

ART AS INFORMATION

Reflections on the Art from Captain Cook's Voyages

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JOHN KEATS ends his *Ode on a Grecian Urn* with the lines:

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.

The lines are well-worn with much quoting, but I repeat them yet once again because they reach to the heart of my subject. It has been noted that they terminate the poem on a surprising note. Art, Keats is saying for most of the poem, gives to the transient events of daily life a perfection which transcends time. But he has the Grecian Urn to say that beauty is an earthly truth, so thrusting us into another country in which a different set of ideas hold sway, one where beauty takes on the form of information, and man-made beauty—art, is akin to the conveyance of correct information.

As several critics of Keats have noted,¹ the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* embodies two views concerning the nature of art which it seeks to resolve. Both views hold that art is an imitation of nature; both, that is to say, are varieties of naturalism. The first is classical naturalism, which centred itself upon the human figure as the finest creation of nature. The second view, which we might call empirical naturalism, takes the spot-light from the human figure and directs it, in the first instance, towards plants and animals. An empirical naturalism is present, in the lower categories of the visual arts, in Europe from the end of the fourteenth century onwards,² but it does not begin to threaten the supremacy of classical naturalism in the high aesthetic realm until the eighteenth century when it received considerable impetus from the work of Carl Linné (1707–78) better known as Linnæus. As a result of Linnæus's influence, empirical forms of naturalism were developed in the visual arts to assist in the provision of a systematic account of nature and of man by means of a connected group of descriptive sciences: botany, zoology, meteorology, geography, geology, archaeology and anthropology. As empirical naturalism came to be preferred to classical naturalism, humankind came to be seen no longer as the measure of all things as it was for the classical naturalists but as one kind of animal among others, specially endowed unquestionably, but

¹ See the comments concerning the ending of the poem made by Robert Bridges, A. Quiller-Couch, I. A. Richards and T. S. Eliot quoted in J. M. Murray, *Keats*, London 1930 (and the author's own comments on p. 212); see also Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn*, London 1947; and W. H. Ewert, *Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats*, Princeton 1965.

² Although the naturalistic illustration of birds appeared even earlier in Emperor Frederick II's *De arte venandi cum avibus* (c. 1250), a treatise on falconry. See Otto Pächt, 'Early Italian Nature Studies and the Early Calendar Landscape', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. XIII, 1950, pp. 13–47.

sharing with those others the same earthly environment and subject to similar laws.

The history of the visual arts in Europe between 1750 and 1890, give and take a few years either way, can best be understood, I would argue, as the steady, relentless and continuing triumph of empirical naturalism over classical naturalism. And at the starting point of that triumph there is no more single significant factor to be found than the visual arts programme which was developed in the course of Captain Cook's three voyages and the discussions which attended their publication. During the twelve years from 1768 to 1780 something in the order of three thousand original drawings were made of things, mostly from the Pacific, not seen before by Europeans: plants, fish, molluscs, birds, coastlines, landscapes, unknown peoples, their arts and crafts, religious practices and styles of life. And Cook's voyages were not only fact-gathering phenomena; they deeply affected conceptual thought; and their influence (and this is my direct concern here) penetrated deeply into the aesthetic realm. That need not surprise us. It would be much more surprising if the unveiling to European eyes of more than one third of the world within fifteen or so years had had a lesser effect.

Yet the effects wrought upon European vision by Cook's Voyages have been largely ignored by English art historians.³

Why, we might well ask, were all those drawings made? It had never happened like that before upon any voyage of exploration. It's true that John White in Virginia, towards the end of the sixteenth century, and Albert Eckhout and Franz Post in Brazil in the third quarter of the seventeenth had worked in the field in the New World, and there were others. But for the two and a half centuries of European exploration, exploitation and colonization of the Americas and both the Indies prior to Cook, the visual records are small, unbelievably small.⁴ The little that did get drawn or painted seems to have been the product of fortunate accident. Little value was placed upon the acquisition of accurate graphic information; no continuing tradition of visual documentation and publication was established; the emphasis was upon secrecy. European artists did not look, were not encouraged to look, beyond Europe.

That situation, long sustained, was changed dramatically by Cook. Under his command the value of visual records was for the first time fully recognized and adequately provided for. They had, however, been advocated by scientists and thoughtful travellers in England for over a century. An early advocate was

³ For example, Martin Hardie's authoritative *Water colour Painting in Britain* (ed. Dudley Snelgrove with Jonathan Mayne and Basil Taylor), 2 vols, London 1966-7, mentions neither Alexander Buchan nor Sydney Parkinson, and Hodges's art is noted mainly with reference to his later work in India. Yet Parkinson is for the Pacific what Paul Sandby was for Scotland, and the work of Hodges in the Pacific foreshadows the naturalism of Constable and Turner.

⁴ For what is known see the admirably exhaustive introduction to P. Hulton and D. Quinn, *The American Drawings of John White*, London 1964.

the Royal Society itself which of course sponsored Cook's voyage so that the 1769 transit of Venus might be observed at Tahiti. In 1665, shortly after the Society's creation, it had prepared with the help of one of its founder members, Lawrence Rooke, the astronomer, a set of written instructions for seamen bound for long voyages. The fourth instruction required them 'to make Plotts and Draughts of prospects of Coasts, Promontories, Islands and Ports'.⁵

Such instructions, however, were at first more often honoured in the breach than the observance. Lord George Anson (1697-1762), during his famous voyage of seizure and plunder against Spain in the South Seas, was one of the first seriously to take note of them. 'No voyage I have yet seen', wrote Richard Walter, the chaplain of Anson's ship *Centurion*, 'furnishes such a number of views of land, soundings, draughts of roads and ports, charts and other materials, for the improvement of geography and navigation'.⁶ It was Walter himself who edited Anson's *Voyage* and it became the most popular travel book of its time. In his introduction he stressed at considerable length the enormous importance of keeping graphic records of exploration and maritime adventure in the way that Anson did: 'For they were not copied from the works of others, or composed at home from imperfect accounts, given by incurious and unskilful observers, as hath frequently been the case in such matters; but the greatest part of them were drawn on the spot with the utmost exactness, by the direction, and under the eye of Mr Anson himself'. It was Percy Brett (1709-81), Anson's second-lieutenant on the *Centurion*, who made most of these drawings. Entering the navy as a midshipman he rose to be a commander who saw much active service and was knighted in 1753 becoming an Admiral of the Fleet in 1778. Unfortunately his original drawings have been lost.

Brett was not a professional artist; he had other things to do than make accurate charts and views. He was, for example, placed in charge of the landing party which sacked and burned the town of Paita in Peru in November 1741. The two activities were not unconnected. Accurate drawing was often an essential pre-requisite for a successful sea-borne assault. This was one of the points which Walter had made in advocating the appointment of professional draughtsmen to men-of-war bound for far voyages and the value of training officers in charting and drawing skills. Walter's *Account of Anson's Voyage* ran through many editions prior to 1768 and his views influenced thoughtful men in the British navy. We know that a copy of *Anson's Voyage* was taken aboard the *Endeavour* for both Cook and Banks refer to it in specific contexts, in their journals.⁷ Walter's emphasis, however, was upon the value of drawing as an aid to navigation and sea-borne assault, though he does allude to the more

⁵ *Philosophical Transactions*, Vol. I, 1665/6, pp. 140-2.

⁶ George Anson, *A Voyage Round the World*, compiled by Richard Walter, London 1748, Introduction (n.p.).

⁷ See J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks*, Sydney 1962, with various references; and J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, Cambridge 1955, Vol. I, p. 58.

general value of drawing for providing accurate accounts of foreign peoples and places.⁸ It was Joseph Banks (1743–1820) who first attempted to realize the possibilities of Walter's programme and to give it a strong scientific bent.

Young, highly energetic and heir to a considerable fortune, Banks, before he sailed with Cook at the age of twenty-five had already befriended Matthew Boulton and Josiah Wedgwood and other pioneer industrialists, had grasped the significance of the application of science to technology for the future of England, and was already an experienced member of the small but increasingly influential circle of English natural-historians who had been inspired by the work of Linnaeus.⁹ He had botanized extensively in the western counties and in Newfoundland. It was Banks and his circle who promoted the practice of making drawings of the plants they collected, in order to record the form, structure and colour before the specimen dried and withered.

