PISTILS AND STAMENS:
BOTANOPHILIA, SEX, AND NATIONHOOD IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
GEORGIAN BRITAIN

by

DARLENE KAY CALYNIUUK
B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1973

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Art History)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

APRIL 2010

© Darlene Kay Calyniuk, 2010
ABSTRACT

Botanical spaces and their visual representations fascinated British viewing publics, particularly in the years 1760 to 1810 during the reign of King George III. This broad public interest in natural history’s new knowledge was fueled by the appeal of Carolus Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification, a taxonomy that held the promise of providing universal accessibility and rational order in the exploration of the natural world. The impetus that Linnaean taxonomies gave to botanical enterprise, however, was also unsettling. Natural history’s laws that claimed a taxonomic rationale capable of consistently regulating previous unknowns, in fact, raised ambiguities in relation to the artificiality of the Linnaean system and crucially, the concepts of affinity, hybridity, and variability. As a result, particularly in the last half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, these Linnaean tenets threatened to destabilize status quos by mobilizing new anxieties around gender, sexuality, class, and race. In addition, Linnaean notions of oeconomia, that is, botanical resource utility, posed challenges to Britain’s cultural conventions and beliefs.

At the broadest level, then, my dissertation explores the interchanges and attendant tensions between natural history’s new knowledge and emerging social anxieties in a period that was especially marked out by Britain’s significant loss of the American colonies and the threat of the French Revolution. More specifically, through examination of visual imagery, my thesis explores a conflicted ‘botanoscape’—one that reveals the ways in which visual representations and display of the botanical were central to the mediation and diffusion of anxieties opened up by Linnaeus’s new systematics and by ongoing transformations within the nation.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.......................................................................................................................... ii

Table of Contents........................................................................................................... iii

List of Figures.................................................................................................................... v

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................... viii

Introduction....................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter One: The Ambivalent Territories of the Naturalist Macaroni ................................. 15

  Introduction....................................................................................................................... 15
  Linnaeus’s Legacy ........................................................................................................... 19
    New Worlds Unveiled .................................................................................................... 19
  Problems and Tensions ................................................................................................. 24
  Caricature and Linnaean Affinities: The Naturalist as ‘Macaroni’ .................................. 30
  Unsettling Associations ................................................................................................. 38
  Conclusion....................................................................................................................... 52

Chapter Two: New Dynamics in Natural History’s Domain .................................................. 54

  Introduction....................................................................................................................... 54
  A Green Slate: New Grounds for Re-visioning the Naturalist Macaroni ......................... 57
  Ordering New Terrains ................................................................................................. 65
    Botany Helps Order New Regimes ............................................................................. 74
    Cultivating Botany’s Popularity ................................................................................. 79
  Networks and Flows of Communication ....................................................................... 84
  Anxieties Move into Uncharted Domestic Terrains ....................................................... 90
  Conclusion....................................................................................................................... 101

Chapter Three: Virtual Paradise, Mutable Kingdom: Troubling Nationhood in the
  Botanical Illustrations of Dr. Robert John Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* ................ 103

  Introduction....................................................................................................................... 103
  The Imprint of Botanophilia ......................................................................................... 109
  Sex in the Garden and Modeling Nationhood .............................................................. 114
  Monarchy Under the Microscope ................................................................................ 118
  The Nation Uncovered—Rendering Gender in *The Temple of Flora* .......................... 127
    Fecundity and Generation ......................................................................................... 130
    Fidelity and Continuity .............................................................................................. 138
  The Foreign ................................................................................................................... 145
  Conclusion....................................................................................................................... 154
Chapter Four: Power Plants—Transforming Terrains ................................................. 156

Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 156
Oeconomia or the Utility of Plants ................................................................................ 159
Imperial Kew and Acclimatizing the Public ................................................................. 163
Domesticating “Green Gold” ........................................................................................ 170
  Cinchona’s Cachet ......................................................................................................... 171
  Cinchona at Home—Negotiating Nationhood ............................................................ 174
  Cinchona Abroad—Mediating Imperial Spaces .......................................................... 177
  The Breadfruit Solution ............................................................................................... 180
  Plant Power and the Breadfruit Solution ..................................................................... 182
  Breadfruit and Arcadia’s Underbelly .......................................................................... 189
The Other Side of Paradise ............................................................................................. 199
  Slavery’s Death Knell .................................................................................................. 199
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 204

Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 205

Bibliography ................................................................................................................... 240
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Moses Harris, Plate XIII, *The Silk-Worm and Large Tyger*, 1766 from *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 by Moses Harris. Courtesy of the Royal Entomological Society, St. Albans, UK ................................................................. 208


1.3 Carolus Linnaeus, *Vegetal Kingdom—Clavis Systematis Sexualis*, or Key to the Sexual System from Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae*, Tenth Edition, 1758. Courtesy of the Missouri Botanical Garden ........................................................................ 210

1.4 Matthew Darly, *The Macaroni Print Shop*, 1773. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum .................................................................................................................. 211

1.5 Matthew Darly, *The Aurelian Macaroni*, 1773. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum .................................................................................................................. 212

1.6 Moses Harris, frontispiece to *The Aurelia: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 by Moses Harris. Courtesy of the Royal Entomological Society, St. Albans, UK ........................................................................................................... 213

