hobbesian than idyllic, noting that “a pastoral state, could never attain to that degree of improvement and happiness, to which agriculture, and the cultivation of vegetables, will easily and soon lead [people]” (235). Forster caps this paean to vegetables by equating cultivation with “a noble and disinterested desire to work for the common weal” in a spirit of “true patriotism” (236-237, emphasis Forster’s). Inconsistencies exist,
however. If the “true patriotism” of cultivation “teaches individuals to scorn to enjoy advantages which cannot become universal, or must be purchased at the expense of the happiness of the community” (237), then how does Forster explain the social hierarchies created by labor and “all kinds of dirty work” that lead to a degenerated “second race” in civilized societies?

Forster rehearses a Lockean premise for the creation of private property and estates, suggesting that in a nascent contractual government “every one began to look upon the land occupied by his trees or roots, as having a more immediate connexion with his person, or with the family or society to which he belonged; and hence arose the first ideas of property” (221). This conception of private land, so central to an aristocratic ethos in Britain, is reinforced by Forster’s suggestion that “isles are … more apt to promote and to accelerate civilization, than large continents; for in these, the inhabitants having too much room to roam over the country, and to disperse, in case of a disgust, or offence, they are prevented from entering into associations” (221). In other words, island nations benefit from the necessity of contractual rule, thus establishing parliamentary government regulated by the most worthy members of its society. The Tahitian “parliament” invests a king “with a degree of authority and power, sufficient to enable him to become beneficial to his subjects, without permitting him to oppress them” (229). Meanwhile, the king’s earls and dukes, or “chiefs of districts,” both “support and check the royal dignity: they form the great council of the nation, assembled on important affairs … without them the king is unable to execute great achievements … and therefore prevent his progress towards despotism, by balancing his power, or by opposing his increase of prerogative” (229). This picture of Tahitian aristocracy clearly configures them in terms identifiable with the English landed aristocracy, who from the time of Magna Carta saw themselves as the guarantors of liberty.
These depictions of the Arees represent land as the primary factor in the creation of contractual government, thereby joining the two cultures with an integral component of each nation’s collective identity. Forster employs the Tahitians as a direct antecedent to a historically “pure” Englishness formed from contractual government and land stewardship. This basis for civil contract, however, also gives rise to a more recognizable—and darker—vision of civility: “Such are the beginnings of arts and cultivation, such is the rise of civil societies; sooner or later they cause distinctions of rank, and the various degrees of power, influence, and wealth, which, more or less are observed among mankind” (152). Cultivation, he asserts, even goes so far to create “a material difference in the colour, habits, and forms of the human species” (152). By linking cultivation both to the creation of civil society and to the creation of material differences among people, Forster offers a scientific—yet nationalistic—explanation for why he believes civilization does, in fact, inherently require categories of difference and otherness.

IV. The Yonder Fair Daughter of Creation

As importantly, Forster uses commerce to justify social and gendered hierarchies more so at home than he does on Tahiti and other islands. Forster’s thoughts on clothing, for instance, reveal more about Europe than they do the Pacific. In the case of the Tahitians, Forster rehearses a weary trope linking clothing to civilization and cultivation, noting that the natives systematically husband trees whose bark “is soon to become the garment of its cultivator” (100). Forster’s earlier writings on clothing as an indicator of civility reveal its function in both the metaphorical and literal oeconomy. The clothes stuffs of Europe, he writes, “are yet beautified by the Application of various productions taken from the animal, vegetable, & mineral kingdom in the vats of the dyer & the house of the calico & linen-printer, so that each age, each business,
and each station of life, from the throne to the footman may have its choice & its *distinction*” (lxii, emphasis mine). Cultivation and human industry aid the naturalist’s work by codifying order in the form of social hierarchies: “natural history made rank and station part of a natural display” and “the greater the variety of goods supplied by nature and commerce, the clearer and finer the distinctions between different stations and the less the chance of confusion, disorder, and miscegenation.”

Despite Forster’s claims of one originary species for all humanity, he seems to endorse the idea that the species must nevertheless conform to specific hierarchies and gradations readily apprehended by external indicators of rank and station. Cultivation might be the primary indicator of civility, but only when combined with a commercial ethos. To echo Pope again, the fruits of cultivation and commerce function as “nature to advantage dressed.”

Forster yokes natural beauty and human industry as a way of signifying station and hierarchy, and he expands this discussion through the metaphorical vehicle of the “yonder fair Daughter of the Creation [whose] conquering Look brings to her Feet a Crowd of Adorers” (lxiv). In the passage that follows, Forster portrays the commercial reinforcement of predetermined notions of social order through the signifier of femininity. Forster questions if the woman’s “crowd of adorers” is “owing only to her superior charms,” to which he answers “I believe not! For wrap her up in rags, she may have the same sweet & victorious Countenance, she never will be the Admiration of the Nobleman, of the Squire, of the Clerk, perhaps not even that of some honest guardian of Horses” (lxiv). Echoing a misogynistic trope popular in the eighteenth century decrying the ability of cosmetics to falsify a woman’s nature or essence, Forster suggests that a woman properly adorned might attract a nobleman or king, while the same woman without her accoutrements is unattractive even to the lowest stable boy. Forster

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92 Dettelbach, lxiii.
reverses the trope, however, celebrating the conjoining of the natural and the artificial to produce a more beauteous, whole product:

Wrap this same Person in the finest Dutch Linnen, in the best chosen Silks, let nature bring her Toilette to this fine Lady, some Vermillion to colour her cheeks, some precious Stones to rival the brightness of her Eyes, some fine filaments of Flax artfully tyed into Brabant Lace, to conceal slyly some of her natural Beauties … let the Flowers lent her their Balm, distilled into essences to spread her odoriferous Smell wherever she moves. All Rangs (sic) of Life will come & sacrifice at the Altar of this Divinity, Hommage of Desire. (lxiv)

The “fair daughter” exists as “a goddess in which the natural and social order could be worshiped at once, as an object of ‘desire,’ and her priest was the natural historian.”95 “Cultivation” is expanded into a jointure of human endeavor and the bounties of nature, with the fair daughter as yet another object in need of “improvement” to awaken “the genius of the place.” Just as the fair daughter needs the help of nature to attract the nobleman, nature is powerless to help the fair daughter without the aid of commerce and industry—the thread turned into Dutch linen, the raising of the silk worm, the creation of cosmetics and perfumes from the stones and flowers of the earth. The takeaway remains that nature does not thrive unaided; without human management, it languishes, just as the natural beauty of the woman is wasted if not improved by these products of a world market.

The “fair daughter” self-consciously embodies a Linnaean oeconomy because the various cosmetics, fabrics, and perfumes signify her place in a social order as nobleman’s consort rather than a stable boy’s prostitute. In this case, commerce functions as a necessary part of the naturalist’s toolkit, creating and reinforcing gendered and hierarchial social structures. The

95 Dettelbach, lxiv.
teleology of commerce is not simply to effect crass material gain, but to “guarantee [order] in the social world, by showing the nation where and how to satisfy its wants, create a closed commerce, and permit ‘all stations of life’ to fulfill and perfect their given functions.”

Little wonder, then, that the proliferation of luxury goods, like tea, china, and silks, proved so alarming. In addition to signifying England’s dependency on a foreign power like China, even inanimate objects might disrupt social order itself by providing an avenue whereby a woman meant for the poor stable boy ends up pursued by her social betters.

The lion’s share of scholarly work on Forster has focused, in fact, on his portrayal of women—not surprising, given Forster’s rather straightforward judgment that women were the gauge of a society’s progress. For instance, Forster admonishes New Zealand’s men for forcing their daughters into prostitution, while praising Tahitian society for placing “the fair sex … [in] a greater equality with the men” (259-260). Wilson, however, draws attention to Forster’s “aesthetic evolutionism,” which ranks civility alongside a scale of female beauty.

At the apex were British women, most beautiful because of their fair complexion, the Tahitians next, and so on. Forster, however, worries himself with what he sees as a disturbing similarity between British and Tahitian women—the refusal of sex. In his journal, Forster describes Tahitian women as “coquettes” and “jilts” who “show uncommon fondness for Foreigners,” but “will not comply to sleep with them, unless they be common prostitutes, or the bribe very great and tempting.”

Both Guest and Wilson note Forster’s alarm stems less from loose morals than it does a violation of an unspoken sexual contract. This sexual exchange (or lack thereof) positions men as supplicants, destabilizing the gender hierarchy through a reversal of sexual consumerism.

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96 Dettelbach, lxxiv.
97 Wilson, 179-180.
98 Forster, Resolution Journal, 356-357.
In this context, Forster signals anxiety about female consumption, but how might we reconcile his portrayal of the richly laden, conspicuously consuming “fair daughter” and Tahitian women? Male observers (and who better than naturalists) assert an aesthetic standard of beauty which puts them back in the role of collector, organizer, and priest of the natural world, even as female consumption represents a threat to this carefully constructed aesthetic. The male observer controls the unruly nature of female consumerism (and its concomitant sexual energy) by safely containing it within an aesthetic discourse of civility and morality only a hair’s breadth from coquetry. Civility, and consequently true Britishness, becomes a transcultural ideal conferred by a proper aesthetic standard that is both readily recognizable by genteel men of taste and embraced by truly polite and civil women.

We might think of Forster’s fair daughter within the discourses of a “national body,” or a body that might signal what it means to be truly British. “Bodies in contact,” write Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, “provided a unique opportunity for the production of knowledge around gender and sexual difference, knowledge that, in turn, offered apparent proof of the comparative humanity of European civilization.”\(^9\) Jeng-Guo S. Chen argues that theories of both masculinity and femininity played an integral part in this construction of comparative history, noting that “femininity and female virtues increasingly shaped the general character of social mores; [masculine virtues] were no longer considered the cardinal virtues of modern society.”\(^10\) The fair daughter, versus her Tahitian counterparts, might signal these virtues, thereby reconfirming gender hierarchies by signifying dependence, given that she must rely on

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merchants, naturalists, and the goods they procure for her station in life. Without these men, even stable boys would not pay attention to her.

Forster offers a paradoxical vision because his notion of commerce simultaneously enforces and destabilizes this “natural” order. Take, for example, Forster’s critique of the mind-boggling expenditures of technology, manpower, and money necessary for one European’s supper: “The pampered epicure in Europe knows hardly the multifarious ingredients of his disguised ragouts, and his palled appetite remains indifferent to the almost infinite variety carried to his table from every quarter of the globe; nor has he the satisfaction to know how or where these things are produced, or manufactured, while the more happy inhabitant of Taheitee plants his own breadfruit tree, and plucks the fruit for his own use” (345). The “multifarious ingredients” are combined to create a new product, just like the fair daughter’s cosmetics, perfumes, and jewels, but Forster stresses the ragout as a “disguise,” a means by which even the stultifying and gauche consumer, who takes no interest in the world appearing on her or his dinner plate, might appear possessing of good taste. An implicit link exists between Cook’s sailors, naively buying excrement from the “waggish” Tongan boy, and the pampered epicure who ingests ragouts more out of fashion than enjoyment. And, if civility and consumerism are as closely related as Forster suggests, both examples raise doubts about the so-called civility of Western Europeans and their excessive drive to consume at any cost. Forester celebrates commerce when it confers a so-called “natural” order, but critiques it as greedy when its progenitors’ materialism threatens to undermine or destabilize class systems or falsify someone’s true nature.