II

In order to appreciate the problems and achievements of the graphic arts programme developed on Cook's Voyages, it is useful to keep in mind some of the characteristics of visual perception and its graphic re-presentation. I would suggest that there are three principal means by which drawings may be said to represent: we might call them inventive drawing, illustrative drawing and documentary drawing. Inventive drawing represents forms drawn, at least immediately, from the draughtsman's mind, as Paul Klee, say, drew the *Snake Goddess and her Enemy* [pl. 1]. Illustrative drawing represents things already expressed in words, as Sebastiano Ricci, say, represented *Achilles surrendering Hector's corpse to Priam* [pl. 2]. Documentary drawing represents things which the draughtsman perceives out there in his world, as Rembrandt, say, saw and drew *A Beggar and his Family* [pl. 3]. Such theoretical distinctions as these are, of course, never so clear-cut in practice. Witness the difficulties archaeologists have got themselves into at times in attempting to decide firmly whether a painting which lacks supporting documentary evidence, at Lascaux, for example, is inventive, illustrative of myth, or documentary of hunting [pl. 4]. Inventive, illustrative and documentary draughtsmen all require a stock of visual memories drawn from their worlds; for all draughtsmen who have learned the art of speech, language normally mediates powerfully at every act of visual perception; in one sense all drawing is illustrative, a visualizing of verbalizations; all drawing documentary in its recording of memories; all

⁸ Anson, *Voyage*, Introduction, (n.p.).

⁹ See Harold B. Carter, 'Cook's Oxford Tutor: Sir Joseph Banks and European Expansion in the Pacific Region 1767–1820', p. 10. Typescript of a lecture given to the Conference 'Captain James Cook and his Times', Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, April 1978. I should like to place on record here my indebtedness to Harold Carter for his generous help on the question of the volumes in Banks's and Solander's library on board the *Endeavour*.

drawing inventive in its translation of neural activities into a graphic code. It is better therefore to think of inventing, illustrating and documenting as actual or potential components of all acts of graphic representation. Considered in this way inventive draughtsmanship is of a kind which stresses invention but minimizes the illustrative and documentary components of perception. A documentary draughtsman, on the other hand, will endeavour to suppress the inventive and illustrative components of his perception, and do his best to draw what he sees. If we keep these points in mind it will assist us in understanding the problems confronting Cook's artists, and the limited yet nevertheless portentous character of their achievement.

In order to carry out his art programme Banks took with him on *Endeavour*, Sydney Parkinson (1745?-71) aged twenty-three, already well known in Linnean circles for his drawings of plants, and Alexander Buchan, who was also young but of whom nothing definite is known prior to his engagement by Banks.¹⁰ When Buchan died of epilepsy at Tahiti Banks called upon Herman Spöring, his naturalist secretary, who possessed talents as a draughtsman to help.

From the time the *Endeavour* left Plymouth on 26 August 1768 Banks put his artists to the task of drawing fish or molluscs [pl. 5] caught in the naturalist's casting nets, or birds shot or snared from the deck, or from the boats put out on calm days. When the ship was running down a coast both Buchan and Parkinson made coastal profiles of the shoreline. This extra duty may have been Cook's suggestion. The drawing of coasts and profiles normally fell to the master or the master's mate, but on *Endeavour* most of the surviving profiles were made by Banks's artists, not Cook's officers. Cook was the kind of commander who made the best use of the talent available.

Occasionally, coastal profiles possessed a potential naval and military value. From 13 November to 7 December 1769 the *Endeavour* was anchored in Rio harbour taking on provisions. The Portuguese Viceroy there, despite Cook's protestations that he was engaged upon a voyage of a purely scientific nature, did not trust him. Had he been able to see Buchan and Parkinson making their drawings of Rio harbour with keys identifying the military and naval installations and to read Banks's and Cook's comments upon the weaknesses of the harbour's fortifications, he would have felt good reason for distrust [pl. 6]. The expedition may have been predominantly scientific in its overt intentions, but Cook, who had helped to chart the St Lawrence prior to Wolfe's successful siege of Quebec, was not likely to let such an opportunity pass. To use topographical art in this way to document military installations was a venerable practice and we have noted the importance that Richard Walter laid upon it. Charles II had employed Dankerts and Hollar in drawing the fortifications at Tangiers. It was

¹⁰ Dr Lysaght's interesting account of Banks's Scottish circle of friends and the Buchans of North Berwick provides no firm basis, on the evidence presented, of linking Alexander Buchan with either. See A. M. Lysaght, 'Banks's Artists and his *Endeavour* Collections' in *Captain Cook and the South Pacific, British Museum Yearbook* 3, London 1979.

a traditional role of topographical art, situated on the lowest rung of the ladder of aesthetic taste, to provide practical information, without aesthetic pretensions, in this way. But things were not to remain that way.

On 15 January 1769 the *Endeavour* anchored in the Bay of Good Success in Tierra del Fuego, to wood and water, and the first encounter was made with a non-European people; a tribe of the Ona Indians of Patagonia. Banks had taken Buchan in order to provide a visual record of the scenes of the voyage that would entertain his friends in England, and Buchan illustrated the event [pl. 7].

He was not a skilled figure-draughtsman, but his small puppet-like figures provide information better in some ways than an academically trained artist's drawings might have done. The watering place is shown as a grove sheltered from the south by banks through which a stream has cut a ravine. A tent has been erected and men are to be seen filling or caulking water barrels, supervised by marines. Two fires have been lit and there is a large pot over one. To the left a small party of Indians have met members of the *Endeavour's* company, and in the foreground some trading is in progress.

Such depictions as this of encounters with indigenous peoples became a feature of Cook's voyages. They were developed from studies in pencil, pen or wash made on the spot, sometimes immediately after the event, sometimes at the end of the voyage. This drawing must have been made shortly after the event; it is interesting to reflect that it must be one of the first, if not the first, in which an on-the-spot visual record was made by Europeans of their encounter with a non-European people at the moment of the encounter. It stands on the threshold of recording contact at the time of contact by visual means: the ancestor of the photographic, film and television documentary of cultural contact between European and non-European.

Banks also sought faithful drawings of the Fuegian people and their manner of living. Towards this end Buchan made a drawing of a man and a woman [pls 8, 9], and Banks wrote a detailed description in his *Journal*:

The inhabitants we saw here seemed to be one small tribe of Indians consisting of not more than 50 of all ages and sexes. They are of reddish Colour nearly resembling that of rusty iron mixd with oil: the men large built but very clumsy, their height 5ft 8 to 5ft 10 nearly and all very much the same size, the women much less, seldom exceeding 5ft. Their Cloaths are no more than a kind of cloak of Guanicoe or seal skin thrown loose over their shoulders and reaching down nearly to their knees; under this they have nothing at all nor anything to cover their feet, except a few of them had shoes of raw seal hide drawn loosely round their instep like a purse. In this dress there is no distinction between men and women, except that the latter have their cloak tied round their middle with a kind of belt or thong and a small flap of leather hanging like Eve's fig leaf over those parts which nature teaches them to hide; which precept tho she has taught to them she seems intirely to have omitted with the men, for they continually expose those parts to the view of strangers with a carelessness which thoroughly proves them to have no regard to that kind of decency.¹¹

¹¹ *Endeavour Journal*, Vol. 1, p. 227.

The relationship between Buchan's drawings and Banks's description is of interest. Did Banks use the drawings to aid his memory when he wrote up his description in his journal later? Or did he direct Buchan to include this or that feature of interest in a drawing? Were the drawings made after, and to illustrate, Banks's verbal descriptions? We do know that Banks was committed to the view that pictorial descriptions were superior to verbal ones. But did he mean superior as independent records or as illustrations of description; was their function investigative or pedagogical? There is no obvious answer. But if the plant and animal drawings may be taken as a model, we might conclude that the verbal and visual descriptions were designed to be mutually supportive; each benefiting from the analytical techniques of the other.

But there's another problem. The way Buchan drew was affected by the way he had learned to draw. Clearly he had not been trained in the skills of academic figure draughtsmanship. He appears to have been teaching himself to draw by copying engravings, which was the way most art students began at that time.¹² Compare Buchan's two drawings [pls 8, 9] with the engraving of *Two Californian Women* (1726) [pl. 10]. If we ignore the landscape setting in Shelvocke the drawings and engraving will be seen to have much in common. Both establish volume by gradated shading in from sharp, dark contours. The stance of the figures and the treatment of the hair is similar and in both cases the feet cast shadows along a bare rocky shelving. It is probable that Buchan used this engraving as a general schematic model for developing some drawings in outline [pl. 11] which he probably made on 15 January 1769 when Banks and his party first encountered a small party of the Ona people, made friends with them, and encouraged three of them to come aboard the *Endeavour*.¹³ These drawings were the crucial acts of primary graphic draughtsmanship upon which a great burden of visual 'editing' later came to be hung. A copy of Shelvocke was in Banks's *Endeavour* library and was in use at that time. Banks had referred to it but three days before in comparing a marine invertebrate he had fished up with a similar one mentioned by Shelvocke.¹⁴ All this is not to say that such a manner of developing a drawing renders the information conveyed inaccurate, but that the information is coded through a drawing technique developed by imitating engravings.