1.7 Moses Harris, Plate XXVII, *The Ruby Tyger, The Sweet-Scented Pea*, 1766 from *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 by Moses Harris. Courtesy of the Royal Entomological Society, St. Albans, UK ........................................................................................................... 214


2.2 Benjamin West, *Mr. Joseph Banks*, 1773. Courtesy of The Web Gallery of Art ................................................................................................................................. 216

2.3 Matthew Darly, *A Mungo Macaroni*, 1772. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum .................................................................................................................. 217

2.4 Thomas Gainsborough, *Ignatius Sancho*, 1768. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada .................................................................................................................. 218

2.5 Frontispiece from Thomas Burnet’s *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, 1753. The British Library .................................................................................................................. 219


3.3 Maria Cosway, *Flora Dispensing her Favours on the Earth*, 1807 from Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents ................................................................. 222


3.5 Philip Reinagle, *Tulips*, 1798 from Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents ................................................................. 224


3.9 Peter Henderson, *Stapelias*, 1801 from Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents ................................................................. 228


4.1 Aylmer Lambert, *Cinchona officinalis*, 1797 from *A Description of the Genus Cinchona* of 1797 by Alymer Lambert. Courtesy of the Linnean Society of London ................................................................. 231


4.3 James Gillray, *The Great South Sea Caterpillar, Transform’d into a Bath Butterfly*, 1796. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum ................................................................. 233
4.4 J. S. Mason after William Woollett, *A View of the Palace from the Hill...in the Royal Gardens at Kew*, c. 1760s. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum... 234


4.7 James Gillray, *Anti-Saccharrites,-or-John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar*, 1792. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum 237

4.8 Thomas Hearne, *Parham Hill House and sugar plantation*, 1779. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum 238

4.9 James Gillray, *Barbarities in the West Indies*, 1791. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum 239
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has benefited from the generous support and insights of my supervisory committee, other scholars, and family. I am deeply indebted to my research supervisor, Dr. Maureen Ryan, whose passion for intellectual inquiry and attention to critical engagement have been invaluable in a study of this scope. Dr. Ryan’s scholarly excellence across disciplines and provocative engagement with this project have been crucial to my growth as an academic and instrumental to the complexity of this thesis. Additional thanks goes as well to members of my dissertation committee Dr. Sherry McKay and Dr. John O’Brien for their thoughtful criticism and encouraging support throughout the duration of this project and indeed during my studies at UBC.

In addition, I extend my appreciation to the faculty and staff of Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at UBC as well as members of the History Department for their perspective and insights. Archivists and librarians have been instrumental to my research process, particularly those professionals in Britain at the Natural History Museum, the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and the British Library. To Dr. Sophie Forgan of the Cook Memorial Museum, Lynda Brooks at the Linnean Society, Valerie McAtear of Royal Entomological Society, and Anne Miche De Malleray at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, many thanks. I appreciate the generosity of Dr. James Secord, Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge for allowing me access to his personal collection of eighteenth-century composite caricatures.

I gratefully acknowledge the three-year Canada Graduate Scholarship (Doctoral) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and for several years of support from the University of British Columbia (through the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory) by way of University Graduate Fellowships, the Gertrude Langridge Graduate Scholarship in Humanities, and Graduate Entrance Scholarships.

Not least of all, I am deeply indebted to Michael and our family for their intellectual curiosity, balanced perspectives, and buoyant wit. Their generous understanding and unwavering support have sustained me throughout this academic pursuit.
INTRODUCTION

Botanical spaces and their visual representations fascinated a broad segment of the British public, particularly in the years spanning the reign of King George III from 1760 to 1820. Significantly, the new system of classification developed by the Swedish natural historian Carolus Linnaeus fueled botanophilia, that is, the love of plants. As I argue in this thesis, the system captivated in part because the Swedish botanist’s method focused upon the plant’s sexual organs—its pistils and stamens—which in turn allowed for the public practice of looking, handling, and counting these ‘private’ parts. Furthermore, as botanophilia and a widespread interest in the pursuit of botanic resources flourished, so did the potential of botanical products to satiate commodity tastes, ignite national renewals, and importantly, posit mastery of new worlds. At its broadest level then my thesis explores the complex relations between Linnaean classification and practices of plant pursuit, collection, categorization, and exchange in relation to Britain’s expanding nationhood. The Georgian period—and specifically between the years 1770 to 1810—was marked by the discovery and exploration of new geographic regions around the globe. These ventures in turn lay the groundwork for Britain’s transition from island nation to imperial power. As the promises of Enlightenment science, new technologies, and world-wide networks made the distant seem familiar, Linnaeus’s innovative contributions to natural history spearheaded at home keen interest in plants as markers of the foreign and the unknown, and as useful resources that could foster national renewal and international strength.


Only on the surface, however, did Linnaean taxonomies posit a universal system based on reason and order, that is, a taxonomy that responded to a world fixed by certainty. As I argue in my study, the new Linnaean natural history also raised anxieties. I explore how several aspects of Linnaeus’s system—specifically the concepts of affinity, hybridity, variation, and oeconomia or resource utility and cultivation—served to undermine Enlightenment claims to rational fixities. Indeed, and as is central to my analysis, these elements tapped into a range of social anxieties in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Britain, namely, tensions around gender, sexuality, class, and race that in turn raised the specter of change and transformation within the nation and empire.