Given that commerce functioned as a component of self-identification for the communities and polities of the still-emerging British nation, it follows that “oeconomies of
nature” and their constituent role in literal economies become part of that self-identification. The nation becomes, in a sense, its own economy of nature because it functioned as a readily recognizable entity which might be studied and understood in terms of its own social oeconomies and hierarchies. Despite Forster’s desire for a system of natural economies free from the taint of commerce, he cannot deny (or divorce) the reality that natural history had become a means for thinking of the nation state itself; if natural historians like the safely Protestant Forster thought themselves priests deciphering God’s providential order on earth, why would the conception of the nation escape this providential order? The Pacific, in particular, proves influential in this crafting of a national past and identity because it necessitated a new way of understanding the world. Forster’s fair daughter performs another important piece of ideological labor because the metaphor exposes the complex relationship among social order, gender, and commerce for both English and indigenous peoples at home and abroad.
CHAPTER 5

GO EAST, YOUNG WOMAN:
REWRITING THE PACIFIC TRADITION IN
PERSUASION

If *Persuasion* (1818) has a moral paragon, it is not Anne Elliot, but the unflappable Sophia Croft. Mrs. Croft implacably manages the domestic and professional affairs of her husband Admiral Croft as she travels the world with him. Her professional and domestic acumen draws attention to the manners and land management associated with the landed gentry neighbourhoods of “three or four families” with which Austen built her classic novels, and also to the wider geopolitical contexts of Austen’s world.1 During a conversation with Mrs. Musgrove, the matron of the house at Uppercross and second only to the Elliot’s of Kellynch Hall in social standing, Mrs. Croft refutes the myopic view that a journey across the Atlantic to the West Indies makes one “a great traveller.”2 Playfully diminishing the importance of the West Indies, Mrs. Croft says that she has traveled “pretty well … in the fifteen years of [her] marriage; though many women have done more … I have crossed the Atlantic four times, and have been once to the East Indies … But I have never been beyond the Streights [of Florida]—and never was in the West Indies. We do not call Bermuda or Bahama, you know, the West Indies.”3 Mrs. Musgrove’s ignorance of

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2 Mrs. Musgrove’s son Dick served under Wentworth on the West Indian station before his death, most likely influencing his mother’s self-serving idea of “a great traveller.”

geography is apparent, given that she “could not accuse herself of having ever called [Bermuda and Bahama] anything in the whole course of her life” (51).

Although Mrs. Croft has sailed to the East Indies only once, she has, in fact, spent the majority of her married life there. Mrs. Croft explains that the only time she has been away from her husband was “the winter that I passed by myself at Deal, when the Admiral (Captain Croft then) was in the North Sea” (51). She and the Admiral have now returned to England after having been stationed in the East Indies for “several years” (17). Mrs. Croft’s notion of a “great traveller” asks us to reconsider certain aspects of Persuasion and Austen’s fiction more broadly, particularly when we consider how the “great traveller” is influenced by a tradition of Pacific voyage literature. The “great traveller” motif present throughout the novel allows Persuasion to perform a geopolitical re-centering of the British empire, because the idealized vision of married and professional life that the Croft’s represents is defined abroad in the East Indies, rather than in England.

At this time, the “East Indies” might generically refer to a wide swath of ocean stretching from Bengal in British India to the Spice Islands of present-day Indonesia and even beyond to Canton harbor in China. Sophia Croft’s description of her time in the East Indies, however, is deliberately vague. Mrs. Croft’s self-conscious omission of her husband’s role in the East Indies allows Austen and readers alike to sidestep the Admiral’s probable and problematic task there, which was protecting British East India merchantmen transporting opium to China. This scenario also poses its own historical problems. Women were not allowed in Canton,

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4 Admiral Croft was present for the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar and the novel is set in 1814. The Admiral’s career, while indebted to the Trafalgar action, has been made mostly in South Asia.

5 While not as lucrative as raiding enemy shipping, convoy duty still proved a financial boon for captains and admirals. The East India Company provided patronage for the safe delivery of goods in the form “Company Treasure,” a “1 or 2 per cent commission on cargoes of treasure to the value of hundreds of thousands of pounds.” Brian Southam, Jane Austen and the Navy (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2000): 81.
that Mrs. Croft would have to be left in Portuguese Macao while the Admiral completed the escort. If so, then Mrs. Croft was not with the Admiral as she claims, although it is unlikely that Mrs. Croft would lie about her time abroad. If the Admiral was operating mostly within the Bay of Bengal, his fleet existed to protect British trade interests, and, in 1814, the date of the novel’s setting, that meant the East India Company’s opium trade. By the time of the novel’s publication in 1818, the East India Company had been rocked by its own scandals like the corruption trial of Sir Warren Hastings, and the exploitive conditions undergirding the opium trade began to look just as problematic as slavery. Mrs. Croft’s self-conscious omission of her husband’s role in the East Indies allows Austen and readers alike to sidestep the problematic opium question, displacing these anxieties onto Persuasion’s visions of naval heroism that find their provenance in the East. The presence of idealized naval figures like the Admiral and Mrs. Croft, for example, help to dispel the corruption and exploitation that continue to coalesce around British India and the opium trade. Later in the novel, for instance, Captain Harville’s assimilation of foreign goods into his home refutes fears of the social chaos goods like tea and china were thought to represent.

In Persuasion, Austen places the Atlantic in direct opposition to what the Pacific, and, by extension, the East Indies, represent. Austen, for example, associates the Atlantic and its trade with the rigid social structures, aristocratic corruption, and perceived effeminacy of old world Europe. The vain, foppish scion of the Elliot family Sir Walter, who judges women and men by their looks, scoffs that the only navy men he knows have prematurely aged and look “the colour of mahogany” (15). Taken mostly from Spanish possessions in South America but also British Jamaica, mahogany was a valuable trade good and highly prized by aristocrats and the socially-mobile commercial classes as the raw material for expensive furniture. The dense landowner
does not even consider—or care—that the wood for his favorite table is one of the products of a complex geopolitical trade circuit that has embroiled England in numerous colonial wars and the slave trade. By describing admirals as pieces of mahogany, however, Sir Walter assigns them a symbolical value, represented by the literal value of the wood. Sir Walter’s derisive taunt nevertheless illustrates that men like Admiral Croft and Wentworth guarantee the safe passage of this prized timber, illustrating their role as navy officers in expanding and protecting the commerce of the empire.  

Given its role in furniture-making, mahogany also is identified with the domestic realm, and with it the reintegration of the mariner into the domestic order that the furniture of the drawing room and the bedroom represents. Despite Sir Walter’s obsession with a hereditary, landed aristocracy, by comparing admirals to mahogany, he unwittingly establishes the fact that in Persuasion both monetary and moral value come not from a Pemberley but from the ocean—a radical departure from Austen’s previous fiction, and a rhetorical move easily associated with the Pacific novels of Defoe.

Austen’s other representations of the Atlantic are rarely flattering. Emma’s (1815) Augusta Suckling, later Mrs. Elton, is introduced as the gauche daughter of a Bristol merchant. As Britain’s main slave-trading port, Bristol and the slave-wealth concentrated there paint Mrs. Elton’s money and nouveau riche manners not simply as unfashionable, but as fundamentally

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6 The professional classes also commodify naval men, however. Sir Walter’s lawyer Mr. Shepherd views them as a source of potential wealth. With “the peace … turning all our rich Navy Officers ashore” (13), Mr. Shepherd speculates he can find a renter for Kellynch, and perhaps even act as a prize agent, a lawyer who could maneuver the tedious legal proceedings of claiming prize money from captured ships, men, and goods. For an overview of the prize system, see Southam, 109-132.

7 Edward Copeland details the divergent fates of James Austen and Charles Powlett, a clergyman known to the Austen’s, according to their shopping lists at the fashionable Ring Brothers. Powlett buys nothing but mahogany furniture and is soon bankrupt. Copeland suggests that “the crucial difference … is not in the furniture that the two men bought … but in their patterns of expense.” Copeland, “The Austens and the Elliots: A Consumer’s Guide to Persuasion,” in Jane Austen’s Business, ed. by Juliet McMaster and Bruce Stovel (London: Macmillan, 1996): 144-147.

8 Nina Auerbach voices a similar conclusion: “Money and the world of the future lie in work, of which the sea is the chief emblem.” Auerbach, Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985): 49.
immoral. In *Mansfield Park* (1814), Thomas Bertram suddenly leaves his estate in England to attend to the business of his sugar plantations in Antigua. Although critics like Edward Said suggest this episode represents Austen’s tacit approval of the slave trade, Bertram’s absence has come to be read by many critics as a critique of slavery, because all of the disorder in the novel springs from his absence. Although the novel’s hero (and Mrs. Croft’s brother) Captain Frederick Wentworth makes his fortune in the West Indies and Sir Walter thinks of the empire only in Atlantic terms, Mrs. Croft undercuts the strategic importance of the Atlantic circuit by relocating moral virtue in the East Indies.

Factors aside from the moral problem of slavery further fueled skepticism of the Atlantic world. England and France routinely fought over valuable islands of sugar plantations, culminating with the (only) successful slave rebellion on Santo Domingo under the leadership of Toussaint L’Ouverture. While Britain initially hoped to retake the colony and re-establish white racial supremacy in 1797, its colonial wars in the Caribbean (both then and in the past) were disastrous. During the Santo Domingo campaign, 80,000 soldiers died mostly from yellow fever, including the Reverend Thomas Fowle, fiancé of Austen’s sister Cassandra. These results recall the devastating outbreaks of yellow fever that plagued the failed expedition of Admiral Vernon to Cartagena in 1739 during the War of the Austrian Succession. Designed as the counterstroke to George Anson’s thrust into the Pacific, the campaign was designed for troops to take Cartagena, link up with Anson, and create a land bridge to transport goods bound for China across the isthmus of Panama rather than around Cape Horn. Ship’s surgeon-turned-novelist Tobias Smollett witnessed the destruction of the expedition first-hand, recounting the terrible conditions and disease in *Roderick Random* (1748). Providing a sharp contrast to Anson’s
“defeat” of scurvy and mastery of Pacific space, Smollett anticipates Austen’s association of the Atlantic with war, disease, immorality, and corruption.

Whereas Smollet’s brutal satire rewrites British military adventurism as a form of contagion, Austen’s *Persuasion* must displace these anxieties of war and disease in order for its hero Wentworth to be safely reinscribed within the realm of polite society. By 1806, when Wentworth wins promotion to post-captain at the Battle of Santo Domingo, the political climate regarding slavery had shifted from a 1797 call to re-enslave the sugar colony to calls for abolition. As Ruth Perry argues, “The degree to which the West Indian theater of operations sapped England’s strength in her contest with France, the extraordinary casualties from tropical disease, and the growing disapproval of the English public of the slave trade upon which the colonial economy depended—these led to a cease-fire and withdrawal of troops from Santo Domingo the year after Thomas Fowle died.”

Although English support for abolition in the Caribbean was a politically motivated move to damage France’s lucrative sugar trade—“the French colony of Santo Domingo alone … produced more sugar than all the British colonies put together”—Wentworth fights to protect “English supremacy in those waters and defend[] Haiti from Napoleon’s attempt to re-enslave it.”

Despite his West Indian involvement, Wentworth frees himself from suspicion by defending former slaves from their colonial overseers, and his capture of French privateers in the *Asp* and the *Laconia* rewrites his patriotic wartime predation as a larger, symbolic attack on the slave trade and the English aristocrats like Bertram whose wealth is dependent upon it.

9 Perry, 95.
10 Perry, 96.
11 Morgan succinctly articulates this point: “His enemies were explicitly the French, but also—as inextricably tied with the French through the mere mention of Santo Domingo—the cruelties of the slave trade and of the plantation slavery system.” Morgan, 92. The British passed abolition laws in fits and starts. The landmark Somerset case in 1772 abolished slavery in England, followed by the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and finally the abolition of
West Indies, and thus has never been embroiled in the unpopular theater or forced to defend, however implicitly, slavery. Mrs. Croft’s focus on the East Indies rhetorically shifts the center of the empire eastward, dismissing the morally fraught (and increasingly unprofitable) sugar and coffee-producing plantation colonies of Jamaica and the West Indies in favor of an Eastern trade.