If engravers' techniques could thus mediate between perception and repre-

¹² 'At the elementary level the pupil was required to copy engravings, called *modèles de dessin* . . . Although this form of instruction had been practised since the seventeenth century, at no time was it adopted in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts during the nineteenth century. It was employed only in the private ateliers, in the industrial schools and in the drawing programme of the State school system'. A. Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, London 1971, p. 24. Although Boime is referring to Continental practice, a similar practice prevailed in England during the eighteenth century.

¹³ *Endeavour Journal*, Vol. I, pp. 217-18.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 214. It is possible that the copy of Shelvocke on board *Endeavour* is that with the call no. 981.d.3. in the British Library. It bears Banks's bookstamp and came to the British Library with some 17,000 odd volumes from Banks's magnificent library.

sentation in the secondary acts of draughtsmanship, the aesthetic conventions adopted by engravers might also effect the tertiary elaboration and editing of the visual material for publication. To illustrate.

Buchan made a drawing of a Fuegian village,¹⁵ and both he and Parkinson made drawings of individual habitations.¹⁶ Some time before Hawkesworth published his *Account* (1773) of the voyage, these two drawings were handed to the engraver Francisco Bartolozzi and his close friend, the history painter, Cipriani, for the purpose of providing a suitable illustration for the *Account*. Cipriani made a composite drawing [pl. 12] based on Buchan's study of the hut, added additional figures from Parkinson but endowed them with a nobler grace and bearing than the original drawings possessed and furthermore gave them elegant proportions quite at variance with Banks's carefully written description. These changes were carried through into the engraving. The radical transformation thus effected by history painter and engraver is often cited as evidence that eighteenth-century Europeans *saw* the peoples of the South Seas as noble savages. But the matter is not so simple. First, it is clear that Banks and his artists did their best within the limits of their skills, techniques and materials to provide an accurate account of the Fuegians encountered. We might therefore want to say that the move from faithful reporting to false presentation occurred when the engraver took over the publication of the information. Yet even here we are on shaky ground. An alteration certainly took place, but there is no good reason to assume that this was due to either Cipriani or Bartolozzi having been converted, as John Hawkesworth may well have been, to the so-called Rousseauian belief in the nobility of savages. We must realize that both Bartolozzi and Cipriani had been trained as history painters in the Academy of Florence and that it was the express business of history painters, proclaimed to academicians since Alberti's time onwards, that they should ennoble and dignify historic events. We must realize too that as fewer walls but more books became available to history painters to illustrate during the eighteenth century, artists like Cipriani turned increasingly to the preparation of designs for engraving and illustrating notable events for publication. They brought to this practice those processes of selection and elevation traditional to the history painter. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in response to comparable social changes, applied the elevation of history painting to his practice of portraiture. *Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces* [pl. 13] which Reynolds exhibited in 1765 and Bartolozzi's Fuegian fisher-girl [pl. 14] published eight years later were members, you might say, of the same neo-classical sisterhood. On this view of the matter the nobility either of aristocrats

¹⁵ 'An Indian Town of Terra del Fuego', British Library, Add Ms. 23920, f. 12. Ill. in Banks, *Endeavour Journal*, Vol. I, pl. 5.

¹⁶ Buchan, 'Inhabitants of the Island of Terra del Fuego in their Hut', British Library, Add. Ms. 23920, f. 14a; Parkinson, 'Natives of Terra del Fuego with their Hut', British Library, Add. Ms. 23920, f. 13. Both ill. in B. Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, Oxford 1960, pls 22, 23.

or 'savages' is not to be understood as a false kind of perception, but as an aesthetic grace which the sovereign artist bestows upon those whom he favours or the situation justifies.

For in the same manner as the repertoire of motifs available to classical architecture, derived from arch, column and lintel, were adapted to suit a multiplicity of purposes whenever a touch of pomp or note of dignity was called for, so the classical repertoire of history painting was deployed whenever a sense of occasion was appropriate. Cipriani used his motifs interchangeably. Some years before he composed his drawing for Hawkesworth he had been employed by Robert Adam (c. 1767) to design an overmantel painting for the fireplace in the Eating Room at Osterley Park. It is entitled *An Offering to Ceres* [pl. 15]. A comparison between the drawing for Hawkesworth and the painting for Adam provides an insight into Cipriani's methods. The figure of the statue of Ceres, reversed and slightly modified, provided the model for his Fuegian fisherman (which his colleague Bartolozzi appears to have slyly transformed, by softening the features, changing the proportions, and rendering the limbs more nubile, into a young woman). The girl seated and reading, third from left, in the Osterley painting provides a model for the comely transformation of Buchan's original squat female seated within the hut. The young woman, second from the right at Osterley, who directs the child bearing gifts to Ceres' sacrificial fire finds her Fuegian parallel in the girl who directs the fisherman and his boy (a Tobias and Angel motif from an unidentified source) to the open hearth-fire before the hut. Whether the story to be told was a food myth from antiquity or a food-gathering custom of one's own time, the history painter possessed a vocabulary of forms and gestures for the occasion, sanctified by centuries of theory and practice. Such conventions were not easily penetrated.

Yet on two points of Fuegian custom Banks's on-the-spot recording and Buchan's witness were accurately conveyed. The men exposed themselves, Banks noted, without any sense of shame, and Bartolozzi ensured that one old man and a boy conspicuously display their penes. But the women were modest. The tiny girl held by her mother in the left-hand corner of the hut is therefore provided, as Banks recorded, with her 'small flap of leather hanging like Eve's fig leaf'. It is salutary to realize that the observations of travellers could be accurately conveyed within the conventions of neo-classical history painting; and also to remember that they could not be conveyed at all but within some kind of convention.

Let us view this whole matter, for a moment, from another angle. It is commonplace to regard the elevated, neo-classical style as a device appropriate for an artist of the stature of Reynolds to apply to the depiction of Europeans of rank, influence and power, but we implicitly accuse his minor contemporaries such as Cipriani or Bartolozzi of a false or 'Europeanized' perception should they apply the same device to the elevation of non-European people. It is important in this regard to realize that the ennobling of so-called Pacific savages contained a latent, but salutary, critique of Euro-po-centric attitudes. It en-

shrined a vestige of that view of the dignity and potential godliness of all men, as Pico and the Renaissance humanists had defined man, a view which remained eminently respectable doctrine until Europe experienced its first real taste of popular democracy in action in the years that followed the outbreak of the French Revolution. As a result of the great fear that followed, notions about noble savagery and universal brotherhood became subversive, being replaced by theories more congenial to Europe's powerful, hierarchical societies during the age of colonial expansion. Such was Darwin's theory of evolution. It provided an empirical, secularized version of the theological dogma of original sin; God's election was replaced by nature's selection. That, surely, was one of the more sinister aspects of the triumph of empirical naturalism over classical naturalism. Those who had been portrayed like gods came to be portrayed like monkeys.

Consider the simian-like proportions of the Melanesians who challenge Cook in Will B. Robinson's illustration in John Lang's *Story of Captain Cook*, written for 'T. C. and E. C. Jack's Children's Heroes Series and published in 1906 at the height of British Imperial power in the South Pacific as elsewhere [pl. 16].

III

As the *Endeavour* rounded the Horn and sailed slowly into the warmer waters of the Pacific Banks's artists were at work daily drawing the life of the sea; shearwaters, albatross, the frigate bird with its magnificent red tail [pl. 17]. And Parkinson became increasingly responsive to the changing colours of the sea. As they passed through the Tuamotus he noted on one drawing 'the water in these lagoons a very fine sea green'¹⁷ and it may have been at this time that he made an extended colour note in his sketchbook, now in the British Library:

the water within the reefs sea green brownish towards the edge of the Reefs the Breakers white. In many a bay have taken notice that the sea green colour with tops of the waves white, this stript and streakt with a dark colour of a purple cast occasioned by the intervention of clouds between sun and water. In a calm where there is a swell the water appears undulated with pale shadows and at other times it is quite smooth streakt here and there with dark colour occasioned by what sailors call cats-paws on the water when there is a wind coming or rain it appears very black upon the water and when nigh it is full of poppling waves which spread themselves on the smooth water, the sky in general is very uniform often mottled with white clouds in a storm the sea is a dark bluish black here and there a pale blue, the tops of the billows white with a number of white streaks all near the surface of the water.¹⁸

The conventional wisdom of art history informs us that the French impressionists were the first to see and to paint the colour in shadows. Yet here a

¹⁷ Upon a drawing of Bow Island (*Hao*) British Library, London, Add. Ms. 9345, f. 42^vb-43^b.