A number of studies have broadly addressed botanophilia in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the ‘botanoscape’ of my inquiry—a phrase I have coined from the terminology of contemporary theorist of global networks, Arjun Appadurai—does not fall upon the conventional reading of botanical space as a site of natural harmony and beauty, pleasurable respite, or as display of agricultural progress. I argue for a very different interpretation, namely, one wherein botanic space is now central both to discourses around

---

3 Here I refer to such explorations in the botanic as those of E. C. Spary’s *Utopia’s Garden* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and Roger Williams’s *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-century France* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), or the studies of Britain’s Richard Drayton in *Nature’s Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) or Dr. Stephen Harris’s more recent commentary that accompanies the British Folio Society’s re-edition of the third part of Dr. Robert Thornton’s *A New Illustration of the Sexual System of Linnaeus* (1799-1807) entitled *The Temple of Flora*. In addition, widely diverse interests in natural history are evident in the inquiries of such historians of science and literature as David Allen, Gillian Beer, Alan Bewell, Ann Shteir, Sam George, Charlotte Klonk and Londa Schiebinger, all of whom approach natural history as a dynamic discipline.

4 I have developed the term ‘botanoscapes’ from cultural theorist, Arjun Appadurai’s concept of the complexity and layers of global cultural relations and flows. In Appadurai’s *Modernity At Large* (Minneapolis: University Minnesota, 1996) the dimensions through which these relations flow are ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, and ideoscapes (328-340). I have chosen ‘botanoscape’ to underscore the complex and multi-layered set of relations that exist in eighteenth-century botanic space and the agency of botanical knowledge: “the infinitely varied mutual contest of sameness and difference on a stage characterized by radical disjunctures between different sorts of global flows and the uncertain landscapes created in and through those disjunctures” (40-41).
the practices, productivity, and agency within new scientific knowledge, and to the resulting social, political, and economic shifts that emerged in Britain’s terrains. More specifically, my analysis distinguishes itself in that I examine how aspects of Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification were linked to social and political worlds—a relationship that played a role in visual culture of the period.

The images I explore in the following chapters not only address the ambivalences and anxieties raised by Linnaean sexual difference and the concepts of affinity, hybridity, variation, and *oeconomia* but also register natural history’s appeal to diverse publics that themselves ranged widely from middle-class to gentrified palates. These visual representations include caricatures of naturalists such as Matthew Darly’s *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* of 1772 and *The Aurelian Macaroni* of 1773; lavish botanical illustrations from Robert John Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* produced between 1799 and 1807; academic paintings such as Benjamin West’s portrait of prominent naturalist, *Mr. Joseph Banks* of 1773 and Thomas Gosse’s rendering of plant pursuit in *Transplanting of the Bread-fruit-trees from Otaheite* of 1796; and caricatures produced in the last decade of the century that reference both the slave trade and Britain’s importation and consumption of sugar as a notorious product of slave labour.

Importantly, my research has found no extended critical analyses that examine the visual in relation to specific Linnaean botanical tenets. Diana Donald’s study, *The Age of Caricature* of 1996, assesses eighteenth-century satirical images and gives attention to those of ‘macaronis’, a term designating fashionable but foppishly dressed elites but without focus upon the tensions incited by natural history’s new knowledge. Art historian Shearer

---

5 Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature* (London: Yale University Press, 1996). There is a large literature on the phenomenon of the ‘macaroni’ in the last quarter of the eighteenth century which I discuss in Chapter One.
West and professors of literature Alan Bewell and Deirdre Coleman have addressed some of the caricatures of naturalists as ‘macaronis’, but in the context of the prominent status of the individuals portrayed and as a form of public mockery of natural history collecting as kind of contemporary fashion in itself.⁶ Here, Alan Bewell’s assiduous decoding of ‘macaroni’ affectations through classical and literary associations has modeled how to tease out the complex levels of caricature’s significance through acute observation of representational details. My exploration of Linnaean tenets in relation to new understandings and anxieties around shifting notions of gender and sexuality also moves in a different direction from that of Ann Shteir, Sam George, or Londa Schiebinger whose studies trace the historical development of women’s practice in botany, of botanical analogy in literature, or of the gendering of natural knowledge.⁷

A similar lacuna in terms of the anxieties opened up by Linnaean formulations has also characterized the study of botanical folios. These have been consistently discussed in descriptive terms or, as in the case of Robert Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora*, considered “sumptuous” but of “no botanical value.”⁸ While art historian Charlotte Klonk in her 1996

---


⁸ Wilfrid Blunt and William Stearn, *The Art of Botanical Illustration* (London: Antique Collectors, 1994), 236. Recent commentaries upon Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* are either a descriptive summary of the entire publication (as with the aforementioned Blunt and Stearn) or a specific address of Thornton’s interest in the “chemical and electrical sources which nourished and animated life itself,” as noted by Martin Kemp in *Seen/Unseen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), Chapter 4.
publication *Science and the Perception of Nature* stands as a major and valuable analysis of the botanical plates of *The Temple of Flora*, her important account does not take up the social concerns raised by the Linnaean system and it problematic tenets.⁹ Similarly in turning to visual culture as a register of *oeconomia*, the images I examine have not been considered in terms of the unsettling impacts of plant utility. Linnaean scholar Lisbet Koerner in *Linnaeus: Nation and Nature* of 1999 has argued that Sweden’s cameralist ideology of national economic self-sufficiency influenced Linnaeus’s views of plant utility as a strategy by which acclimatized botanic resource could serve the nation’s political mandate.¹⁰ But in Britain’s case the social effects linked to cultivation and trade of such resource produced public concern and widespread debate. The inquiry of cultural historians such as James Walvin, Roxann Wheeler, and Felicity Nussbaum has given impetus to my exploration of how Linnaean *oeconomia* was complicated by discourses and economies that addressed slave labour and re-visioned race. Kay Dian Kriz’s provocative and in-depth study of a range of visual forms that took up the issue of slavery and the production of sugar on Jamaican plantations has also been invaluable in this respect.¹¹