Many critics have read Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson as the model for Wentworth’s idealized naval masculinity in *Persuasion*, although Nelson’s affair with Emma Lady Hamilton places him squarely in the middle of a Regency debate about effeminacy and corrupted masculinity often associated with British India and the Regency court of George IV. As a slavery advocate who located England’s commercial future in the Atlantic “triangular” trade, Nelson fails to live up to the idealistic vision of commerce, travel, and domesticity provided by the Croft’s. Thus, I argue, Austen must look farther East to a broader, idealized Pacific tradition for her heroic models. Austen ironically draws on a tradition of Pacific travel literature to reinscribe her naval characters safely within the bounds of domesticity. Wentworth’s capture of French shipping can be imaginatively grafted onto a patriotic tradition of military adventurism in the vein of Drake and Anson, even as his action at the 1806 Battle of Santo Domingo symbolically rejects the traffic in human flesh. Too, Wentworth makes his real fortune in the Mediterranean, where he would have also been responsible for shepherding East Indiamen carrying loads of luxury items bound for England into protected British waters. Mrs. Croft and her husband, who embody Austen’s rejection of the evils of the Atlantic world, symbolically extend the tropes that defined an idealized Pacific—freedom from war, slavery, and disease—to

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slavery in the British Empire in 1833. The territories controlled by the East India Company, however, were exempted from the law until 1843.

the East Indies, effectively whitewashing the moral hypocrisy of the opium trade. Wentworth, Croft, and even Harville are indebted to a prevalent idea, subscribed to even by Austen, that the empire makes men worthy of England’s legacy and fit to govern her in the future. This chapter examines how *Persuasion* completes the transformation of the Pacific mariner, rehearsing what it might actually look like when such imperial males finally return home to govern. For her model of masculinity, however, Austen looks not to the corrupted Admiral Lord Nelson, but back to the characters that had already been established in the Pacific texts.

I. Professionalism and Professional Domesticity

Almost every critic of *Persuasion* has considered the role of the Royal Navy in the novel, most notably Tim Fulford, Jocelyn Harris, Ruth Perry, and Brian Southam, although no one has focused on the unique set of concerns presented by contemporary discourses surrounding the Indian Ocean or how Austen’s reading of the Pacific tradition influences her fiction. These critics, for example, have tended to pigeonhole the Royal Navy, one of the eighteenth-century’s largest, most diverse, and most logistically complicated social institutions, with the rather generic, homogeneous term “professionalism.” Professionalism in *Persuasion* is often read as the basis for Austen’s radical reimagining of British society as a meritocracy. What proves so fascinating in the novel, however, is Austen’s linkage between this social redefinition and Britain’s Eastern empire, and particularly the way women are shaped by the empire. The professionalism of the naval fraternity—Wentworth’s patriotic raiding, Croft’s protection of British trade, and Harville’s appropriation of foreign objects—makes for more suitable

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13 Fulford and Harris focus almost exclusively on Nelson in relation to the navy’s meritocratic power structure. Southam examines naval culture in exhaustive detail, using Austen’s two naval brothers Charles and Francis as a touchstone for the navy’s influence on her writing.
guarantors of a British future than the ineffectual masculine figures of Sir Walter, Charles Musgrove, and William Elliot, but it is the women behind the navy men—Mrs. Croft and Anne Elliot—who imbue these new forms of professional merit with a moral authority. Intimately linking domesticity and imperialism, Austen anticipates a key ideological component of Britain’s Victorian empire even as she imagines women as capable of undergoing a heroicizing process similar to the sailors. While men return from the East as heroes who banish the colonial specter of effeminacy and cosmopolitanism, women like Mrs. Croft return ready to legislate the morality and manners that reimagine the gender roles necessary to govern the empire.

Although *Persuasion* undoubtedly *does* endorse the navy as an institution representing a new breed of professional men better-suited to rule England than the Sir Walter’s of the world, such readings can be greatly expanded by contextualizing how naval service and a global awareness shaped Austen’s representation of domesticity in the novel. Scholars such as Anne Mellor, Claudia Johnson, and Margaret Cohen argue that Austen’s geopolitical awareness in *Persuasion* creates possibilities for redefining the social order as fundamentally feminine. Boldly declaring that novels like *Persuasion* contribute to a reconfiguring of “British national identity … as feminine,” Mellor notes that the famous final sentence, that “[Anne] gloried in being a sailor’s wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance” (178), conflates domesticity with the navy as two professions relevant for reasons both national and domestic. Anne’s “tax” assigns a real rather than simply symbolic worth to her marriage. The virtues of domesticity, the tax suggests, can be assessed in objective terms alongside the figurative terms of the “glory” that comes from being a part of the navy. Austen suggests a radical parity between the domestic and the naval in terms of geopolitical importance.
How, then, does Austen reimagine the domestic as another sort of geopolitical profession? Mellor writes, “It is the profession of women, of English wives, to define the very moral character or heart of the new British nation … to mother both the nation and her far-flung colonies, and thus to become the visible embodiment of Britannia herself.”

Suggesting that “Persuasion asks us to consider whether women’s happiness may not be better served by cutting loose from [landed society’s] arrangements,” Claudia Johnson echoes the argument made by Dampier, Defoe, and most Pacific writers, who view the strictures of landed society as unreasonable and unsuitable for the emerging global reality of Britain’s empire.

In this regard, “Landed life is not taken to task simply because it promotes mediocrity or ignorance, but rather because its insularity is psychologically damaging, especially for women.” These reconfigurations of national identity, however, cannot occur without a fundamental reimagining of gender roles. Monica F. Cohen points to this new “professional domesticity” as “a radical means of nonrevolutionary change” based on women’s “social and ethical expertise.”

Although not suggesting that women should be relegated solely to a domestic role, Cohen argues that *Persuasion* explores how progressive forms of Tory feminism might realign social

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structures.18 This vision of the British woman as the arbiter of manners and morals on a national and global level reveals the origins of the ideological relationship between the domestic and the imperial, where “home stood at the center of nation and empire.”19 Considered within the context of *Persuasion*, Mrs. Croft and her professional domesticity are “made” on the fringes of empire just as much as her husband and his naval career are. Professional domesticity, for Austen, is an Oriental invention; whereas the generic “Orient” was thought to be an effeminate, sexualized space that sapped British men of their vigor (like Admiral Nelson), Austen revisions this space as a site where women might discover new forms of agency. Mrs. Croft illustrates how the Eastern empire functions not simply as the incubator of a new professional class, but as the womb of a domestic professionalism that fundamentally redefines ideas of self and society.

Austen’s reimagining of British society has inspired widely divergent readings of *Persuasion*. Many see it as evidence that “revolutionary” characters will inherit control of England from a morally and financially bankrupt aristocracy withering on the vine.20 Still others read *Persuasion* as a cautionary tale or implicit recapitulation of conservative values. Marilyn Butler, for instance, argues, “[Austen] believes that the gentleman … derives his personal dignity from the contribution he makes at the head of an organic, hierarchical, small community. It is for such a community, ideally perceived, that her novels speak.”21 And Wentworth, who ostensibly represents an idealized vision of a new, professional class meant to rule England,

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18 Mellor agrees, arguing, “Women writers were primarily responsible for insisting that the conduct of the British government must be moral—that political leaders should demonstrate the same Christian values that mothers and daughters—and father and sons—were expected to practice.” Mellor, 11-12.

19 Fulford, 171.

20 See William Deresiewicz, *Jane Austen and the Romantic Poets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004): 127-158. See also Auerbach, who writes that Wentworth offers “mobility to a static society and emotional release to a suppressed heroine,” ultimately concluding that the novel is one of “utopian hopes.” Auerbach, 45-46. Kirkham reads the novel as a call for “rational feminism,” arguing, “The feminist demand for a rigorous intellectual education for women could not but carry a threat to the patriarchal basis of authority in … the family.” Kirkham, 4.

nevertheless embodies a problematic set of traits that can be potentially anti-social. He is aggressive. He usually gets his way. His confidence borders on recklessness. I say potentially because Wentworth also holds the key for a truly idealized reordering of society. As such, Wentworth’s “revolutionary optimism and individualism” must be reformed, so that he can “see [his] way to a marriage promising continued self-discipline, and a higher commitment than ever before to the service of the community.” Wentworth and Anne’s marriage, nonetheless, represents the potential for a positive reordering that empowers both women and a nascent professional class.

This positive potential represents a radical gender shift for both males and females that Austen borrows from the Pacific tradition. Understanding Persuasion as a novel influenced by a Pacific tradition and global discourses located in the Eastern empire challenges some longstanding assumptions while shedding new light on other historical contexts. The presence of the navy and Austen’s savvy usage of global affairs like the trade in sugar and mahogany, the East Indian trade, and the Battle of Santo Domingo repudiates the idea that Austen wrote only with three or four families as her focus. Mrs. Croft’s time in the East also demolishes the canard that Wentworth functions as Austen’s unequivocal celebration of Nelson. And, if Persuasion “offers a vision, as public and political as it is personal and romantic, in ways for nations as well

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22 Butler, 275, 285. Alistair Duckworth’s keen reading of landscape management leads him to conclude that Austen “deplored the politics of economic individualism” and reads Persuasion as a “groundless” novel where the naval fraternity must be read negatively because Anne Elliot and Wentworth’s marriage fails to confirm “a wider stability in society at large.” Duckworth, The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen’s Novels, 2nd Ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994): xii. Both Joseph Kestner and David Springer dismiss the dichotomy of these progressive versus conservative theses, arguing that Austen endorsed an alliance of aristocracy and what Springer calls “pseudo-gentry,” and which Kestner describes as a “famous pact” between the Victorian aristocracy and middle class to rule together. Kestner, “Jane Austen: Revolutionizing Masculinities,” Persuasions 16 (1994): 158. Springer argues that, far from revolutionary, a “pseudo-gentry” (the class to which Wentworth would have belonged) had been long incubating. The men of this pseudo-gentry, Springer suggests, were “junior partners in Jane Austen’s day … by 1914 at least equal partners, [and] on the way to becoming senior partners.” Despite Springer conservative reading of class in the novel, he readily admits “[Austen’s] major preoccupation … was the fate of women in that society.” Springer, “Interpreters of Jane Austen’s Social World: Literary Critics and Historians,” in Jane Austen: New Perspectives, ed. by Janet Todd (New York and London: Homes & Meier Publishers, 1983): 68-69.
as lovers to exist in the world,” then the idealized Pacific tradition it draws upon represents the wider range of possibilities available to both nations and lovers, and functions as a space for the imaginative rehearsal of new possibilities. Given *Persuasion*’s geopolitical slant, the novel also asks us to reconsider Austen’s position on imperialism. Although critical of the Atlantic world and the slave trade, Austen offers an unapologetically pro-imperialist vision of the East, idealizing the opportunities it affords women and men even as she glosses over Britain’s lack of real moral virtues in Eastern waters.

II. The Regency Crisis and Naval Masculinity

The prevailing discourses of masculinity in Regency England help to explain why Austen, like Defoe, Anson, and Forster, represents the Pacific as a place free of corruption and disease where true English masculinity can be reclaimed. Roger Sales argues that Austen’s novels are directly influenced by the Regency Crisis of 1788-1789, when George III’s porphyria caused a constitutional crisis, and the second Regency Crisis of 1810-1811, which Sales argues was defined by anxiety about “dandyism, given that at the time it seemed highly likely that the Prince Regent would allow the dandies to take control of his father’s political house.” Janine Barchas also illustrates how a climate of uncertainty typified Regency England, characterizing that time as “uniquely troubled by uncertainties … generated by royal scandal and disease, celebrity affairs, healthcare restructuring, and wartime violations of local rule [which] paints a more complex and gritty picture of Austen’s Regency world than seemed previously imaginable.” These uncertainties and “dandyism,” at least in Regency terms, might be best

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23 Morgan, 89.
24 Sales, xvii.
recognized in their most conspicuous public figures, the Prince Regent (later George IV) and his companion Beau Brummel. At a time when “the royalty and aristocracy that dominated Parliament and the army threatened to destroy the virtues by which the navy had defended Britain and Britishness,” Wentworth provides an acceptable hero that many critics have suggested serves as an unvarnished celebration of England’s greatest naval hero of all, Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson. As this section argues, however, even Nelson fell prey to the pitfalls of Regency dandyism, leading Austen to dismiss him as a suitable model of imperial endeavor.

A transgressive figure reminiscent of the Restoration libertine, at least in his excesses, if not his intellectual skepticism, the Regency dandy despised commerce and any sort of profession. The dandy nonetheless depended on Britain’s commercial empire for the social mobility that foreign goods conferred upon him. This formula constitutes a masculine iteration of the panic over the moral decay and social mobility that Eastern goods like tea and china were thought to bring to women in the mid-eighteenth century. Thus, Sales concludes, “The dandy was both the embodiment of aristocratic principle as well as the insolent threat to it.”