¹⁸ British Library, Add. Ms. 9345, f.13.

century before is a young artist describing with precision the purples he sees in shadows and the effects of broken colour on water that reads like a recipe for an impressionist painting. So we might naturally ask, why didn't he paint what he saw? The answer, surely, is contained in Heinrich Wölfflin's flat and enigmatic statement 'Not everything is possible at all times. Vision itself has its history'.¹⁹ Parkinson could not have painted such a picture successfully even if he had wanted to. A century of technical experiment with such problems lay between Parkinson's perception and their resolution into an adequate pictorial form. Nor would Banks, surely, have allowed his precious pigments to be used upon such experiments. The purple in Parkinson's colour box was for the portrayal of such things as the tail of the frigate bird. His landscapes were always rendered in a grey wash. Yet Cook's artists were being confronted with new problems. A new aesthetic stage was being set.

When Buchan died Banks called upon Spöring to provide more drawings. He made one of a canoe that belonged to Purea, whom Wallis had described as the Queen of Tahiti [pl. 18]. Spöring normally drew in ink; his eye was for construction; it is, you might say, an engineer's drawing. When he draws Spöring does not look for the visual effect as Parkinson does but for a linear description of the dynamic energy of a wave, just as Leonardo had done in the fifteenth century. And this little drawing will serve to remind us how often it is that English art in the second half of the eighteenth century recalls the empirical, naturalistic interests of so much Italian art of the fifteenth century before it was folded over into the hard crusts of *grandeur* of the High Renaissance and Baroque styles.

With Buchan dead however, the great burden of the work fell to Parkinson. He was now required to provide drawings of landscape and people in addition to his plant and animal drawings. His study of the *Peaks of Orofena*, drawn in the morning from the deck of the *Endeavour*, gives one the impression that Parkinson was keen to become a landscape painter.²⁰ Some of his drawings, such as *View up the River among Rocks* [pl. 19] are purely picturesque, but most contain information of human interest. Such drawings reveal, I believe, the influence of Paul Sandby, the first English artist of distinction to adopt a wholly naturalistic approach to the drawing of both landscapes and figures [pl. 20]. Parkinson's life is closely comparable to that of the early life of Sandby. At the age of fifteen Sandby was attached as topographical draughtsman to Colonel David Watson's survey of the Scottish highlands, undertaken soon after the defeat of the Jacobite uprising of 1745. As a young Scot, it is likely that Parkinson would have known Sandby's etched *Views in Scotland* published in 1751 and equally likely that he saw Sandby originals exhibited at the Society of Artists Exhibitions in London during the 1760s. Although the use, as I have noted, of topographical artists for the recording of accurate naval and military informa-

¹⁹ H. Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, trans. M. D. Hottinger, Dover edn (n.d.), p. 11.

²⁰ British Library, Add. Ms. 9345, f. 44. Ill. in J. C. Beaglehole, *Life of Captain James Cook*, London 1974, pl. 8b.

tion was a traditional one, with artists such as Sandby and Parkinson we reach a point, I would suggest, in the history of art where art as information and art as taste meet with significance for the future direction of painting. And here I should like to make a general point.

Although a great deal has been written about the picturesque from the eighteenth century onwards it has been written almost exclusively in terms of aesthetic taste.²¹ What has been missed, it seems to me, is this. That both the practice and the theory of the picturesque served as an aesthetic matrix within which art as topography, art as information, was elevated gradually to the level of taste. The conveyance of information was admitted to art under the mask of a new kind of beauty. This, I would suggest, was the basic thrust behind that elevation of the lower categories of painting which Frederick Antal once noted as one of the features of Romanticism.

But as St Matthew informs us 'if men put new wine into old bottles, the bottles break and the wine runs out'. Something like that happened to picturesque painting. Picturesque composition traced its descent from the compositional methods of Claude Lorraine and Salvator Rosa, and through them back to the Mannerist modes of Brill and Elsheimer and the classical modes of the Renaissance, in which harmonic geometry, poise and counterpoise, provides the essentially linear, framing structure. That, and the supporting use of tonal gradations, of closely related or sharply contrasted tones, by which a painting could be turned into a correlative of human feelings, of serenity, nostalgia, repose, of fear or of faith. Such landscapes were structured by a 'divine' geometry and united by human feeling; by what Constable speaking of Claude once called 'the calm sunshine of the heart', or Ruskin more critically described as 'pathetic fallacy'. Picturesque composition, I would argue, was one of the belated expressions of classical naturalism. It continued to influence Parkinson's treatment of landscape in the Pacific, particularly when he was called upon to record the funerary practices of Polynesia. By his disposition of branches and leaves, solitary waterbirds and isolated mourning figures or abandoned boats he evokes a pervading melancholy for unredeemed pagan man which the engravers were quick to seize upon and enhance. In Parkinson's case it is more than a pictorial device for it is clear that he was a devout young man despite his deep involvement in the science of his day. A disturbed Christian conscience is present in such drawings, explicit enough for Chateaubriand many years later to recognize and seize upon as I have argued elsewhere, in order to attack the values of the Enlightenment.²²

Where traditional feeling thus ran strongly the old pictorial structures held. But it was not easy to stick all the new information being won for the emerging descriptive sciences together in views and landscape by means of the old glue;

²¹ For bibliographies of the picturesque see W. J. Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*, Carbondale 1957; and J. Burke, *English Art 1714-1800*, Oxford, p. 400.

²² *European Vision and the South Pacific*, pp. 115-16.

the pieces kept falling apart visually. They didn't look well together. This, surely, is the root of the visual problem of so much nineteenth-century landscape painting. What was required was a new adhesive, a new compositional structure: one that belonged to the same level of enquiry as empirical science, an order grounded in time, not in timelessness.

The search for the new alternative form of composition was first undertaken, I would argue, in the depiction of weather, not merely as one of the substantial components among others in a painting but increasingly as the compositional *modus vivendi* of the painting itself. The portrayal of weather became a catalyst by means of which colour and light—traditionally seen and painted as secondary qualities of the substantial and discrete objective components of a composition, were transformed into active manifestations that, in the long run, divested the discrete components of a painting of their conceptual substantiality. Now it is true that this gradual triumph of light and colour over harmonic geometry and human feeling was a long time coming; that we should have to go back to the great Venetian colourists to do the subject justice. My point is that a compositional mode congenial to empirical naturalism was significantly advanced by the artists of Cook's voyages who had to front up as best they could to portraying, with scientists looking over their shoulders, the startling radiance of tropic seas, the drama of tropical weather, the half-light of antarctic seas; situations that were new to them all.²³

In Parkinson we may gain only a faint glimpse of the coming change. His limited materials: pencil, pen and wash, were inadequate tools with which to face the challenge. But he was aware of it. Repeatedly, though he portrays the ethnographical information he was employed to portray, the real subject for him is the movement of the clouds in the sky, the shafts of light or rain, the effects of wind in the sky; as we may see in his study of *Vessels in the Island of Otahe* [pl. 21].

If the exploration of the Pacific itself encouraged these concerns, so did the interests of the *Eudeavour's* company. A capacity to forecast and interpret the weather was crucial to the art of navigation. Parkinson's endeavour to depict weather patterns would have gained a larger and more appreciative audience among the ship's company than his more specialized work on plants and animals.

IV

Let us turn now to Cook's Second Voyage and pursue some of the themes we have been considering. William Hodges, the artist employed on that voyage by the Admiralty, was better equipped than Parkinson. He had been trained

²³ Their situation anticipates, of course, that of several influential painters of the nineteenth century who also travelled south towards the sun: Delacroix to Morocco, Van Gogh to Arles, Gauguin to Martinique and Tahiti. In the last case colour was freed from the controls both of chiaroscuro and naturalism for the ancient, conventional freedoms of decorative art. But by then the 'savage' was beginning to 'hit back'.

under Richard Wilson as a landscape painter and took with him a wider range of materials. For coastal profiles he used pencil, ink and watercolour, and could, by his artistry, transform them into works of great beauty [pl. 22]. For his portraits of Pacific peoples he used red crayon exclusively, though occasionally he sketched heads in oils on canvas [pl. 23]. For landscapes he used both watercolour and oil, the latter being painted usually on hardboard, though some of his larger works are on canvas.