The tenets of Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification as presented in *Systema Naturae* (1735), *Philosophia Botanica* (1751), and *Species Plantarum* (1735) which ignited interest in the botanical, are of course seminal to my inquiry. To assess responses to Linnaean formulations, I have turned to contemporaneous commentaries and critiques in print culture’s literary texts, pamphlets, treatises, newspapers, and diaries or journals to understand the

---


social and political temperaments that both fêted and denounced natural history’s new knowledge. These documents and their circulation provided access to diverse social, political, and economic discourses that characterized pre-Darwinian theories in the late eighteenth century. I thus consider sources ranging from Johann Siegesbeck’s (1686-1755) outrage at what he argued was the Linnaean system’s overt concern with sex, or ‘loathsome harlotry,’ to Joseph Bank’s journals of South Pacific exploration of 1775, to Robert Thornton’s translation of the Linnaean sexual system of classification begun in 1797. All register the tensions as well as the promise of the new natural history. The ‘botanoscapes’ of my study, therefore, are not the usual unsullied and passive spaces posited by idyllic garden sites. To the contrary, I argue that these terrains were in fact both dynamic and troubled, belying the perceived order and stability assumed inherent to Linnaeus’s taxonomic system.

The Chapters

To address the tensions and anxieties raised by the new Linnaean natural history, this thesis is divided into four chapters. In each chapter I explore particular aspects of Linnaeus’s taxonomy—affinity, hybridity, variation, and oeconomia—that posed problems for British publics. The first two chapters take up anxieties around masculinity and British nationhood in the decade of the 1770s at the time of the uncertainties around the American colonies; the final two chapters examine concerns in relation to patrimony, monarchy, and empire in the 1790s following the upheavals and challenges posed by the French Revolution. I argue

through the images foregrounded in each chapter that aspects of Linnaeus’s system with its emphasis on difference, transformations, and adaptive mobilities, negotiate tensions between public and private spheres, exploration and exploitation, and distant and familiar terrains. These are all domains of sociability where complications within natural history’s new knowledge visibly play out. Each chapter nuances these central strains, addressing Britain’s modernizing flux through the body, nationhood, and global reach.

In Chapter One, I focus upon Linnaean sexual difference, the formative tenet of his taxonomic system. Georg Ehret’s engraving *Methodus plantarum sexualis* of 1736 (Figure 1.2) provides a diagram of the simple, ordered construct of Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification. The implications of Linnaean taxonomy and its basis in sexual difference play a key role in caricaturist Matthew Darly’s *The Aurelian Macaroni* of 1773 (Figure 1.5) where anxieties associated with natural history’s popularity are taken up in the depiction of well-known entomologist, Moses Harris. Harris’s *The Aurelian* of 1766, a publication on butterflies and botany, opened up for publics new considerations around sexuality and transformation. Darly’s engraving, at the simplest level mocks the aurelian, a butterfly collector, as a foppish effete interested only in natural history as a passing fashion. More importantly, however, the image calls up fears about affinities that underpinned the Linnaean system’s arbitrary framework, and around sexual ambiguity that seemed to threaten the nation’s patriarchal stability. Conflicts with the American colonies and uncertainties about political allegiances unsettled those who saw the naturalist ‘macaroni’ as an obtuse youth

---

13 Moses Harris, *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects; namely, moths and butterflies. Together with the plants on which they feed; and their standard names, as given and established by the Society of Aurelians. Drawn, engraved and coloured, from the natural subjects themselves* (London: printed for the author, 1766).
susceptible to foreign influence. Here, I show how the body is a significant discursive site where debates around natural history emerge and anxieties around cultural shifts surface.