Brummel, a member of the Tenth Light Dragoons and a favorite of the Prince of Wales, was seen as “aristocratic in everything but his background, allowing dandyism to stand for at one and the same time both social mobility and rigidity.” The Prince Regent’s dandyism manifested itself in the mass consumption of alcohol and laudanum, and an appetite for gambling and numerous public affairs. Germanic in origins, French in his tastes, and ostentatious in his military dress, the future George IV also insisted upon modish oriental garments and architecture, which “allowed stereotypes of oriental despotism to cling to him.” Politically, the Prince Regent

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26 Fulford, 167.
27 Sales, 74.
28 Sales, 73.
29 Sales, 64.
came to be associated with a constellation of political figures like Charles James Fox and Richard Brinsley Sheridan who represented the Prince Regent’s shift away from Tory powerbrokers to the commercial interests of Whig grandees. Regency masculinity, characterized by dandyism and the loose sexual mores often attributed to Orientalism, typified the sort of cosmopolitan effeminacy rejected by Anson.

The dandy’s threatening social mobility, of course, existed for all of the wrong reasons. Just as tea and china were thought to allow class mobility for women, dandies could move in high circles based simply on fashion and clothing. While this form of social mobility stands in direct opposition to Austen’s representation of the navy man’s ability to become a gentleman through merit, dandyism also infected the Regency military. In 1809, the Duke of York, the Prince Regent’s brother and commander-in-chief of the army, found himself in the middle of a pay-for-promotion scandal known as the Clarke Affair. York’s mistress Mary Anne Clarke was supplementing her royal allowance by taking bribes from officers for promotions, which the Duke of York facilitated. Many expected the bribes to garner sexual favors from Clarke along with a promotion from York, effectively turning York into a pimp. Although York was censured and dismissed, he was reinstated by his brother George only a year later. One of the Prince Regent’s other brothers, the Duke of Cumberland, furthered the court’s reputation for scandal in 1810 when his valet Joseph Sellis was found dead. Gossip abounded that Sellis had been murdered for his attempts to blackmail Cumberland over homosexual liaisons. The event sparked a backlash, with the raiding of molly houses and “an exceptionally ferocious crowd” present for the public sentence and humiliation of the men found there. As a result,

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30 Sales, 58-60. Sales notes, however, that upon assuming power the Prince Regent’s Whig friends were largely ignored, leading Sales to speculate that “support for the Whigs had in fact been a largely theatrical act of defiance towards his father rather than the product of any deep commitment.” Sales, 59-60.

31 Fulford, 166.
Cumberland’s role in the army led to the “increased surveillance of sexual conduct particularly amongst servicemen.” Both episodes undermined confidence that the military was equipped to handle a threat as serious as Napoleon, and further exacerbated the belief that the government, aristocracy, and even armed services had fallen prey to a despotic, oriental, and effete ethos.

When juxtaposed against the stolid “Farmer George” persona of his father, the Prince Regent’s libertine tendencies and his handling of the Clarke scandal were read as signs of a debased masculinity associated with continental excess and the effeminizing effects of the empire. Suspected of a secret marriage to his twice-widowed Catholic mistress Maria Fitzherbert in 1785, the Regent was soon able to add whore-monger and harem-keeper to the list of insults lobbed at him. The Royal Marriages Act of 1772 explicitly forbade marriage between the Prince and a Catholic, leading the Regent into an arguable act of polygamy when he married Caroline of Brunswick in an official 1795 ceremony. Their turbulent marriage was deeply unhappy, and within months they were living apart, with each carrying on a series of public affairs. In the March 1812 issue of The Examiner, Leigh Hunt described the man as thus: “In short, this delightful, blissful, wise, pleasurable, honourable, virtuous, true, and immortal PRINCE, was a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in debt and disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of gamblers and demireps, a man who has just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity!” Hunt was imprisoned two years for libel.

Hunt’s comments regarding posterity speak directly to the ongoing constitutional crisis crystallized by the Regency because the Prince Regent had yet to produce a (legitimate) heir. Although George III sired numerous children and many sons, thereby precluding the most

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32 Sales, 68.
33 Qtd. in Sales, 64-65.
serious sort of crisis, the Regent’s failure to reproduce furthered his reputation as a dissolute aristocrat who elevated his own interests above those of the country by refusing to ensure the continuation of the line. Despite dedicating *Emma* to the Prince Regent, Austen was well-aware of his personal foibles, expressing her sympathy for the Princess Caroline: “Poor woman, I shall support her as long as I can, because she is a Woman, & because I hate her Husband … If I must give up the Princess, I am resolved at least always to think that she would have been respectable, if the Prince had behaved tolerably by her at first.” There were, admittedly, any number of reasons to hate the Prince Regent, but Austen’s letter speaks directly to the future king’s infidelity.

In an interesting example of how her brothers’ naval careers influenced Austen’s writing, Frank Austen’s squadron escorted Caroline to England for her marriage, which sounds similar to Wentworth’s delivery of Harville’s wife in *Persuasion*: “I would assist any brother officer’s wife that I could, and I would bring any thing of Harville’s from the world’s end, if he wanted it. But do not imagine that I did not feel it an evil in itself” (50). Because of the harsh conditions aboard ships and the prevailing assumption that women would prove a distraction to the men, Wentworth objects to women onboard as “evil.” Nevertheless, because the Prince Regent and Caroline’s marriage had no basis in love or mutual desire, the role played by the navy in safely escorting Princess Caroline to George IV versus Mrs. Harville to her husband throws into relief two visions of domesticity: one represented by Harville, his wife, and their numerous children, and another by the unhappy, political marriage of George IV and Caroline. Wentworth’s delivery of Harville’s wife takes on an entirely new valence, foreshadowing a more conservative reading of the narrator’s final assertion that the navy is “that profession which is, if possible, more

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34 Qtd. in Sales, 69. Sales suggests the dedication “may be best read as an ironic statement and therefore placed alongside the mock-dedications that were such a distinctive figure of the Juvenalia.” Sales, 71.
distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance” (178). The navy becomes not simply a geopolitical tool meant to secure the legitimacy of states and monarchs, but also an institution that, more importantly, secures the legitimacy of domestic unions which Austen represents as the very integrity of Great Britain.

Austen’s disgust with Regency masculinity can be read in Persuasion’s opening lines, where the narrator undertakes a withering critique of the Elliot family patriarch Sir Walter. For one, Sir Walter is obsessed with looks. The narrator says, “Few women could think more of their personal appearance than he did” (4). His daughter Anne he ignores for the same reason: “Her father had found little to admire in her, so totally different were her delicate features and mild dark eyes from his own” (5). Sir Walter’s reference to sailors looking like mahogany is complemented by the quip that, after years in the East Indies, Admiral Croft’s “face is about as orange as the cuffs and capes of my livery” (17), which says something about Sir Walter’s taste for bright, fancy clothing. Upon meeting Croft, however, Sir Walter, “without hesitation, declared the Admiral to be the best-looking suitor he had ever met with, and went so far as to say, that, if his own man might have had the arranging of his hair, he should not be ashamed of being seen with him any where” (24). Sir Walter, in essence, represents the very crisis of Regency masculinity precipitated by the licentious behavior of the Prince Regent and the Duke of York. Although key differences exist between Sir Walter’s foibles and the Regency scandals (Sir Walter does not chase women, nor does he deck himself in Eastern fashions), there are numerous similarities. He is foppish and ostentatious, spends money hand over fist, and does so while largely ignoring his responsibilities to the neighbourhood. His lavish spending reaches the point where even his ancestral home Kellynch Hall must be rented in an effort to retrench. If Kellynch Hall or any of the country houses and estates in Austen’s fiction are to be read as the
“physical emblem[s] of a cultural heritage,” then Sir Walter, like the Prince Regent, has betrayed his basic responsibility to the kingdom.  

Sir Walter’s dandyism, however, is simply a reflection of a deep-seated narcissism articulated through an obsession with history. “Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot’s character; vanity of person and of situation,” the narrator bluntly states (4). Like Prospero, Sir Walter looks backward into the dark abysm of time, attached only to a text that mirrors an outdated idea of masculinity and social standing back at him—Debrett’s *Baronetage of England* (1808), which maintains a prominent spot at Kellynch. Sir Walter lingers over the book “for his own amusement” regardless of his mood, finding “occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one” (3). Although it would be unfair to suggest that such opening lines indict the entire landed gentry, they unquestionably indict this particular landowner as remiss in his duties.  

Sir Walter spends “idle” hours flipping through the book, alternately delighting himself with his own history or wallowing in his own self-pity. His myopic focus on the *Baronetage* and his own lineage especially (which he has even amended in his own edition) signal a narcissistic shirking of duty similar to the Prince Regent’s.  

Although Sir Walter has children, his own selfishness has impeded their success in life. The eldest daughter Elizabeth, self-conscious of her lack of a husband at the relatively late age of 29, “would have rejoiced to be certain of being properly solicited by baronet-blood within the next twelve-month or two” (6). Contractual language of solicitation aside, Elizabeth’s hopes for marriage elicit both sympathy and derision. On the one hand, Elizabeth is clearly her father’s

35 Duckworth, 184.  
daughter, whose hoped-for marriage would enable her to “again take the book of books with as much enjoyment as in her early youth” (6). On the other, she cannot help but elicit sympathy because she has so deeply internalized a patrilineal ideology of marriage that she feels shame at her inability to fulfill her “proper” role. One of Sir Walter’s more cruel actions is to leave the book open in front of Elizabeth, where she is forced to confront “the date of her own birth, and see no marriage follow but that of a younger sister” (6). Elizabeth’s failure on the marriage market “made the book an evil; and more than once, when her father had left it open on the table near her, had she closed it, with averted eyes, and pushed it away” (6).

Despite the fact that Elizabeth does nothing to discourage or curtail her family’s spending, when the need for retrenchment surfaces Elizabeth “felt herself ill-used and unfortunate” (8). While this self-pity might be dismissed as the self-manufactured crisis of the aristocracy, there exists the sense that Sir Walter’s frivolous spending has caused profound social damage. If the *Baronetage* represents the history of England and the history of the Elliot family, then Sir Walter’s financial woes mean that Elizabeth will receive few suitors, let alone ones fit for her station. The *Baronetage* becomes more a source of anxiety, pain, and discord than it does pride, even to Sir Walter, who now views the *Baronetage* only “to drive the heavy bills of his tradespeople, and the unwelcome hints of Mr. Shepherd, his agent, from his thoughts” (8).

Functioning as an unhealthy, escapist outlet from reality, the *Baronetage* thus readily calls to attention not the failure of a social class, but the distinct failure of Sir Walter, whose spendthrift nature will destroy a two-hundred year legacy and break his family line. Sir Walter and Elizabeth, however, still insist to “reduce their expenditure, without involving the loss of any indulgence of taste or pride” (10). Thus, Sir Walter “does not see his house as part of a larger context, an interrelated rural society, an ecology … it is more like a pleasure dome or a three-
dimensional mirror which flatters his vanity.”37 Elizabeth’s self-centered suggestions that money should be saved by “cut[ting] off some unnecessary charities, and to refrain from new-furnishing the drawing room” and “taking no present down to Anne, as had been the usual yearly custom” draws further attention to the family’s bankruptcy, both moral and economic (9). When Kellynch cannot be maintained in a way that flatters Sir Walter, he simply leaves.

The Baronetage, however, is inherently pessimistic, and assigns value not to expansion but to contraction. Sir Walter feels best when “contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents” (3), illuminating that exclusivity defines the aristocracy. Sir Walter’s own entry mentions his children Elizabeth, Anne, and Mary, but also “a still-born son, Nov. 5, 1789” (3). Associated with the French Revolution, the conspicuous 1789 date leaves Sir Walter’s uncertain lineage open to interpretation. Does the still-born son signal Austen’s recognition and tacit endorsement of revolutionary behavior? Unlikely, considering England’s wars with the French Republic and Napoleon. Or does the still-born son signal the futility and folly of revolutionary endeavor? David Springer notes that the landed gentry during this time period were in fact stronger, more financially sound, and more progressive than they ever had been before. If we accept Springer’s thesis, then we must accept that the “still-born son” functions more as an indictment of “revolutionary” activity. Sir Walter’s own pedigree arises from his family opposition to “revolution,” having been granted the “dignity of baronet, in the first year of Charles II” (4). The specter of the English Civil Wars associated with the Elliot family’s past introduces ambivalence into a situation often read as a straightforward endorsement of a new professional class. Despite Sir Walter’s foolishness, his family’s loyalty during the English civil wars self-consciously recalls the catastrophic effects of revolutionary change, and recalls the

37 Tanner, 185.
common-held idea that the landed gentry and aristocracy represented a bulwark of “liberty” against the opposing forces of chaos and social upheaval represented by Oliver Cromwell.