His use of red crayon for portraits is of interest. Richard Wilson, his teacher, favoured crayon for drawing and Hodges probably picked up his skill with crayon from him. But there may be another reason. Soft-ground etching and stipple engraving, by means of which the qualities of drawings with their informality and subtlety of line could be effectively reproduced, had been developed in England during the 1760s and were very popular. I suspect that Hodges would have liked his portraits of Pacific Islanders reproduced by one of these new processes so that the intimacy of drawing might be preserved. Hodges had received no training in academic figure draughtsmanship and tended to avoid full-figure renderings, though he did develop an effective visual shorthand for rendering figures in land and seascapes.²⁴ Otherwise he kept to portraiture. Not that his skill was here beyond question. He had trouble, for instance, with three-quarter views, sometimes getting the perspective of the face out of true. But as in the case of Buchan there was one sense in which Hodges's lack of training in academic draughtsmanship served him well. The mental luggage which he brought to the Pacific did not include the visual models based upon classical statuary which were part of the equipment of every well-trained classical draughtsman. Hodges's portraits usually carry conviction; he does not see people as stereotypes, as noble or ignoble savages, as typical of this or that ethnic type, but as individuals in which character and temperament shine through with convincing clarity. Consider, for example, his portrait of that complex Tahitian Tu [pl. 24]. It was of Tu that Cook wrote: 'he seems to avoid all unnecessary pomp and shew and even to demean himself, more than any of the other Earee's (*arii*)'.²⁵ Yet it was Tu who rose, as a result of his kin connections, and what John Beaglehole has described as his 'timidity and cunning', to a higher rank as Pomare I than any other person in Tahiti. Something of his intelligence, his nervous, apprehensive vitality, and perhaps even his cunning may be gained from this portrait, perhaps the finest Hodges ever drew. When we compare it with J. Hall's line engraving [pl. 25] in the official account of the Second Voyage published in 1777 we become aware of a loss in quality; we have moved back from the individual to the type. The presentation has become insensitive, the mouth thicker, the hair matted to a mop, the once puzzled expression now vacuous: we feel that an individual has

²⁴ See, for example, 'Natives of New Zealand in a Boat', British Museum, Dept. of Prints and Drawings, 201.c.5. Ill. in *Captain Cook and the South Pacific*, *The British Museum Yearbook* 3, London 1979, fig. 76, p. 136.

²⁵ Cook, *Journals* (ed. Beaglehole), Vol. II, p. 410.

been reduced to the impersonality of an ikon. What we are observing here, however, is probably nothing more than the deficiency of line engraving as a medium for the conveyance of subtle information, not necessarily the imposition by the engraver of his personal preconceptions upon the character of a man of the Pacific. It is to be regretted that none of Hodges's drawings was reproduced in the new techniques that had become available for reproducing crayon.

Hodges's particular genius, however, lay in landscape. He succeeded on the second voyage in raising a documentary, informational art to a high level of creative achievement. An early test case is the masterly painting entitled *Cape of Good Hope* now in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich which he probably painted from the great cabin of the *Resolution* during its three-week stay there in November 1772. There is little doubt, as I have argued elsewhere, that the naturalism which he achieved on that occasion developed directly from a desire to provide an accurate visual record of the weather prevailing at the Cape at that time.²⁶ To gain such effects he painted broadly and sharpened his contrasts.

In the Antarctic, however, Hodges preferred the use of wash for capturing the special effects of light. In *Ships Taking in Ice* [pl. 26] he records not only the water reflections in the cavernous interiors of the icebergs but also the curious effect of the low northern sun upon the ships' sails; working with economy he achieves sharp optical effects. Hodges is the first artist to capture the effect of a full flood of tropical light [pl. 27]. In some landscapes he breaks up masses of foreground foliage by painting the innumerable faceted highlights upon leaves, as in this magnificent *View of New Caledonia* [pl. 28], a technical device which came to be known some fifty years later when Constable began to use it as 'Constable's snow' [pl. 29]. Even when Hodges paints a subject full of potential associations, such as a *fata tupa pau* in Tahiti his approach is objective not literary.²⁷ His subject is weather and light even when he paints such evocative subjects as the *Statues of Easter Island*.²⁸ The technical move which Hodges began to make to achieve such optical immediacy is of considerable interest. It is present in his oils but can be seen most vividly in his wash drawings where he sharpens the contrasts between light and dark by virtually eliminating half-tone; a radical move which though quickly stated was one which painters struggled with for over a century. For shading in half-tone was a hallowed academic practice ever since Leonardo and his generation developed the principles and practice of chiaroscuro. Chiaroscuro provided a method whereby three-dimensional objects could be represented on a flat surface under conditions of controlled lighting. Hodges, seeking to represent the dazzling effects of uncontrolled tropic light began to seek for an optical rather than a plastic re-presentation of

²⁶ *European Vision and the South Pacific*, pp. 41-3.

²⁷ 'A Toupapau in Tahiti', Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia, Canberra, NK 6575.

²⁸ Ill. in colour in A. Murray-Oliver, *Captain Cook's Artists, in the Pacific*, Christchurch 1969, pl. 83.

reality, by dispensing progressively with the use of half-tone and sharpening his contrasts. Manet, a century later, made precisely the same move in order to create an optically-inspired mode of painting. He was, of course, able to proceed much further. But I would argue that the significant early move towards an optically-inspired and empirical naturalism was made in the Pacific by Hodges working under the pressure of a geographic imperative to paint what Constable came to call, half a century later, 'a natural history of the skies'.

Hodges was before his time and knew it. In a letter to his friend, the poet William Hayley, a few years before his death, he wrote: 'I have sometimes secretly quarrelled with the world for allowing me the Character of a man of Genius in the display of fanciful representations than that of accurate observation'.²⁹ The comment goes to the source of his originality. For though one can find anticipations of his style in the works of earlier artists, particularly the more painterly artists of the Venetian baroque or the French Rococo, in such cases the painterly flourishes are the individual gestures of highly-expressive personalities.³⁰ Hodges's individuality developed as he struggled to develop technical procedures suited to empirical naturalism. 'Everything,' he wrote in his book on his travels in India, 'has a particular character, and certainly it is finding out the real and natural character which is required',³¹ and to Hayley he wrote 'truth is the base of every work of mine'.³²

Truth was certainly his base on the Second Voyage where his associates, Cook, Wales and the two Forsters were all of a strong scientific cast of mind. But upon his return he felt bound in the paintings he executed for the Admiralty and exhibited in the Royal Academy to present his basic truths within conventional super-structures, constructed out of neo-classical, picturesque and romantic elements. In so doing he created some of the most evocative paintings of Tahiti as a South Sea Island Paradise that were painted before Gauguin, in which the memories of his feelings on location are mingled with his empirical vision.

Such imaginative recastings of visual information had already been attacked when Hawkesworth's *Voyages* appeared in 1773, and they were bound to be attacked again. When the attack came it came from one of Hodges's personal friends, the young and brilliant George Forster (1754-94), who had been appointed as natural-history draughtsman to the voyage under his father's supervision, the scientist and polymath, Johann Reinhold Forster (1729-98).

The object of George Forster's attack was directed at the engraving said to

²⁹ Hodges to William Hayley, London, 27 April 1793. Holograph letter, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

³⁰ Tiepolo, for example, is an interesting case. But the lightening of his palette was a response to changing taste in mural decoration rather than a response to the new scientific demand for accurate visual records.

³¹ Hodges, *Travels in India*, London 1793, p. 155.

³² Hodges to Hayley, cited above, note 29.

have been made after Hodges's drawings of the peoples of Eua which was published in the official account of the Second Voyage as *The Landing at Middleborough* [pl. 30].