In Chapter Two, I explore botany’s global outreach and the resulting anxieties around Linnaean tenet of hybridity, which had the potential to blur conventional boundaries imposed by class and race. Here I return to Matthew Darly’s prints because of their wide public appeal. Darly’s *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* of 1772 (Figure 2.1), a caricature of Britain’s chief naturalist-explorer and renowned botanical administrator Joseph Banks, and Benjamin West’s 1773 painted portrait *Mr. Joseph Banks* (Figure 2.2), both depict cultural shifts that attended botany’s global outreach. While these very different representations register the prominence of Joseph Banks who served for forty years as Director of King George III’s Royal Gardens at Kew, and concurrently shaped Britain’s imperial botanical enterprises, both also evoke Linnaean tenets of hybridity or ‘mixity’ that complicated botany’s legitimacy as a stable scientific discipline. Another satire, *A Mungo Macaroni* of 1772 (Figure 2.3), an engraving of freed black protégé Julius Soubise, and the 1768 portrait by Thomas Gainsborough of writer and former slave Ignatius Sancho (Figure 2.4), address offshoots of botanical outreach—slave labour and freed slaves—that in fact troubled gentrified publics. As a product of the triangular trade that saw botanical resource exchanged for slaves who were then transported to Europe or North America, Soubise represented the potential to both co-opt and corrupt Britishness. Sancho’s portrait, a representation also within the tradition of academic art, positioned similar ‘race’ anxieties, particularly in relation to black populations who capably adapted and penetrated elite worlds. In the images, caricature’s bourgeois tastes are held in tension with portraiture’s more sophisticated eye to negotiate cultural discomfort pertaining to emerging social hybridity.
In Chapter Three, I turn to the Linnaean notion of variation and address both the tenets and the anxieties it raised through a different category of imagery, the popular botanical folio. Several plates from Dr. Robert John Thornton’s folio, *The Temple of Flora* (1799-1807), the third part of his much larger work *The New Illustration of the Sexual System of Carolus von Linnaeus* (1797-1807), frame my discussion. From *The Temple of Flora*, Philip Reinagle’s allegorical plate of 1805 entitled *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* (Figure 3.2) and Peter Henderson’s 1804 florals of *The Queen Flower* (Figure 3.4) and *The Dragon Arum* of 1801 (Figure 3.10) negotiate and diffuse, I argue, debates extending from monarchy, governance, and patrimony to erosions around constructs ranging from conventional notions of gender to that of time. Unique to *The Temple of Flora* are the landscaped backdrops of the various florals—testaments to Britain’s national trajectories and imperial mandates that were facilitated through botany’s global reach. Such depictions, while positing Britain’s botanoscapes as harmonious and idyllic, are actually striated with uncertainties that surface through the themes of fecundity and generation, fidelity and continuity, and the threat of the foreign. In this chapter, Linnaeus’s notion of variability within a species is shown to pose unsettling considerations especially in light of looming revolutionary change in France that in itself modeled the potential volatility of political and social variation.

Chapter Four’s investigation takes up Linnaeus’s *oeconomia*. Here I explore how the power and utility of plants lay not just in their usefulness as a food source, but in their influence upon the nation’s economic health and political prowess. Within the productive partnership of *oeconomia* and imperial geo-botanizing anxieties materialize in relation to resource exploitation and interactions with the native ‘other.’ I return to and further explore Britain as *imperium*, that is, botanic space as a depiction of nation. Here, the Royal Garden at Kew is assessed as a botanizing center representative of the nation’s botanical expertise,
global trade capability, and imperial prowess. Thomas Gosse’s *Transplanting of Bread-fruit-trees from Otaheite* of 1796 (Figure 4.2) is a pivotal image through which I investigate the promise of economic botany as well as its dark underbelly as a site of slave exploitation.

James Gillray’s caricatures, the *Anti-Saccharrites, -or-John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar* of 1792 (Figure 4.7) and his *Barbarities in the West Indias* of 1791 (Figure 4.9), tease out the hypocrisy underpinning Britons’ desires for commodities, such as tea and sugar, that blinded publics to the brutalities and atrocities of the triangular trade in African slaves. Such images, as I develop, responded to topical debates and tensions concerning new social mixities, miscegenation, and shifting notions of what constituted British subjectivity.

**Theoretical Considerations**

My investigation of how botanophilia and what was known as a ‘botany cult’ mobilized yet constricted cultural transformation in Georgian Britain has been informed by several aspects of critical theory. Michel Foucault’s formulations have influenced my tracing of the complex web of power relations belying the discipline of natural history and its practices, whether individual bodies like that of the naturalist as a fashionable ‘macaroni’ or institutional spaces such as the Royal Gardens at Kew. In resolving the order of things in natural history’s new knowledge, Foucault’s method of anticipating “the possibility of *seeing* what one will be able to *say*,”¹⁴ not only validates natural history’s empirical approach as measured and rational, but also allows for the emergence of discourses around imagined possibilities that apparently contributed to the naturalist’s pursuit of botanical knowing.

Power and knowledge conflate here to validate botany’s productive strategies of examining,

---

measuring, questioning, and adapting. In as much as visible patterning of an entity’s sexual organs—in Linnaean terms, ‘number, form, proportion and situation’—formed the basis of a predictable taxonomic language, and by analogy found application to the social, I have found invaluable Foucault’s observation that it is not necessarily in what these patterns “make possible to see, but in what they hide and in what, by this process of obliteration, they allow to emerge.” It follows then that Foucault’s aforementioned paradox is instrumental to unpacking ambivalences and fluctuations which I argue underpin Georgian botanoscapes and their visual representations.

I also draw upon aspects of postcolonial theory, specifically Homi Bhabha’s concept of ambivalence, that is, “a negotiation of oppositional and antagonistic elements” that emerge as an ‘in-between’ site of “problems of judgment and identification that inform political space.” Bhabha’s notion of hybridity as “neither one nor the other,” but somewhere in-between has import for thinking through Linnaean formulations of the hybrid as ‘mixed’. This formulation has given shape to my unpacking of the anxieties incited by unknown variations and perceived instabilities seen to surface in Linnaeus’s system. So too have cultural scholars Mary Douglas, Mary Louise Pratt, and Gayatri Spivak informed my view of subaltern invisibility and social tensions striating Georgian Britain’s national and imperial terrains, specifically within the spheres of class, sexuality, gender, and race. Mary

15 Ibid., 150.
16 Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994), 22-29.
17 Ibid., 22-29.
Douglas’s observations on “chasing dirt…re-ordering our environment, making it conform to an idea,”19 for example, not only mirrors taxonomic strategy but conversely points to the embedded tensions around disease and the ‘exotic’ within botanic space. In addition, debates stimulated by Edward Said’s Orientalism (1979) have lent texture to my analysis of how natural history’s practices provoked and complicated an imagined exoticism of distant spaces and encoded how Britons gazed upon or exploited those of other cultures. A return to Foucault helps map out tensions concerning race that emerged through Linnaean taxonomic tenets. Foucault’s observation of race as a conflicted site “between a race…that holds power and defines the norm, and one which constitutes various dangers for the biological patrimony,”20 is fundamental to anxieties surfacing in the botanoscapes of my study, and that in turn I have argued, lent momentum to shifts in Britain’s cultural terrains.