Sir Walter’s connection to the military gives some insight into how we might read this ambiguous moment in the novel. Sir Walter dislikes the navy because it “bring[s] persons of obscure birth into undue distinction, and rais[es] men to honours which their fathers and grandfathers never dreamt of” (15). His own rank of baronet, however, was always a title of financial expediency, often sold in bunches when the crown felt financial constraints, or offered as rewards for loyal service. Sir Walter also chooses to socialize with army, rather than navy, officers like Colonel Wallis at Bath, calling down a whole host of associations. *Persuasion* was completed in 1816 (not published until 1818), *after* Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo in 1815. As a result, the army had risen in the nation’s eyes while the navy endured a period in which its popularity declined, suggesting that Austen situates Sir Walter’s preference for army men as a dandyish vanity for circulating with fashionable people. The novel is set, however, during 1814, *before* Wellington’s great triumph. In 1814, the truly fashionable thing to do would be to associate with navy men, still celebrated, almost ten years later, for the resounding victory at Trafalgar in 1805. Sir Walter, however, naturally gravitates to the army man and the scandals he represents; the relatively recent Clarke Affair and the Duke of Cumberland scandal recall charges of dandyism, sodomy, and effeminacy that dogged the army, rather than the victorious 1815 campaign by Wellington. In eschewing the navy after Trafalgar, Sir Walter reveals himself not to be a man associated with the “liberty” of the landed classes as traditionally guaranteed by the navy, but the tyranny of the army and the Regency dandies accused of despotism who commanded it. Like a Beau Brummel, Colonel Wallis is also defined by his good looks rather than his ability in the field (which no doubt appeals to Sir Walter): “[Sir Walter] had never
walked anywhere arm in arm with Colonel Wallis, (who was a fine military figure; though sandy-haired) without observing that every woman’s eye was upon him; every woman’s eye was sure to be upon Colonel Wallis. Modest Sir Walter!” (100). Perhaps Austen’s conservative ethos masks more radical intentions; taken in this light, the Elliot family’s loyalty looks more like allegiance to the worst parts of Charles II’s absolutist court rather than the defense of ancient rights, especially given the dandy’s close association with the libertine.

The Colonel’s name Wallis also represents an explicit contrast between army and navy. Wallis carries a significant Pacific connotation, because Samuel Wallis circumnavigated the globe in the *Dolphin* and was the first European to reach Tahiti in 1767. Although not celebrated like Cook, Wallis was instrumental in opening the Pacific to Cook and the explorers who came after him, and his voyages were included in the enormously influential (if critically panned) collection of Pacific voyages penned by John Hawkesworth entitled *Accounts of the Voyages and Discoveries in the South Hemisphere* (1773)—books which Barchas speculates Austen would have read. She notes that the *Godmersham Park Library Catalogue* “lists dozens of famous sea voyages, [and] confirms Austen’s access to these naval greats through, for example, ‘Cooks Voyages 2 vols London 1784,’ ‘Cooks Voyages 3 vols London 1785,’ and ‘Byrons Voyage London 1767’.”

38 John Byron completed a circumnavigation of the world (1764-1766) in the same *Dolphin* that Wallis commanded, according to plans drawn up by Anson, at that time First Lord of the Admiralty. Such patronage networks were common; Pacific sailors were usually assigned to Pacific missions by their former commanders. Cook’s officers and crew, for instance, commanded the vast majority of Pacific voyages for the rest of the eighteenth-century and on into the nineteenth. Frank Austen began his naval career under a favorite of Cook’s, a Captain Smith who sailed on the first two circumnavigations. The young Frank also studied

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38 Barchas 224. For an overview detailing Austen’s access to truly prolific libraries, see Barchas 22-23.
astronomy and mathematics under William Bayly, who accompanied Cook on the second voyage to test the lunar method of determining longitude.  Francis’s tangential connection to the Cook voyages suggests Austen was at least aware of the Pacific’s importance, and her familiarity with Pacific names means she surely would have been familiar with Cook.

In fact, numerous character names in the novel are associated with Pacific travel and would also be in Persuasion’s other prominent book, The Navy List—Wallis, Carteret, Dalrymple, Byron, and Russell. The Navy List was released quarterly, detailed which captain was assigned to each ship, and included a list of major engagements the ship had participated in along with prizes taken. Anne, for example, knows all about the professional history of both Admiral Croft and Wentworth because she reads these quarterlies. Barchas pits the materiality of each book, the solid construction of the Baronetage versus the designed ephemerality of the cheap Navy List, to illustrate an ironic scale of worth between the characters who populate these respective texts. Austen’s characters ironically display what these books are “made of;” in Mansfield Park, for instance, the exploits of William Price inflame a fleeting stab of patriotic pride in the breast of Henry Crawford. Noticing that William’s naval experience confers on him “a right to be listened to” even by his social betters, Crawford “longed to have been at sea, and seen and done and suffered as much … he wished he had been a William Price, distinguishing himself and working his way to fortune and consequence with so much self-respect and happy ardour, instead of what he was! The wish was rather eager than lasting.”

Austen deploys the materialism of “ephemera” versus the “ephemera” of aristocratic feeling to great ironic ends.

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39 Southam, 37-38.
40 For a material description of the respective books, see Barchas, 210.
Barchas argues that “Austen swaps names from within book and booklet for her seafaring and landed gentry, hinting at a parity that is, in and of itself, already fairly radical,” while Harris goes even further, suggesting that “slippage between famous names and venal characters opens a wide satiric gap between the ‘rating’ system of the navy and the more arbitrary hierarchies of society.” As a viscountess, Lady Dalrymple is the highest-ranking aristocrat in the novel. She and her daughter Lady Carteret come to Bath, causing an immediate stir for Sir Walter and Elizabeth Elliot. Sir Walter’s obsequiousness gives one an immediate clue about Dalrymple’s and Carteret’s characters, and, measured against the naval figures Carteret and Dalrymple, these women are lacking in merit if not status. Philip Carteret began life in the navy in 1747, rising through the ranks until he commanded the Swallow, sister-ship to the Dolphin during the Wallis expedition. His successful circumnavigation proved a boon to his career, and he eventually became a rear-admiral. Dalrymple, although not a sailor, played an important role in Britain’s Pacific aspirations. As head of the Admiralty’s Hydrographic Office, he brought together disparate navigational information from logs, charts, and manuscripts, and ordered missions exclusively focused on charting coastlines (including Frank Austen’s missions to chart Simon’s Bay and St. Helena) in order to standardize navigational information for the navy. While Barchas and Harris are correct that these names are to be read ironically, neither scholar points out that every naval name in the book, with the exception of Wentworth, is associated with the Pacific. This ironic register that Pacific names create reveal Austen at her most cutting,

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42 Barchas, 211.
43 Harris, 204.
44 The two ships were eventually separated, with Wallis going on to “discover” Tahiti, and Carteret completing a relatively uneventful circumnavigation. A more oblique connection can be made between Lady Russell and Baronet Henry Russell, who made his fortune with the East India Company. During the Wallis-Carteret voyage, a relatively unknown Thomas Russell was rising through the ranks of the navy, and the third-rate Russell was captained by Philip Saumarez, George Anson’s former lieutenant aboard the Centurion during the 1739-1744 circumnavigation. For details of the Russell baronetcy, the naval officer, and the ship, see Barchas, 244-245.
45 Barchas, 248.
placing the popularity and publically-acclaimed heroism of mariners who paved the way for Cook against the general sloth and excess of the more fashionable, aristocratic characters. Sir Walter’s Wallis pales in comparison to the real Wallis, a hero of the Pacific and man who circumnavigates the world. Colonel Wallis can barely circumnavigate the Bath pump room.

Wishing to restore the honor of the navy at a time when it was in decline because of Wellington’s victory, Austen self-consciously constructs an idealistic naval fraternity that also combats the problematic masculinity of the Prince Regent’s court. In the figures of Admiral Croft and Wentworth, Austen reminds her readership of what the navy traditionally represents. Fulford skillfully summarizes the importance of the navy, and Nelson more specifically, in the English cultural imagination: “Romantic portraits of the navy provided moral exemplars for the domestic and imperial spheres. They promoted the chivalry of the ocean when the chivalry of the land was in doubt.” Fulford argues that the navy’s role as moral exemplum during this time was consciously linked to Nelson through biographies like Robert Southey’s *Life of Nelson* (1813) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s writings about Sir Alexander Ball, which reworked the Nelson persona. Like voyage literature, Nelson biographies had become a genre in and of themselves, readily recognizable by their tendency to portray good governance in the figure of a naval man of humble origins, who rejects the temptations of a vaguely Eastern or Orientalized mistress to make the ultimate sacrifice for his country. Nelson biographies situate the navy as the crucible of masculinity, where men with the necessary mettle to expand, maintain, and govern the empire are made. As a figure, Nelson’s heroic status relied not only upon the fact that

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Fulford, 162. Penny Gay adds, “The pressure of war with France produced a need for a more idealised figure … Admiral Nelson and his peers filled this role to perfection.” Gay, *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 150. Harris admits that the Nelson model is in some ways “problematic,” although she cites similar humble backgrounds between Nelson and Wentworth to uphold Wentworth “as a distinctly Nelsonian war hero.” Harris, 189. Kestner argues Austen also relies on Nelson, but that she “appropriate[s] this paradigm and democratize[s] it, that is, to instantiate this paradigm into domestic and quotidian contexts.” Kestner, 148.
he “banished the memories of mutiny, restored ‘subordination,’ and destroyed French revolutionary imperialism at sea,”\textsuperscript{47} but that he also functioned as a repudiation of a Regency society increasingly defined by effeminate libertinism and conspicuous consumption.

The similarities between Nelson and Wentworth are readily apparent. Both come from humble beginnings, both work their way through the ranks of the navy based on merit, and both characters come to represent an idealized form of heroic masculinity. Yet Nelson was himself embroiled in affairs of the sort that plagued the Prince Regent and his brothers. The Prince Regent’s ostentatious behavior was responsible for “the ensuing redefinition of the social and political order [that] relocated chivalric ideals from the aristocracy to the gentry and to the growing professional classes,” but Nelson’s paramour Emma Lady Hamilton associates the admiral with the same loose sexual mores that defined the Regency court.\textsuperscript{48} Gay suggests that Nelson “counter[s] the reality of the aristocracy’s excesses and the corruption, frivolity, and sexual license of the army,”\textsuperscript{49} which ignores the fact that Lady Hamilton “was too Oriental” and “exhibited herself in a series of provocatively sensual ‘attitudes,’ using Indian shawls ‘to form Grecian, Turkish and other drapery, as well as a variety of turbans,’ as she represented Circe, Cleopatra, and other Oriental heroines.”\textsuperscript{50} Among Hamilton’s confidantes was the notorious William Beckford, known as “Vathek,” and satirists soon began to lampoon Lady Hamilton in the same vein as the Prince Regent and York’s mistress, Mrs. Clarke. Some even called Nelson a Marc Antony.\textsuperscript{51} Given the backlash against the Prince Regent’s “Oriental” tendencies, both in the hybridized style and architecture of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton and the common insult

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{47} The mutiny referred to here is the fleet-wide mutiny at the Nore in 1797. Fulford, 165.
\textsuperscript{48} Fulford, 171.
\textsuperscript{49} Gay, 153.
\textsuperscript{50} Fulford, 175. See also Harris, 189.
\textsuperscript{51} Satirists suggested “Nelson the warrior had given up his manliness for a cheap imitation of the fascinating Queen of the Nile.” Fulford, 175.
\end{footnotesize}
referring to the Regent as “Grand Turk” or “Sultan,” Nelson cannot function as an idealized vision of naval masculinity. Moreover, one of the oft-quoted justifications for Wentworth and Nelson’s conflation is the Admiral’s assertion that the West Indian station (where Wentworth won his spurs) was “the station for honor.”