Mr. Hodges designed this memorable interview in an elegant picture, which has been engraved for captain Cook's account of this voyage. The same candour with which I have made it a rule to commend the performances of this ingenious artist, whenever they are characteristic of the objects, which he meant to represent, obliges me to mention, that this piece, in which the execution of Mr. Sherwin cannot be too much admired, does not convey any adequate idea of the natives of Ea-oowhe or of Tonga Tabbo. The plates which ornamented the history of captain Cook's former voyage, have been justly criticised, because they exhibited to our eyes the pleasing forms of antique figures and draperies, instead of those Indians of which we wished to form an idea. But it is also greatly to be feared, that Mr. Hodges has lost the sketches and drawings which he made from *Nature* in the course of the voyage, and supplied the deficiency in this case, from his own elegant ideas. The connoisseur will find Greek contours and features in this picture, which have never existed in the South Sea. He will admire an elegant flowing robe which involves the whole head and body, in an island where women very rarely cover the shoulders and breast; and he will be struck with awe and delight by the figure of a divine old man, with a long white beard, though all the people of Ea-oowhe shave themselves with muscle-shells.³³

The irony of it was that Hodges was not directly responsible for the engraving in question, though his name was on it. The drawing was probably made by a classicizing history painter such as Cipriani (we know that he made the drawing for the companion engraving—the *Landing at Erromanga*).³⁴ It was quite out of character with Hodges's art. Yet it must be stressed that even such an elegant composition as this could still convey accurate information. A close examination of the engraving will reveal that the Tongan ritual practice of amputating the little finger has been faithfully recorded.³⁵

George Forster's criticisms, however, were taken to heart. Never again did engravers depict Pacific peoples for an authoritative official publication as though they were actors in a Greek play in an English country garden. It came to be accepted that publishers of official voyages should do all they could to depict visual field work faithfully.

For his Third Voyage, Cook, at Daniel Solander's suggestion, chose John Webber as his artist. Webber was more fully trained than any of the artists of the previous voyages, having studied first at Bern then later at Paris as a landscape and as a figure draughtsman. Furthermore Cook by now had a pretty clear idea of what he wanted from his artist and worked closely with him. In the introduction to the official voyage he explained Webber's duties

so that we might go out with every help that could serve to make the result of our voyage entertaining to the generality of readers, as well as instructive to the sailor

³³ G. Forster, *A Voyage Round the World, 1777*, Vol. I, pp. 427–8.

³⁴ Ill. in Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, pls 54, 55.

³⁵ See A. L. Kaeppler, 'Eighteenth Century Tonga', *Mau*, Vol. VI, June 1971, pp. 204–30.

and scholar, Mr. Webber was pitched upon, and engaged to embark with me, for the express purpose of supplying the unavoidable imperfections of written accounts, by enabling us to preserve, and to bring home, such drawings of the most memorable scenes of our transactions, as could only be expected by a professed and skilled artist.³⁶

There was an eye then, one notes, to publication from the beginning and in many ways Webber provided the best and certainly the most comprehensive record of all three voyages. His art programme developed more or less as set pieces for each major landfall. First, he made studies for a large watercolour painting which usually depicted Cook's first encounter with the local people [pl. 31]. This usually included the accompanying wooding, watering and trading activities that proceeded more or less simultaneously; and he then placed the whole scene in an appropriate and (so far as they may be presently judged) within remarkably accurate landscape settings.

In addition to such 'encounter' drawings there is usually one or more of what we might call 'entertainment' [pl. 32] drawings in which Cook, and his men, are depicted being entertained by tribal elders at feasts or sporting engagements. The 'encounter' and 'entertainment' paintings, many of which were published in the *Atlas* to the Third Voyage with great care, both for artistic perfection and accuracy, constitute a new kind of history painting more radical in its consequences for the later history of art than Benjamin West's *Death of Wolfe* of 1771. For Webber's paintings originated in the field and constituted a new visual source for the study of history, and not as in academic history painting, the retrospective illustration of a traditional text.³⁷

Apart from such paintings drawn to 'entertain the generality of readers' Webber also made careful studies of at least one man and woman of the people encountered at each landfall, and frequently more [pl. 33]. He also made studies of housing, sports, surfboard riding, and dancing [pl. 34], dress and adornments, and ritual and religious practices. These visual records relate closely to Cook's verbal descriptions and were obviously done to provide supportive visual evidence. Such was the material, as Cook had plainly said, drawn for the scholar. What Cook and Webber were engaged in then was nothing less than a well thought-out programme to provide a systematic ethnographic account of the peoples encountered in the Pacific.

John Webber's achievement has not gained the recognition it deserves, for

³⁶ J. Cook and J. King, *Voyage to the Pacific Ocean*, London 1784, Vol. I, p. 5.

³⁷ This, it would seem to me, is the crucial distinction between the two modes of history painting—ancient and modern—which Edgar Wind, in his important article 'The Revolution of History Painting', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. II, 1938, pp. 116-27 does not develop. For though Wind discusses the portrait sketches which Thornhill and Hogarth made of criminals, and also the on-the-spot sketches made by these two artists, he does not concern himself with the basic distinction, as evidence for an historic event, between drawings made on the spot at the time of the event, and a 'realism' such as West's and Copley's assembled after the event, or even a 'realism' as aesthetically potent as David's *Death of Marat* based on the artist's memory of the murdered Marat the day before his death.

an odd reason, his use of Mannerist proportions. John Beaglehole, for example, complains that he adopted 'a sort of modern fashion-artist's devotion to length of body and of leg, a manner rather than a style; and that, in a producer of documentary drawings, is rather dismaying'.³⁸ One must object that fashion art is an effective and influential form of documentary drawing. Rüdiger Joppien has recently shown that the illustration of Cook's *Voyages*, and predominantly those based on Webber's drawings, provided the basic information about the Pacific which was published in the great Italian and French costume books that appeared during the first third of the nineteenth century.³⁹ It was through such books that Europeans gained a popular knowledge of the appearance of Pacific peoples. The importance of Webber's use of proportion can be exaggerated. Proportion is largely an individual rather than an ethnic characteristic, and conventional proportions need not vitiate the conveyance of typical information. Sometimes, especially in an age of engraving, a tall figure had practical value for portraying figures in landscape; compare the case of the cartographer who chooses the projection best suited to the information he seeks to convey. Yet there was also, I suspect, a personal choice involved; that Webber chose Mannerist proportions to give his portrayal of Pacific people elegance and dignity. This was the art in *his* information. At some stage during his student days in Berne, Paris or London—he was only twenty-four when he travelled with Cook—he had picked up the Mannerist mode. There was at that time, particularly in Switzerland, and associated with the literary *cénacles* of *Storm and Stress* and a revival national sentiment, a return to Mannerism. We must always remember that Webber was drawing people. He had to get them to stand or sit to him. Portrait drawing is a slower, more ceremonial affair than, for example, taking informal shots with a camera when the subject isn't looking. That incidentally is the reason why portrait painters are the only kinds of painters notorious for exercising an influence upon heads of state and government; their trade immobilizes when pride is vulnerable. And Webber had problems. At Nootka he had to barter all the buttons on his coat before he was allowed to complete the drawing of a carved house-post that he had begun [pl. 35]. Perhaps he sensed that his subjects liked to be drawn in the tall, elegant way of Mannerism. Europeans of birth and distinction had long approved the mode as the portraits of Van Dyck and Gainsborough testify. Or he may have believed that the people he encountered possessed an innate human dignity and sought to make that dignity visible. If one were sensitive and intelligent, as Webber was, an adolescent of the 1760s in Switzerland and Paris, it is more likely than not that one would be predisposed to such an attitude. In any case what has to be said is that Webber's ethnographic record of the peoples of the Pacific was a tremendous achievement that has never been equalled. It is

³⁸ Cook, *Journals*, III, Vol. I, p. ccxi.

³⁹ R. Joppien, 'The Artistic Bequest of Captain Cook's Voyages' in R. Fisher and H. J. M. Johnston (eds), *Captain Cook and His Times*, Vancouver 1979.

invaluable; unique for our understanding of Pacific culture at the crucial moment of major European contact.

It is then upon the Third Voyage that we may witness a programme of empirical naturalism which had begun with the portrayal of plants and animals on the *Endeavour* and was extended to the portrayal of weather and light on the Second Voyage, developed until it concentrated upon man himself; thus confronting classical naturalism on its own grounds. Classical naturalism had portrayed man as the master of nature and the measure of all things, empirical naturalism depicted him as one creature among others subject to natural laws; at once the flower and victim of his environment.

I have been arguing that in seeking to develop an accurate informational art that was capable of supporting the expanding scientific programmes of Cook's three voyages, the leading artists, Parkinson, Hodges and Webber were impelled by the social and environmental challenges which confronted them towards a pictorial mode of empirical naturalism which determined the course of the most progressive painting in Europe during the nineteenth century. It is true that they were not able to achieve, with the possible exception of Hodges, unquestioned masterpieces in this new kind of art. But they became aware of the new problems and had begun to take the first steps in working out the technical methods necessary for its production. If we can, for a moment, imagine a hypothetical painter who, able enough to combine Hodges's technique for achieving a sense of direct optical presence by the elimination of half-tone, with Webber's ability to depict people not as heroes, but as members of communities who take on the colour and mood of their environment, and then transfer the scene from the Pacific back to a European setting, we shall find ourselves upon the threshold of impressionist painting. For in such paintings as Manet's *Concert in the Tuileries* [pl. 36] humankind is no longer presented acting out some heroic or sacred tale or raising monuments to its pride but is seen as if it were so many frigate birds flying as best they can upon life's ocean. In such paintings empirical naturalism is at last realized in a fully-formulated aesthetic. But the change in perception which was necessary in order to make the new aesthetic of impressionism possible has as one of its earliest and most significant sources the use of art, that was championed by the young Joseph Banks so effectively, as information in the service of descriptive science. If we agree with Wölfflin that 'vision itself has its history' then a pre-condition for the creation of that kind of vision which seeks an aesthetic reality in a sequence of impressions is the practice of art as an informational activity.