I have also found important Bruno Latour’s formulations in Science in Action (1987) that expand upon the idea of ‘mobilization of the world’ through science’s empirical practices, a concept valuable to this study’s exploration of natural history’s influence upon Britain’s imperial mandates of resource and land claim. His concept of “centers of calculation,” namely, spaces or “centers dominating at a distance many other places” through a means that “renders them mobile...stable... combinable,”21 has been helpful in framing the construct thought necessary in the negotiation of new knowledge, new geographies, and new botanical resources. I argue that Latour’s ‘centers’ are evident in the botanic space of Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification, voyages of discovery, botanical administrators

19 Douglas, Purity and Danger, 2.


and their networks, or botanic gardens as transfer depots for vegetal resource. These centers of calculation allowed for fluctuations that characterized a more modern and diverse world, a factor similarly endorsed by spatial theorists. Here, geographer Doreen Massey’s formulations have informed my inquiry, specifically the idea that not only is “the character of a particular place a product of its position in relation to wider forces, but also that that character in turn stamped its own imprint on those wider processes.” My exploration of botanic spaces argues then that visual culture did not just register new knowledge and its anxieties but lent momentum to emerging shifts in social, political, and economic practices. On a similar note, as Edward Soja cogently observes in his response to Henri Lefebvre’s *Production of Space* of 1991, “the production of space (and the making of history) can thus be described as both the medium and the outcome of social action and relationship.” In my inquiry, these ambivalent concepts of ‘medium’ and ‘outcome’ come to light through social interactions and relations within the productive spaces of governance, class, gender, and race, giving momentum to new understandings and cultural transformation.

My thesis then contributes to art historical studies by demonstrating that visual culture’s discursive space allowed for the mediation, circulation, and dissemination of new knowledge and attendant anxieties around specific aspects of Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification. Formerly the province of privileged tastes and collectors, botanical practices and their visual representations began to appeal to a wider and more diverse viewership. Eighteenth-century publics that ranged from the middle-class to the elite were fascinated with taxonomy’s universal accessibility and standardization, a strategy whose simplified naming

---


process and gridded order assured containment of a chaotic natural world. Such mastery, through analogy, suggested similar stability when applied to social and political paradigms. But natural history’s promise was ambivalent. Not only did botany’s terrain open up (in Foucauldian terms) “the knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak about it,” but concurrently made way for the unsettling emergence of ‘exceptions’ particularly around Linnaean notions of sexual difference, hybridity, variation, and oeconomia. Botanophilia and its practices were not untroubled sites of harmony and respite, but complex spaces where shifted ways of seeing and knowing natural and human worlds registered unsettling mobility and cultural change.

CHAPTER ONE

The Ambivalent Territories of the Naturalist Macaroni

Introduction

In the last quarter of the eighteenth-century in Britain, natural history fed a wide range of public interests from the curiosity of hobbyists to the rigours of scientific inquiry. Botany and botanophilia, the study and collection of plants, played key roles in these developments. The sexual system of classification of Sweden’s Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778) was central to public accessibility around both botany and natural history as a whole. First documented in his Systema Naturae of 1735, Linnaeus set out his fundamental tenets of the natural world’s three kingdoms: mineral, vegetal, and animal.\(^1\) Historian of science Gunnar Broberg has pointed out that sexuality was the quality “common” to both “plants and animals,”\(^2\) yet the vegetal and thus botanical world was the key vector for Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification. Linnaeus based his botanical taxonomy upon counting and differentiating sexual organs in plants to determine their class and order, a seemingly rational and mathematical process.\(^3\)

---

\(^1\) Carolus Linnaeus, Systema Naturae, with an introduction and first English translation of the “observations,” (1735) First Edition, trans. M.S.J. Engel-Ledeboer and H. Engel (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1964), 19. All further references to this text will be truncated to Systema Naturae. In the Linnaean system, within each kingdom were classes, within classes were orders, which in turn had genera (genus), within which were species, and then within species were varieties. There were six classes in the animal kingdom (mammalia, aves, amphibia, pisces, insecta, vermes), twenty-four classes in the plant kingdom as designated by Ehret’s diagram (Figure 1.2) as will be discussed shortly, and three classes in the mineral kingdom (petrae, minerae, fossilia).