Nelson’s view of the West Indies, however, puts him at odds with Austen: “He regarded Jamaica … as the jewel in the crown, to be guarded at all costs, together with the slave trade itself, a commerce to be protected.” Nelson represents an Orientalized, pro-slavery figure, too flawed to serve as the model for a hero.

Nelson’s biographies, to their credit, do not duck the problem of Nelson’s affairs. Rather, they attempted to explain how Nelson’s affair was actually a good thing. Whereas the aristocracy had fallen prey to a luxurious and licentious Oriental dream, Nelson’s affair represented the wiles of an Orientalized culture that had “infected” England, only to be purged by Nelson’s eventual repudiation of Lady Hamilton: “Nelson, Southey claimed, redeemed himself by escaping from Naples, Lady Hamilton, and the aristocratic immorality they epitomized into the male and Protestant culture of the fleet.” By reconfiguring a repudiation of Lady Hamilton as an “escape,” the Nelson biographies exchange one problematic form of masculinity for another: Nelson exchanges an affair with a highly sexualized, Eastern “Cleopatra” for the all-male homosocial community of the navy. Both of Nelson’s mistresses, Lady Hamilton and the navy, prove equally unsatisfactory because both require him to abandon his wife and domestic obligations. The all-male world of the navy, as represented in Wentworth’s suggestion that women aboard ship are “a great evil,” might function as a refuge from female sexuality, but in Nelson’s case also comes dangerously close to the homosocial, often homosexual, all-male world of the Regency dandy.

52 Qtd. in Harris, 184.
53 Southam, 190.
54 Fulford, 176.
Austen has joked in this vein before in *Mansfield Park*; Mary Crawford’s glib description of naval life stems from her experience with an unloving uncle-admiral, whose adulterous affair has forced Mary and her brother Henry to relocate to Mrs. Grant’s parsonage on the Mansfield estate. Mary asserts, “Post captains may be very good sort of men, but they do not belong to *us*. Of various admirals, I could tell you a great deal; of them and their flags, and the gradation of their pay, and their bickerings and jealousies … Certainly, my home at my uncle’s brought me acquainted with a circle of admirals. *Of Rears, and Vices, I saw enough.*”⁵⁵ Concluding with, “Do not be suspecting me of a pun,” Mary jokes about the petty internal politics of admirals and sodomy, aligning the homosocial world of the navy with the transgressive world of the dandy. Despite Mary Crawford’s own dubious character, her jokes undercut the heroic vision of Admiral Nelson while illuminating the dangers that the post-captain Wentworth has to avoid. Wentworth may “retreat” into the fleet after his initial rejection by Anne, but it becomes clear that he has never wavered in his affections for her. *Persuasion*’s naval fraternity returns home after service, valuing the homosocial bonds of the fleet while ultimately relinquishing them—voluntarily—in favor of normalized heterosexual representations of desire, something Wentworth must learn when Mrs. Croft rebuffs him for not allowing women aboard his ships.

Accordingly, Nelson may be a war hero, but he is not a domestic hero like Wentworth: “The betrayal of his wife was an infamy which could not be ignored, excused or laughed away.”⁵⁶ Nelson’s heroic status, in fact, ultimately manifests itself as a threat to social order. Nelson’s death at Trafalgar resulted in a number of pantomimes and theatricals similar to the afterpiece *The Death of Captain Cook*. Whereas the Cook afterpiece met with great success, the post-mortem theatricality of Nelson was more troubling. Gillian Russell explains that Nelson’s

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⁵⁶ Southam, 235.
funeral “was encoded with a crypto-royalist mystique” which “exploited the concept of the king’s two bodies.” The attendant symbolic investment in the idea that “Nelson is dead, long live Nelson” must have rankled Austen; if England’s (and her brothers’) naval legacy was to be enshrined in a quasi-immortal figure, surely one without Nelson’s metaphorical baggage could be found. The common tars, too, felt that they were the guarantors of Nelson’s legacy and refused to let the idea of Nelson be appropriated; during the funeral, those sailors in attendance disrupted the final ritual “to impose their own rite, one which expressed the significance of Nelson as a popular hero rather than as a pseudo-monarch.” The sailors’ staged repudiation of Nelson’s symbolic status constituted the sort of public theater which Austen thought might fundamentally disrupt social hierarchies, reiterating how Nelson’s, at times, divisive public character was rewritten as heroic after the fact. Nelson’s death represents how “this idealization of the honesty and loyalty of the tar is bound up in an awareness of his disruptive potential, constantly threatening to topple over, to violate boundaries and distinctions.”

In previous chapters, I argue that Pacific islands (particularly Tinian and Tahiti) are used as places where social order might be reinscribed; Forster, in particular, imagines the Tahitians as England’s cultural forebears, a kindred “island race” mirrored in their connection of civility to discourses of “improvement” through land management and parliamentary-style government. Compared with Cook, whose voyages were seen to promote “the arts of peace” and which produced literature that fundamentally affirmed the social order of Britain, Nelson’s funeral and pantomimes (and his affairs) remind viewers that the Georgian sailor is an aberrant who often disrupts society even as his military action ensures social harmony.

58 Russell, 87.
59 Russell, 100.
Given the simultaneously patriotic but threatening role the Georgian sailor embodies, to reintegrate her sailors into polite society Austen must discursively banish fears of Orientalism, imperial effeminacy, and social autonomy. Austen rewrites the East Indies not as the locus of an exotic female sexuality associated with the paramours of the Prince Regent and Nelson, but as a suitable site of English domesticity as represented by the Croft’s. Wentworth’s injunction against women onboard ship, in this light, comes to look more like the rules of a man who does not wish to fall prey to the temptation which undid Nelson. Too, Austen’s brothers influence this story. Frank, like Croft, spent significant time protecting British shipping in the East Indies, even being awarded prize money from the East India Company. Both Frank and Charles eventually rose to the rank of admiral, and their fortunes were undoubtedly forged in the furnace of empire, both by protecting trade and fighting in colonial wars to preserve that commerce. But these brothers also ranged between Bengal and Macao, susceptible to the same perceived threats to which even heroes like Nelson succumbed. Charles and Frank’s morality is rhetorically secured by the model the Croft’s represent. As such, I argue that Wentworth, in fact, functions as a critique of the man many scholars insist he is modeled upon, and that Nelson functions as Austen’s stand-in for the larger cultural problem of decadent, effeminate Regency-era masculinity and the threat it represents to traditional notions of British identity. At the same time, Austen is again able to dispel the anxieties of an Eastern empire—sexual licentiousness and effeminacy—with sailors constructed in the Pacific tradition, a place where the specters of Orientalism had been rhetorically banished by Walter and Robins seventy years before.
III. Locating Professional Domesticity in the Pacific

Even in Austen’s time the Clarke Affair and Nelson’s dalliance “placed at the center of British politics a fear of sexual corruption that was itself exacerbated by Britain’s growing role as a ruler of colonies.” Austen’s recognition of colonies, particularly those associated with the slave trade, as a site of enervation and dissolution, exemplifies this characteristic representation. Britain was “haunted by a perceived cultural relationship in which the corruption at home was thought to have been spread by importation from the East,” although “viewing immorality as a colonial import was in one way reassuring: it assuages Britons’ fear that ‘infections’ of moral and political corruption were endemic to the British character.” For Austen, as for Dampier, Defoe, Anson, and Forster, the idealized Pacific represented a different imperial possibility: a “pure” space devoid of the taint of luxury and colonial excess associated with aberrant sexuality and the immorality of the slave trade. In contrast to the reality of South Asia, the Pacific still functions as a space which creates men who may freely move among the empire without falling prey to its enervating influences, like Anson, Cook, and Wentworth. Wentworth’s connection to the Pacific tradition, then, is symbolic rather than actual, and allows Austen to displace the anxieties of an Eastern empire.

Beyond displacing anxieties, Austen rewrites the domestic as a space influenced by this Pacific idealization, where good husbands and wives, in addition to good sailors, are made. Take for example, the domestic arrangements of Harville. Harville is introduced through the story of his dear friend and comrade-in-arms Benwick, who was engaged to Harville’s sister Fanny before her untimely death. The grieving Benwick now lives with Harville and his family, despite the house having “rooms so small as none but those who invite from the heart could think

60 Fulford, 167.
61 Fulford, 168.
capable of accommodating so many” (71). Anne reflects on the “bewitching charm in a degree of hospitality so uncommon” that characterizes Benwick and Harville, leading her to think, “These [officers] would have been my friends” (70-71). Although Duckworth’s contention that the individual “isolated from a stable and inherited ‘estate’” is “excluded from his ‘grounds’ of being and action,” *Persuasion* supplies an alternative model whereby the “grounds” for being and action are supplied through domestic ties, both fraternal and conjugal.62 The notion of professional domesticity embodied by the Harville’s and the Croft’s replaces the idea that only connection to the land can secure identity. Anne finds her identity in this world of friendship and affective ties.

Despite Anne’s “astonishment” at the house’s size, she is “soon lost in the pleasanter feelings which sprang from the sight of all the ingenious contrivances and nice arrangements of Captain Harville” (71). Echoing Sir Walter’s earlier jokes about mahogany, Anne notes that Harville “suppl[i]es the deficiencies of lodging-house furniture … with some few articles of a rare species of wood, excellently worked up, and with something curious and valuable from all the distant countries Captain Harville had visited” (71). In this case, the “rare species of wood” illustrates the domestic connection between trade goods and empire, where exotic woods like teak sit side-by-side with English oak and the British tars themselves, who serve as metonymic representations of their ships and country with their “stout hearts of oak.”63 Unlike Sir Walter’s mahogany, which serves as a form of dandyish conspicuous consumption associated with the corruption of the West Indies, Harville uses rare wood he has gathered to fashion his own furniture, combining beauty, taste, and utility in his modest home. Harville’s taste also illuminates his ability to assimilate foreign objects into an idealized British domestic space.

62 Duckworth, 4.
63 For a discussion of exotic woods, see Southam, 287.
Unlike the threatening presence of tea and china, the wood Harville fashions represents how British males might safely consume and integrate foreign trade goods within their domestic sphere. “Such a notable consumer triumph,” writes Copeland, “brings the entire Harville establishment safely within the pale of genteel consumerism so admired by the heroine and her author.” More than simply “the signs of bourgeois consumption,” Harville’s ingeniously fashioned goods from abroad signify an “artisanal rather than a commodity-based culture.”

Just as Sir Walter uses mahogany to define the worth of Admiral Croft and his wife, this rare wood registers the ingenuity and inherent value of Harville, and, like the Croft’s, Harville does not rely on West Indian wealth for his literal and metaphorical self-worth.

Harville’s controlling quality, rather, is his industriousness. For the Romantic Benwick, Harville “contrived excellent accommodations, and fashioned very pretty shelves, for a tolerable collection of well-bounded volumes” (71). Unlike the vanity of the Baronetage that occupies Sir Walter, or even the adventurous daydreaming of the Musgrove women when perusing the Navy List, Harville spends his time crafting ingenious devices: “A mind of usefulness and ingenuity seemed to furnish him with constant employment within. He drew, he varnished, he carpentered, he glued; he made toys for children, he fashioned new netting-needles and pins with improvements; and if everything else was done, sat down to his large fishing-net at one corner of the room” (71). Cohen has pointed to the essentially domestic nature of Harville’s tasks, which create a “picture of repose and domestic happiness.” Harville’s domesticity, however, is registered in nautical terms: the “fitting-up” of the cottage to “defend the windows and doors against the winter storms to be expected” (71) is similar to the fitting-up of a ship to keep out weather and water. Harville’s progressively-coded domesticity is confirmed by this naval

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64 Copeland, 141.
65 Cohen, 350.
66 Cohen, 350.
acumen, and his fashioning of exotic wood and his collection of “curious and valuable” items are derived from a strategic idealization of Eastern waters that exempt him from the corruption signified by tea and china and the products of the slave trade.