The Plates

- 1 Paul Klee, *The Snake Goddess and her Enemy*. By permission of Benteli Verlag, Berne.
- 2 Sebastiano Ricci, *Achilles surrendering Hector's corpse to Priam*. By permission of Albertina Museum, Vienna
- 3 Rembrandt, *A Beggar and his Family*. By permission of Albertina Museum, Vienna
- 4 Unicorn No. 2, Main Chamber, Lascaux, France.
- 5 Sydney Parkinson, *Medusa-pelagica*; Parkinson drawings, Zoological Library, British Museum (Natural History), iii, 54. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, London
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- 28 William Hodges, *A View in the Island of New Caledonia*; The Admiralty, Whitehall, British Crown Copyright. By permission of the Controller of Her Britannic Majesty's Stationery Office
- 29 William Constable, *Dedham Vale, Suffolk*; Victoria and Albert Museum. By permission of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- 30 Engraving by J. K. Sherwin after Hodges, *The Landing at Middleborough*; in James Cook, *Voyage Towards the South Pole and around the World*, 1777, pl. 54
- 31 John Webber, *Captain Cook's Interview with Natives in Adventure Bay—Van Diemen's Land*; Naval Library, Ministry of Defence, London
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- 33 John Webber, *A Man of Atooi (Kauai), Sandwich Islands*; Bernice P. Bishop Museum. By permission of the Bishop Museum, Honolulu
- 34 John Webber, *Dancers of Owhyhee*; Bernice P. Bishop Museum. By permission of the Bishop Museum, Honolulu
- 35 John Webber, *Interior of a house in Nootka Sound*; Department of Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Scotland. By permission of the National Gallery of Scotland
- 36 Edouard Manet, *Concert in the Tuileries*; National Gallery. By permission of the National Gallery, London

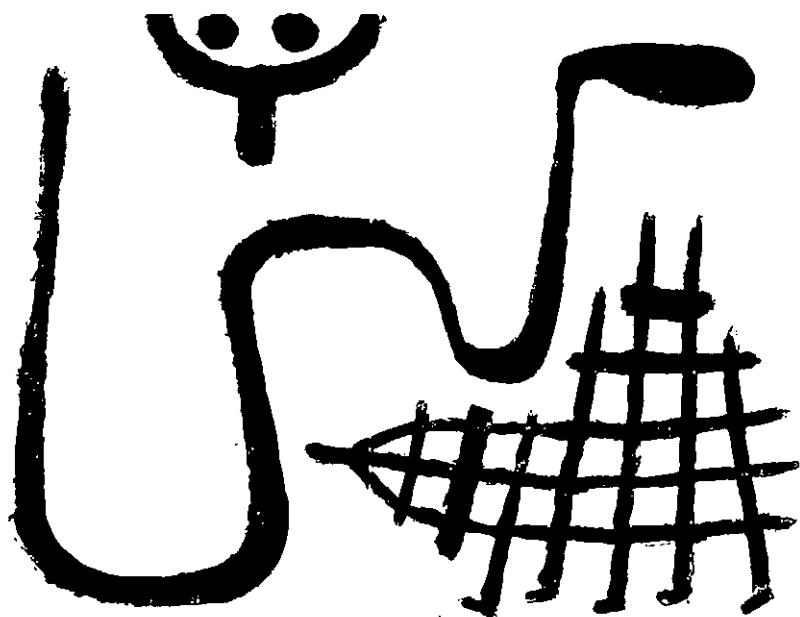


PLATE 1 Paul Klee, *The Snake Goddess and her Enemy*



PLATE 2 Sebastiano Ricci, *Achilles surrendering Hector's corpse to Priam*



PLATE 3 Rembrandt, *A Beggar and his Family*



PLATE 4 The 'Chinese' Horse, Lascaux



Medusa pelagica Linn.

PLATE 5 Sydney Parkinson, *Medusa-pelagica*



PLATE 7 Alexander Buchan, *A View of the Endeavour's Watering Place in the Bay of Good Success*
Australian Academy of the Humanities, Proceedings 10, 1979



PLATE 8 Alexander Buchan, *A Man of the Island of Terra del Fuego*



PLATE 9 Alexander Buchan, *A Woman of the Island of Terra del Fuego*



PLATE 10 Engraving by John Pine, *Two Californian Women, the one in a Bird's Skin, the other in that of a Deer*



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PLATE 12 Giovanni Battista Cipriani, *A View of the Indians of Terra del Fuego in their Hut*



PLATE 13 Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Sarah Bunbury Sacrificing to the Graces*



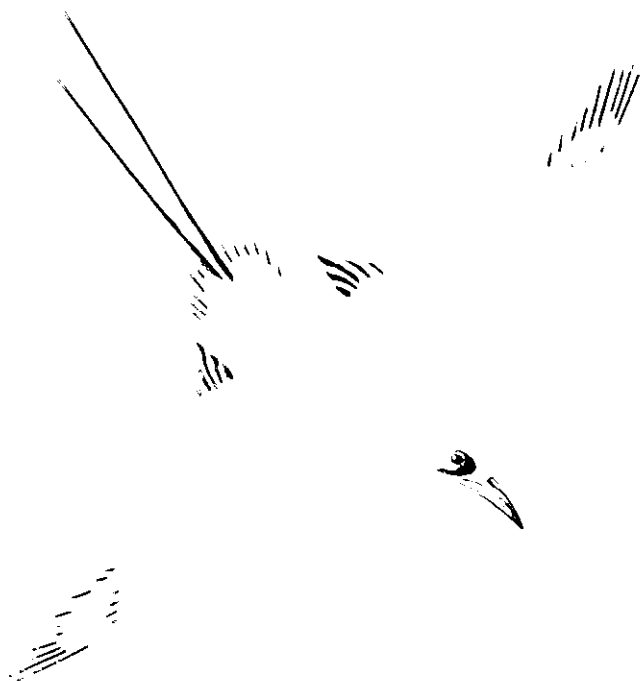
PLATE 14 Detail of engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi, *A View of the Indians of Terra del Fuego in their Hut*



PLATE 15 Giovanni Battista Cipriani, *An Offering to Ceres*



PLATE 16 Will Robinson, *A Few of the Natives brandished spears*



Phaeton rubricauda

PLATE 17 Sydney Parkinson, *Phaeton rubricauda*. Gm. Red-tailed Tropic Bird

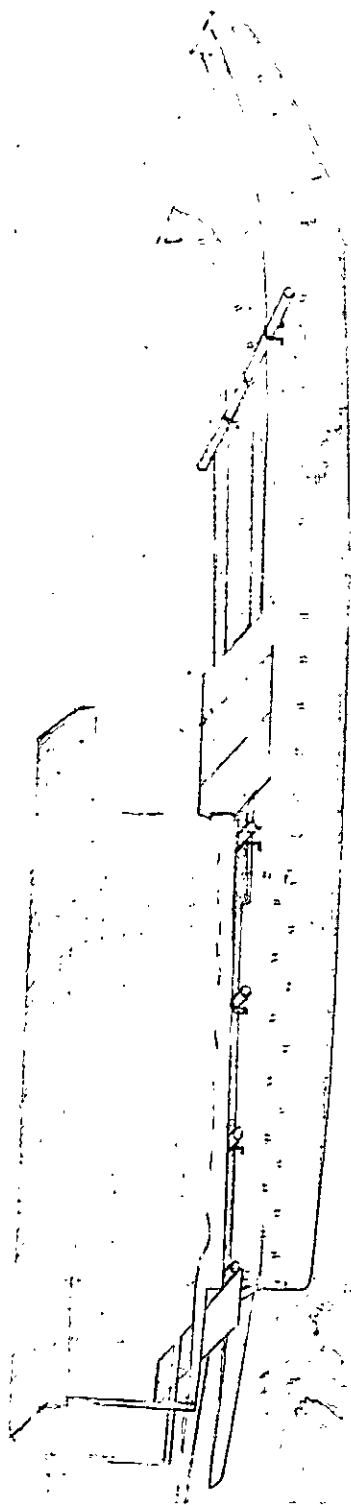


PLATE 18 Hermann Spöring, *Oberer's Canoe, Otcheite*



PLATE 19 Sydney Parkinson, *View up the River among Rocks*



PLATE 20 Paul Sandby, *Romantic Landscape with figures and a dog*



PLATE 21 Sydney Parkinson, *Vessels of the Island of Otahe*

PLATE 23 William Hodges, *Head of a Polynesian Man*



PLATE 22 William Hodges, *In Dusky Bay, New Zealand*





PLATE 24 William Hodges, *Portrait of Tu*



PLATE 25 Engraving by J. Hall after Hodges of *Ottoo (i.e. Tu), King of Otaheite*