\(^3\) In the botanical world, the plant’s class was determined by the position and number of stamens, or male sexual organs in the flower, and the plant’s order was determined by that of pistils or female sexual organs.
While Linnaeus’s taxonomy facilitated the pursuit, collection, and exchange of botanical specimens, the system as a whole brought clear translation and uniform order to former unknowns effectively taming, as one commentator in 1796 noted, “the chaos of intricacy and confusion”⁴ within the natural world. But the new taxonomy also had implications for human, social, and political relations in the modern world of the eighteenth century. After all, Linnaeus called his system *Nuptiae plantarum*—the marriage of plants⁵—and through metaphor drew parallels between vegetal function and paradigms of human sexual relations, as clearly expressed as well in *Philosophica Botanica* of 1751, where he described how “the CALYX is the bedroom, the ANThERS are the testicles, the POLLEN is the sperm and the STYLE is the vagina.”⁶ It was also unsettling that in *Systema Naturae* Linnaeus described botanical features with reference to “husbands, wives and concubines” or that of polygamy with its “many marriages with promiscuous intercourse.”⁷ Indeed by the end of the century polymath Erasmus Darwin, who had translated Linnaeus into English in 1783,⁸ played upon this aspect of the new science in his overtly erotic publication *The Loves*.

---

⁴ *The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany* (January, 1796), 426.


⁶ Carl Linné, *Philosophia Botanica* (1751), trans. Stephen Freer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 105. All future references to this publication will be as *Philosophia Botanica*. Bronwyn Parry points out in *Trading the Genome* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification was not entirely “normative, objective, or rational. It was, rather, a regulatory system devised by Linnaeus as he “read nature through the lens of social relations” such that his “new botanical ‘language’ integrated fundamental aspects of his own social world” (28). Parry also makes reference to Londa Schiebinger’s *Nature’s Body* (2004).


of the Plants (1789), the second part of The Botanic Garden. In The Loves of the Plants, Darwin anthropomorphized and eroticized the vegetal kingdom by exploiting various sexual liaisons and impulses that ranged from clandestine marriages to the personification of flowers as “vamps,” “nymphs,” and “wanton beaut[ies].”

These kinds of analogies extended to other realms of natural history. As Deirdre Coleman has noted concerning eighteenth-century entomology, “Insects, especially the social insects—bees, ants, termites, and wasps—[had] long been a source of fascination, rich in allegorical meanings for human life.” Thus, in the 1760s and 1770s the fascination with insects in terms of their social organization and productivity encouraged comparison to human social and political constructs. Put another way, just as vegetation was vital for insect nourishment, insect pollination was instrumental to fructification in the vegetal world, and as

Linnaeus’s works, A System of Vegetables of 1783 and The Families of Plants of 1787, writings that served as ‘inspiration’ for Darwin’s own The Loves of Plants (1789) and The Economy of Vegetation (1791) which are together known as Darwin’s The Botanic Garden. See Maureen McNeil, Under the Banner of Science (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

Fredrika J. Teute, “The Loves of the Plants; or, the Cross-Fertilization of Science and Desire at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” The Huntington Library Quarterly 63, no. 3 (2000): 319-345.

Deirdre Coleman, “Entertaining Entomology: Insects and Insect Performers in the Eighteenth Century,” Eighteenth-Century Life 30, no. 3 (Summer, 2006): 107-134. One social parallel for example emerges from Linnaeus in Fundamenta entomologiae, or an introduction to the knowledge of insects, trans. W. Curtis (London, 1767) where he wrote of insects that “each of them has its proper business assigned to it in the oeconomy and police [my emphasis] of nature” (4), a function that helped ensure Linnaeus’s view in Oeconomia Naturae (1749) of the cycle of “perpetuation,” “preservation,” “destruction,” and “reiteration” of species in nature. Historian Robert Stauffer in “Ecology in the Long Manuscript Version of Darwin’s “origin of Species” and Linnaeus’s “Oeconomy of nature,” Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society points out that in Linnaeus’s dissertation, Politia Naturae of 1760, “politia” can mean both ‘polity’ or ‘police’. Stauffer quotes Linnaeus from an English translation of Politia Naturae to show how Linnaeus makes a parallel between insect and human worlds: “Nature resemble[s] a well regulated state in which every individual has his proper employment and subsistence, and a proper gradation of office and officers is appointed to correct and restrain every detrimental excess” (240). As historian Lisbet Rausing cogently summarizes in “Underwriting the Oeconomy: Linnaeus on Nature and Mind,” History of Political Economy 35, Annual Supplement (2003): 173-203, Linnaeus saw nature as “benign and cyclically self-regulating” by way of “policing” mechanisms one of which was insects which were essential to the succession of plant communities.
such a highly effective and cyclical, symbiotic relationship emerged with the core allure of sexual activity. Moses Harris’s plate of *The Silk-worm and Large Tyger* (Figure 1.1) from his publication *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 depicts moths mating on a mulberry plant’s upper leaves, insect nests affixed to the underside of a work-table, and the life cycle of Lepidoptera development. Notably, the ripening fruit on the mulberry branch marks out the vital role of insects in plant pollination and fruition just as the ‘silkworm’ calls up insect utility that underpins Britain’s thriving silk industry.