Admiral Croft and his wife, although much richer than Harville and his family, are presented in similar terms. Renting Kellynch Hall, the Croft’s at once go to work refitting the house to improve its utility. And while the Admiral, like Harville, has an eye for creating utility where there was little before, he is smart enough to realize his shortcomings as a businessman. Sophia Croft, on the other hand, skillfully handles the affairs of land typically assigned to males. Our first description of Mrs. Croft’s business acumen foreshadows Anne’s eventual declaration of domestic life as a profession because she is “a very well-spoken, genteel, shrewd lady,” and, upon renting Kellynch, “asked more questions about the house, and terms, and taxes, than the admiral himself, and seemed more conversant with business” (18). In an oft-quoted passage, the absent-minded Admiral Croft nearly runs their carriage into a post, until “by coolly giving the reins a better direction herself, [the Croft’s] happily passed the danger” (66). Anne observes Mrs. Croft’s judicious control over both her husband and the carriage, reflecting “with some amusement at their style of driving, which she imagined no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs” (66). Because the Croft’s have spent the vast majority of their married years together in the East Indies, one can only assume that their style of domestic partnership was learned there as well. Both the Harville’s and the Croft’s register domestic arrangements which are the antithesis of Nelson’s and the Crawford’s uncle-admiral.

The biographies locate Nelson’s ultimate rejection of the effeminizing influences of continental Europe and the colonies in his iconic charge at Trafalgar that “England expects that every man will do his duty.” Austen, however, self-consciously reconfigures “duty” from the
highest realization of service to the nation through military action to a new ideal where the highest realization of service to the nation is the creation of a “home” at its imperial center. The teleological end of professional domesticity, a “stable domestic society,” could no longer have as its model a Regency masculinity characterized by excess.\textsuperscript{67} This reconfiguration of “duty” reveals how Anne, too, belongs to this naval fraternity. Just as Harville can fix up his small cottage with great benefit and Mrs. Croft proves savvier at business than her otherwise able husband, Anne also displays a keen eye for household management. Anne “considered [retrenchment] as an act of indispensable duty” and thinks the pinch of monetary strain should be “felt as a duty” (10, emphasis mine). Far from abandoning the land or prescribing radical upheaval, Anne insists that the land itself, the symbolic social order linked to it, and her father’s role as landowner in a small neighbourhood must be defended. Although overruled by the self-absorbed Sir Walter, Anne provides the most expedient and lasting plan for retrenchment and saving Kellynch Hall. Like her mother, who ran Kellynch and managed its affairs with “method, moderation, and economy” (9), Anne proposes retrenchment “on the side of honesty against importance,” calling for “more vigorous measures, a more complete reformation, a quicker release from debt, a much higher tone of indifference for every thing but justice and equity” (10). She justifies “more vigorous measures” of retrenchment, in fact, on the grounds that “Kellynch-hall has a respectability in itself, which cannot be affected by these reductions; and that the true dignity of Sir Walter Elliot will be very far from lessened, in the eyes of sensible people, by his acting like a man of principle” (10). Believing that merely the history of the house and the family carries an innate dignity that no sensible retrenchment can undermine, Anne displays the sort of utilitarian common sense—the kind of professionalism displayed by Mrs. Croft—without undermining the importance of history in the establishment of personal and national identity.

\textsuperscript{67} Fulford, 187.
This sense of inherent dignity is conversely seen in the naval officers themselves. Although airing a contemptuous view of the navy, Sir Walter, in actuality, lets Kellynch on the grounds that “an admiral speaks his own consequence, and, at the same time, can never make a baronet look small” (19). Vain and foolish as he is, even Sir Walter begrudgingly recognizes an inherent dignity in both the landed classes and certain professional ones like the navy.

Anne also echoes the earlier tradition of projecting onto the Pacific the possibility of “improvement” and its attendant virtues. Whereas Harville shows his ability to “improve” a property in terms of utility, Anne hopes to “improve” Kellynch in moral terms. She also points to a tradition of retrenchment, asking, “What will [Sir Walter] be doing, in fact, but what very many of our first families have done—or ought to do? (10). To retrench is an accepted and relatively common, if temporarily embarrassing, measure to correct financial shortcomings. Given that Anne’s investment in “fitting-up” a house mirrors the “fitting-up” of Harville’s home and Kellynch by the Croft’s, Austen echoes the importance of “improvement” as a signifier of national and personal identity that is often projected onto Pacific islands like Tahiti. Scholars such as Johnson have noted that “Anne, like Emma, is an autonomous heroine,” which Duckworth reads as a manifestation of a world without defined social order: “Emma examines self as a danger to order; Persuasion examines the self as it responds to a world without external manifestation of design.”

External order, however, is present in Persuasion. Characters like Lady Russell wish Anne to play her part in reproducing an older, landed ideology of domesticity. Anne’s place in the novel’s naval fraternity, however, stems from her own reproduction of ideology that manifests itself as the moral, financial, and utilitarian “fitting-up” of the people and places around her. Such “fitting-up” in the novel functions as a “mode of resistance … allowing

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68 Johnson, 259.
[her] to exit the heteronormative economy and the social order aligned with it.” In other words, Anne’s role as an “improver” finds its inspiration in the naval discourses Austen espouses in her interlocutor Mrs. Croft. The gentry world of Sir Walter will have to learn to accommodate the progressive reality of women like Anne and Mrs. Croft, not to mention Wentworth’s professionalism, if it wishes to stay relevant.

IV. Who Rules Britannia?

Although Wentworth and Anne’s marriage represents England’s future by symbolically joining the landed and professional classes, Wentworth has, on the whole, been read by scholars with some skepticism. He balances the potential for meaningful social change and progressive gender ideals along with the aggressive, entrepreneurial spirit that would come to define the masculinity of the Industrial Revolution and, arguably, our contemporary Western society, and his easy manner and self-confidence do not necessarily bode well for marriage. Wentworth returns to England in 1814 with a fortune of £20,000 in prize money (similar to Austen’s brother) that makes him suitable for marriage to women once out of his reach. Yet Wentworth has already made one fortune from his earlier career. Like Singleton, he has just spent it and returns to sea for more: “He had been lucky in his profession, but spending freely, what had come freely, had realized nothing” (20). His breezy confidence affirmed by his early fortune naturally leads to a providential belief in continued good fortune: “He had always been lucky; he knew he should be so still” (20). The qualities that appeal to the teenage Anne as “bewitching” are those that Lady Russell sees as indicative of “a dangerous character,” whose “brilliant” and “headstrong” nature suggest an innate aggression and individualism that must be curbed (20). When describing Wentworth, critics who celebrate the novel’s meritocratic strands suddenly

69 Galperin, 13.
strike a conservative, Burkean tone. Johnson reads Wentworth as “the impetuous, combustible masculine type Burke so feared, the mere man of talent who is dangerous precisely because he has nothing to lose.”\textsuperscript{70} Over the course of the novel, Wentworth’s fortune increases from £20,000 to £25,000, leading Mellor to describe the Captain as “a rationale for laissez-faire mercantile capitalism: for high-risk investments, aggressive entrepreneurship, and uninsured stock speculation.”\textsuperscript{71} Such appraisals echo Lady Russell’s objections and seem fundamentally at odds with the social mobility the novel endorses. Individualism in this society, of course, has real consequences, but these charges seem better reserved for the novel’s true predator: William Elliot, Sir Walter’s heir.

Both Wentworth and Elliot represent the antisocial potential a democratic “individualism” holds in Austen’s world, but Austen situates these two “new” men as foils, relying on the Pacific tradition to reinscribe Wentworth safely within the sphere of domesticity. Wentworth, of course, is defined by his naval service. Unlike Admiral Croft, however, who spends most of his career in the East Indies, Wentworth spends most of his years as a captain who preys upon French shipping and privateers in the West Indies and later the Mediterranean. Wentworth first commands the \textit{Asp}, a sloop he used to capture “privateers enough to be very entertaining” and finally “a French frigate [he] wanted” (47). Typically, a sloop would be no match for the larger, more heavily armed, and more maneuverable frigate, but Wentworth’s luck holds in more ways than one. He manages to bring his prize into port despite a raging gale which threatened to sink the \textit{Asp}, and, more importantly, he was not sailing under an admiral’s flag at the time. Admirals were entitled to 1/6 the value of whatever ships, cargo, and men were captured by anyone under their flag. Wentworth, by luck of being assigned to interdiction rather than action, emerges unscathed.

\textsuperscript{71} Mellor, 126.
than blockade duty, is personally entitled to 3/8 of the prize money, while also being able to “sell” the captured frigate to the Royal Navy.

When discussing his next ship, the frigate Laconia, Wentworth reminisces “How fast I made money in her” (48). As fast ships, frigates were often the navy’s raiders, and their captains gained something of a bad boy reputation—free agents who operated away from the larger fleets on the much more boring, dangerous, and less lucrative blockade duty. When the Musgrove sisters look for Laconia’s entry in the Navy List, “Captain Wentworth could not deny himself the pleasure of taking the precious volume into his own hands to save them the trouble, and once more read aloud the little statement of her name and rate, and present non-commissioned class, observing over it, that she too had been one of the best friends man ever had” (48). Wentworth’s treatment of the Navy List is strikingly similar to Sir Walter’s treatment of the Baronetage. He “saves them the trouble” by turning directly to his own entry (he knows exactly where it is), and he once more read aloud the details of the Laconia. Like Sir Walter lovingly reading his own history, Wentworth rereads his; whereas Sir Walter’s rereading is narcissistic, however, Wentworth’s rereading affirms the naval masculinity associated with patriotic service, contrasting the dandy and the navy man.

Wentworth’s naval engagements are quite glamorous, placing him within a tradition of celebrity mariners, many of whom are associated specifically with the Pacific: Drake and Anson, and to a lesser degree men like Dampier and Woodes Rogers. Austen, then, displaces fears of a state-sanctioned piracy onto a Pacific tradition, thereby rewriting as patriotic and heroic what might be read as fundamentally predatory. Wentworth functions as a unique bridge between two Pacific traditions: the predatory raider whose action is rewritten as patriotic service in the vein of Drake and Anson, and the enlightened explorer like Captain Cook, who represents an imperial
vision based on “the arts of peace.” Although Wentworth operates in the symbolically murky waters of the Atlantic, his action at Santo Domingo banishes the specter of slavery and disease, and his later action in the Mediterranean, in fact, associates him with the East Indian trade. Because frigates could not be allowed by enemy powers to prey on shipping unimpeded, Wentworth’s Mediterranean presence occupies French raiders that would otherwise attack the East India Company’s merchantmen returning to England. The move to the Mediterranean brings Wentworth safely into an idealized vision of empire based on unimpeded trade with the East.

In short, reading Wentworth as a “pirate” is anachronistic. Southam clarifies that neither Austen nor her readers would see Wentworth’s actions as problematic, and “that a Captain in search of a frigate was after prize-money was not a cynical assessment, but a truism accepted through the Navy … Prize-money was the only route to wealth.”72 While not ignoble, prize hunting did pose one inherent problem: “the potency of its attraction away from war: the fact that fortunes were to be made not in the pursuit of the enemy’s warships but in the search for his treasure-ships and richly-laden merchantmen.”73 Recognizing this inherent self-interest, Nelson introduced a radical change in naval tactics, initiating a plan of “annihilation” rather than harassment. With this emphasis on the complete destruction of French military vessels, chances for a captain’s personal gain were significantly darkened. One of Nelson’s flag officers—Francis Austen—felt the pinch. Nelson reputedly told Austen, “A frigate would have been better calculated to have given [you] a fortune,” but that the honor of sinking “a French 80-gun ship” would more than compensate Austen for the money lost.74 Southam suggests that Wentworth’s success in a frigate is a fictional healing of harms, which, again, distances Wentworth from the

72 Southam, 114-115.
73 Southam, 126.
74 For an overview of Nelson’s “annihilation” strategy, see Southam, 113-115.
charge of self-interest. Moreover, given the problematic picture of naval masculinity that Nelson poses, any distance Wentworth can maintain from Nelson should be read positively.