PLATE 26 William Hodges, *The Resolution and Adventure 4 Jan 1773 taking in Ice for Water. Lat 61 S*

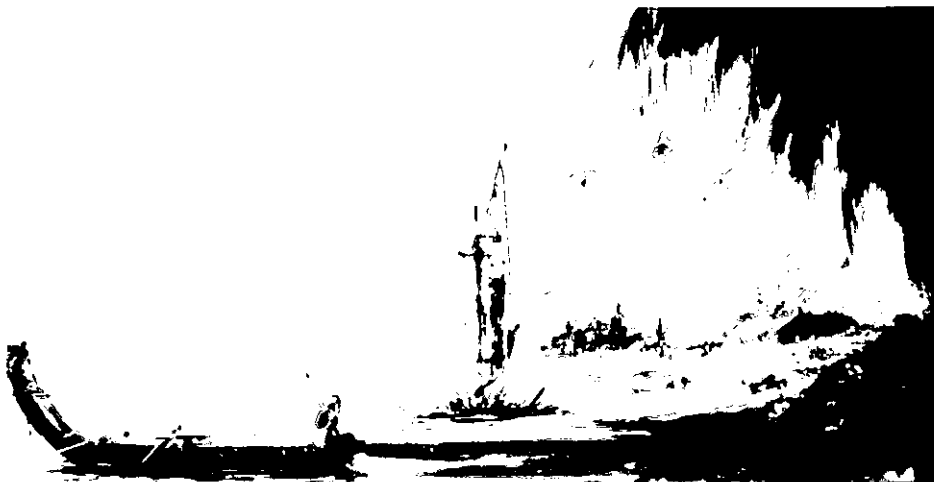


PLATE 27 William Hodges, *View from Point Venus, Island of Otaheite*



PLATE 28 William Hodges, *A View in the Island of New Caledonia*



PLATE 29 William Constable, *Dedham Vale, Suffolk*



PLATE 30 Engraving by J. K. Sherwin after Hodges, *The Landing at Middleborough*



PLATE 31 John Webber, *Captain Cook's Interview with Natives in Adventure Bay—Van Diemen's Land*



PLATE 32 John Webber, *A Boxing Match before Captain Cook*

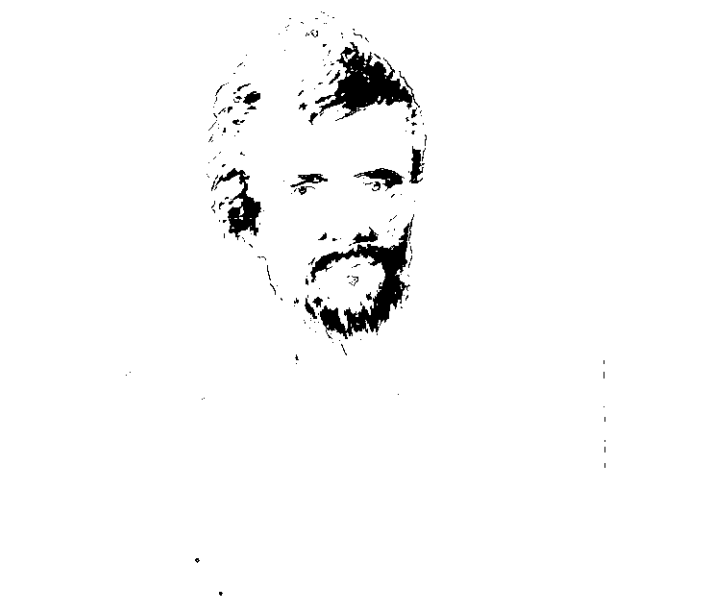


PLATE 33 John Webber, *A Man of Atooi (Kauai), Sandwich Islands*



PLATE 34 John Webber, *Dancers of Owhyhee*

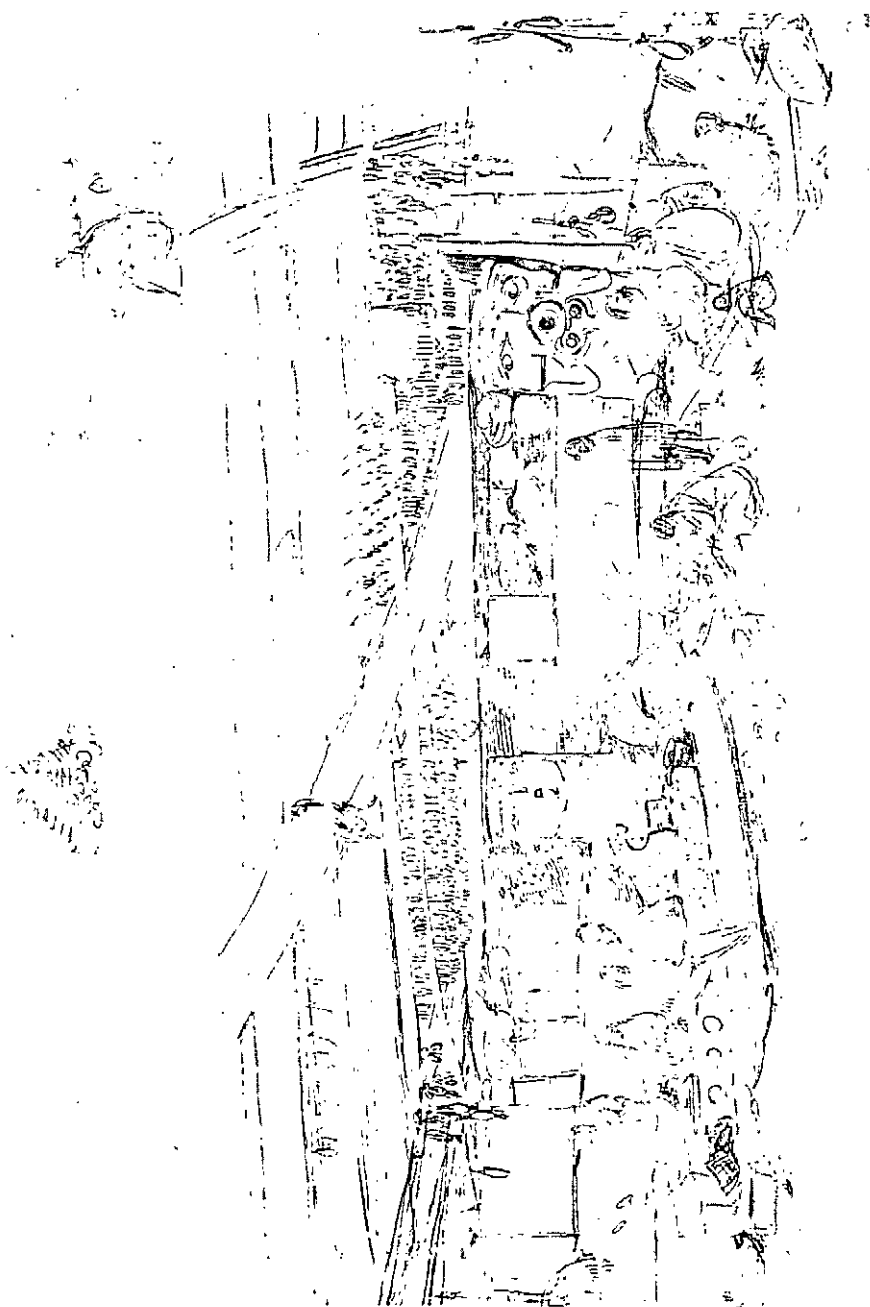


PLATE 35 John Webber, *Interior of a house in Nooka Sound*



PLATE 36 Edouard Manet, *Concert in the Tuileries*