Despite *Persuasion’s* implicit suggestion that professional domesticity will replace the need for a society that draws its values primarily from the land, Austen is too clever to suggest that a new, more socially mobile professional society will not create new predators. Sir Walter’s presumptive heir, Mr. William Elliot, however offers a damning foil for the portrait of naval masculinity embodied by Wentworth. A truly piratical fortune hunter, Mr. Elliot shares many qualities with Wentworth. As “a very young man, just engaged in the study of law” (7), he, too, is a professional. He courts the eldest Elliot sister and wins her heart. Unlike Wentworth, however, he throws over Elizabeth and rebuffs Sir Walter, pursuing a different path of economic individualism—“he had purchased independence by uniting himself to a rich woman of inferior birth” (7). While the naval men might represent an idealized vision of a professional class capable of infusing a pre-existing social order with newfound virtue and vigor, the dark side of the professional classes exists in the avatar of Mr. Elliot. Taking his own “prizes,” he, not Wentworth, represents a “modern capitalistic world in which competitiveness and individualism have separated man from a society of enclosure and support.”75 For all of Wentworth’s positive characteristics that are now recognized as the qualities of a self-made man in a meritocracy, Mr. Elliott reminds us that a Wentworth is never that far removed from a Singleton, and a merchant never that far from an “allegorical pyrate.”

This sort of fortune-hunting is tacitly coded as its own form of piracy, although Sir Walter mistakes who the real pirates are. Upon letting Kellynch to Admiral Croft, Sir Walter wryly jokes, “A prize indeed would Kellynch-hall be to him; rather the greatest prize of all, let him have taken ever so many before” (13). The Admiral’s capture of Kellynch as a “prize,”

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75 Duckworth, 15.
however, is written in the same patriotic vein as Wentworth’s capture of prizes, because the
domestic professionalism of the Croft’s promises to rectify the symbolic damage Sir Walter’s
neglect has done to the neighbourhood. Given Austen’s location of professional domesticity in
the East Indies, economic individualism makes positive impacts on society when coded in naval
terms, and more broadly, imperial terms. Otherwise, prize-hunting is performed only with
personal gain in mind.

Mr. Elliot’s treatment of women as prizes to be taken also tempers Wentworth’s earlier
missteps with respect to the treatment of women onboard naval vessels. Wentworth’s rationale
undoubtedly stems from a rather sexist, paternalist attitude, which he justifies by saying, “This is
from no lack of gallantry towards [women]. It is rather from feeling how impossible it is, with
all one’s efforts, and all one’s sacrifices, to make the accommodations on board, such as women
ought to have. There can be no want of gallantry, Admiral, in rating the claims of women to
every personal comfort high—and this is what I do” (50, emphasis Austen’s). Despite his naval
brothers’ tendency to “show a healthy lack of self-consciousness about the constraints of
gender,” Wentworth’s “gallantry” treats women as creatures incapable of enduring the same
exertions as men, which the life of Wentworth’s sister refutes easily enough. 76 As the arbiter of
correct manners and morals, Mrs. Croft points out that her brother’s illogical stance is based on
an idea of “idle refinement” (50), reminiscent of the “idle hour” Sir Walter spends perusing the
Baronetage. Echoing Wollstonecraft, Mrs. Croft says, “I hate to hear you talking so, like a fine
gentleman, and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures. We none of us
expect to be in smooth water all our days” (50). 77 Life in the East Indies for both the Crofts and

76 Knox-Shaw, 240.
77 Knox-Shaw has a particularly good reading of Wollstonecraft in Persuasion. See Knox-Shaw, 241-242.
Southam, however, takes issue with Mrs. Croft’s breezy representation, writing, “Jane Austen skates over a good
deal. The gap here between fiction and fact is wide.” Southam suggests the hardest thing about living on a naval

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Captain Harville refutes a life of idle refinement, empowering both men and women to be “rational creatures” who occupy themselves with a life of purpose and utility, as opposed to the rather pointless, if innocuous, country sports of Charles Musgrove and the days of boredom and leisure that lead his wife Mary to a life of hypochondria.

Wentworth’s gallantry, however misguided, nevertheless stands in contrast to Mr. Elliot, who views women as objects to be used. Fortunately, Anne promises the same sort of professional domesticity that Mrs. Croft displays, thus promising to transform or “persuade” Wentworth into an Admiral Croft-type character. In addition to her examination of the moral valence accorded to Pacific names, Barchas reveals that “Wentworth” is actually one of the oldest names in England, with the Wentworth Woodhouse estate in Yorkshire dating to the thirteenth century when a Wentworth married the aptly named Emma Wodehouse. The landless sailor thus shares a name with a man recognizable to any landholder in eighteenth-century England. The last Wentworth died in Austen’s lifetime—the Earl of Strafford carried the name in 1799. Austen no doubt played on this name, given that the Wentworth family underwent its own succession crisis in 1695, when the second Earl of Strafford died without an heir; the title then passed through his sister Anne Wentworth to her son, Thomas Watson, sparking a Wentworth-Watson feud. With now “two opposing Strafford lines in the Wentworth family—one Whig and one Tory, one old and one comparatively new,” it is hard not to think Austen purposefully meant for her own Anne Wentworth to play a similar transitional role symbolically conjoining old and new. Furthermore, given that the line survived via Anne Wentworth, one might assume the fictional Anne will serve a similar function, securing the vessel (for men and women) were the spectacles of harsh punishment, which were reputed to make even hardened veterans physically ill. Austen makes no mention of such punishment in Persuasion. See Southam, 278-285.

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78 Barchas, 3.
79 Barchas provides an extensive overview of the Wentworth name. See Barchas, 27-56.
80 Barchas, 44. Similarly, Croft is the name of an old, landowning family.
relevancy of the gentry by infusing it with meritocratic values and professional domesticity. Wentworth and Anne’s marriage, then, represents the best of both worlds: the name of an old, venerated landed family whose legacy is figuratively and literally secured by the progressive values of a woman named Anne. Although Barchas contends that Austen uses old, landed names “that upset Persuasion’s seeming radicalism, mixing associations between old and new, land and sea,” I would argue that these names confer a moral and social authority on the new class this union represents. ⁸¹

As a final reminder that the idealized future of Wentworth and Anne, like the Croft’s, remains at sea, Austen offers up a problematic moment of masculine gallantry: Wentworth secures the legal restoration of Mrs. Smith’s West Indian property, which had been swindled from her by William Elliot. Although Mrs. Smith connives to have Anne marry Mr. Elliot, coding her as a “manipulative and mendacious person whose main goal is to regain her West Indian property,” this fact alone does not excuse Wentworth’s decision to restore her slave wealth; despite Britain’s abolition of the slave trade by this point, slavery was still legal in the colonies. Galperin reads this restoration as a cynical moment wherein Austen purposely undercuts the novel’s idealism: the episode “has the additional effect of deconstructing any difference that might exist between the old order and the newer democratic order under whose auspices both slavery and the continued subjugation of women are also countenanced.” ⁸² Wentworth, despite his professionalism and self-made status, has not wholly learned the lessons Anne is to have taught. While this final action may cast doubt on the entire reformatory project of the novel, Wentworth has, tellingly, never been to the East. Wentworth and Anne must themselves become “great travellers” like the Crofts, discovering for themselves an idealized

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⁸¹ Barchas, 212.
⁸² Galperin, 233.
picture of marriage, self, and society in the Eastern oceans. Until they do, they run the risk of
remaining mired in an outdated, patriarchal system, simply recreating the new society in the
image of the old one.

It is necessary, then, to confront the reality that Austen tacitly supported the spread of
d Empire, if only for the possibilities it registered for social mobility and the betterment of
women.83 Although Austen writes, “I am tired of the lives of Nelson, being that I never read
any,” she nevertheless adamantly endorses tales of imperial endeavor farther abroad.84 I repeat
an oft-quoted passage from her letters at length:

I am reading a Society octavo, an Essay on the Military Police and Institutions of
The British Empire by Capt Pasley of the Engineers, a book which I protested
against at first but which upon trial I find delightfully written and highly
entertaining. I am as much in love with the author as ever I was with Clarkson or
Buchanan, or even the two Mr. Smith’s of the city—the first soldier I ever sighed
for—but he does write with extraordinary force and spirit.85

Austen’s men seem an unlikely grouping of military, missionary, and abolitionist; Pasley’s Essay
on the Military Police of the British Empire (1810) is an unapologetic celebration of British
imperialism prompting Austen’s uncharacteristic “the first soldier I ever sighed for” quip, while
Clarkson wrote The History of Abolition (1808) and Buchanan a tract called Christian
Researches in Asia (1811). Perry makes clear, however, that “all three men represent
engagement with a new international world order, a new way of thinking about territories and

83 Perry attributes this attitude to a distinct class consciousness. It is because Austen “watched the wars of
colonialism over territory enable her brothers’ upward mobility, that she revised her estimation of colonialism in
Persuasion.” Perry, 102.
84 11 October 1813.
85 24 January 1813. Perry provides a concise overview of Pasley, Clarkson, and Buchanan. See Perry, 103-105.
markets in the rest of the world—whether to convert, to protect, or to conquer them.” Once again, all the men Austen mentions cast their gaze much farther afield than the West Indies, settling on India and the East as the future of the empire.

As an idealized extension of the Pacific, Austen’s generic “East” confers an order upon the broader social aspects of *Persuasion*’s world. Thinking of this broader “East” as a geopolitical influence on the novel informs the argument that “domestic virtue has been moved out of conventional society into a group whose commitment is to the nation rather than this or that parish or village,” whereby this idealized space functions as a proving ground or the site from which good governance flows. Indeed, Sir Walter voices what most already know—the interlocking imperial projects of commerce, war, and exploration *do* elevate people of obscure birth to wealth, prestige, and rank, including men like Drake, Anson, Cook, and Wentworth. The problem, of course, is that the idealized view of empire is tied directly to its continued expansion, often through war. If an individual’s “commitment” must shift from the parish to the nation, from being English to being British, then the empire becomes the new locus for thinking about identity and, in Austen’s case, domesticity. Admiral Croft blithely attributes fortune to war, telling his wife that Wentworth will rise to admiral and take Anne to sea: “When [Wentworth] has got a wife, he will sing a different tune. When he is married, if we have the good luck to live another war, we shall see him do as you and I” (50). Anne’s “tax of quick alarm” reminds us of the personal cost of this new form of society, and, despite the implicit suggestion that Anne and Wentworth will emulate the life of the Croft’s, this realization of professional domesticity requires warfare to justify, secure, and solidify its place in society.

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86 Perry, 104.
87 Tanner, 186.
Like any good comedy, *Persuasion* promises a restoration of social order, and naval texts of this time, *Persuasion* among them, worked “to strengthen the governing classes against not only corruption from without but revolution from below.” By representing a new social order based on domestic union and professional classes, Anne and Wentworth’s union reflects the transformation of the Pacific mariner. Wentworth comes to embody an idealized form of empire Austen adapts from the Pacific tradition, banishing the problems of disease and slavery and rejecting the figurative threats of effeminacy and acculturation. *Persuasion* helps to create the robust, imperial, commercial, and aggressive male subjectivity of the nineteenth century alongside the domestic ideology whereby women and the “home” function as the anchor of English manners, morals, and identity abroad. With a character like Mrs. Croft, it is hard not to argue that the East Indies serves as a natural backdrop against which this new subjectivity is rehearsed and affirmed. If “the whole moral direction of *Persuasion* is a toward an embracing of the energetic life and a rejection of the life of leisure,” then this direction embraces the East as the representative site of a British nation and empire where only the most meritorious men and women succeed to govern society. The Atlantic, the West Indies, and an imperial network that props up decrepit social systems is rejected. British India and the Pacific, of course, are not without their own sad legacy of colonial exploitation and human suffering. Austen, however, appropriates that nucleus of Pacific travel literature, the fantasy of empire without exploitation, to imagine the new social structures that might best suit a future England. Like many of the Pacific authors, she rehearses new ideas of self, society, and nation, if in a more progressive way than most.

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88 Fulford, 172.
89 Duffy, qtd. in Kestner, 158.
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