In this chapter I explore tensions that I argue were generated by the Linnaean system’s explicit sexuality and as well by its numerous inconsistencies. For example, by Linnaeus’s own admission the taxonomic system was ‘artificial’. In terms of botany, it was constructed arbitrarily upon one key attribute, the reproductive organs, and was meant only as a temporary solution until a more satisfactory ‘natural’ system could be found. Additionally, Linnaeus pointed to inconsistencies or exceptions that were at odds with his clear categorization. As I will argue what had the potential to trouble Britons in the last quarter of the eighteenth century were these exceptions that surfaced in relation to three

---


13 See Linnaeus’s comments on ‘artificiality’ in James Edward Smith, *A Section of the Correspondence of Linnaeus and other naturalists, from the original manuscripts* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821), 232. From this text, in a letter to Albert Haller on April 3, 1737, Linnaeus explains that he “never spoke” of his “harmless sexual system” as being “a natural method; on the contrary, in my *Systema, p. 8 sect. 12*, I have said, ‘No natural botanical system has yet been constructed; not do I contend that this system is by any mean natural...Meanwhile, till that is discovered, artificial systems are indispensable.’ And in the preface to my *Genera Plantarum, sect. 9*: ‘I do not deny that a natural method is preferable, not only to my system, but to all that have been invented...But in the meantime artificial classification must serve as a succedaneum.” Renowned naturalists, British John Ray (1627-1705) and French Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) had not agreed with Linnaeus’s arbitrary choice of pistils and stamens (that is, sexual difference as the one definitive trait that determined division into a category) as central classifiers. They argued for a *natural* system that saw species exhibiting affinity through various shared characteristics, not just reproductive parts. Also see Philip R. Sloan, “The Buffon-Linnaeus Controversy,” *Isis* 67, no. 3 (September 1976): 356-375 and James Larson, “Linnaeus and the Natural Method,” *Isis* 58, no. 3 (Autumn 1967): 304-320.
Linnaean concepts: ‘affinities’ or shared traits, hybrids or ‘mixities’, and ‘mutabilities’ or variations between categories. These components of Linnaeus’s taxonomy through “the lens of social relations” posed threats to a world that chastised deviations from the status quo and valued fixity not flux.

Linnaeus’s Legacy

New Worlds Unveiled

Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification promised understanding and mastery of the natural world. This mastery was shown in Linnaeus’s own practice where he identified 7700 plants through a simplified naming system (binomial nomenclature) that helped standardize botanical knowledge. His orderly method, designed to be easily applied and argued to be universally relevant, captivated eighteenth-century publics who viewed such practices as demonstrating enlightened and rational thinking.

The forte of botanical knowing was its fixed methodology of observing, counting, and categorizing, one that seemed on the surface at least, to evoke a form of certainty. Georg

---

14 See Parry, *Trading the genome*, 27-28. Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification was not entirely static, that is, “normative, objective, or rational” as Parry points out. Rather, as a method by which to classify the natural world, Linnaeus “read nature through the lens of social relations” and as such that his botanical overview “integrated fundamental aspects of his own social world” (28).

15 Lys de Bray, *The Art of Botanical Illustration* (Bromley: Helm, 1989), 69. Linnaeus worked in Georg Clifford’s gardens at Hartekamp where he cultured his botanical interests. Influential friends such as Herman Boerhaave, a physician to Clifford and professor of Linnaeus, helped finance Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae*. Frans Stafleu in *Linnaeus and the Linnaeans* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1971) notes that Linnaeus’s *Species plantarum* (1753) is known as the “starting-point book for the nomenclature of most groups of plants” (102). The two-name system for identifying plants, binomial nomenclature, named the genus (the basic unit or biological type in taxonomy) and then the species within that genus.

16 According to Nils Uddenberg in “The Origin of and the Philosophy Behind Linnaeus’s Sexual System” *The Linnean* [sic] *Special Issue* 8, eds. Mary Morris and Leonie Berwick (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2008) this method, like that of Descartes, used traits that could be weighed, counted, and measured. Thus the tangible and visible number of stamens and pistils were keynote (46).
Ehret’s diagram *Methodus plantarum sexualis* of 1736 (Figure 1.2), published a year after Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae*, illustrated the orderly logic of the system’s twenty-four classes according to the number and position of its stamens (male reproductive organs). In this representation, Figure 1.2, Ehret identified the various combinations of sexual organs with letters ‘A-Y’ to visually correspond to Linnaeus’s first twenty-three classes, that is, the ‘Nuptiae Publicae’ (Public Marriages). These were seed bearing plants whose sexual organs were visible. The last and twenty-fourth class lettered ‘Z’ by Ehret was Linnaeus’s ‘Nuptiae Clandestinae’ (Concealed Marriages) because organs were not visible to the naked eye.

These classes could then be divided into orders as determined by their female organs, or pistils. For practitioners, Ehret’s drawing was a clear guide for identifying and categorizing plants by the number of their sexual organs. The image focused upon the nexus of classification, what Linnaeus called the “essence of a plant’s flower,” in other words, the site of fertilization and fructification—the sex organs or where in Linnaeus’s words “the male genital organs strew their genital flour (pollen) on the pistil’s stigma.”

Ehret’s *Methodus* sanitized and seemingly objectified Linnaeus’s system into a methodical, mathematical exercise.

---

17 A plant with one stamen (*andria*) would be *Monandria*, two stamens were *Diandria*, three stamens were *Triandria* and so on. The plant with one pistil (*gynia*) is *Monogynia*-one pistil, *Digynia* has two pistils, *Trigynia* has three. In Ehret’s image, then, letter “A” denotes a plant whose flower has one stamen and one pistil and thus categorizes in Linnaean terms as *Monoandria monogynia*. A plant such as the Crocus, for example, is classified as *Triandria monogynia*, that is, a species that has three (*tri*) stamens (male-*andria*) serving one (*mono*) pistil (female-*gynia*). Plants that had a similar configuration were classified into this similar category.


A plant, therefore, was classified by determining the “number, shape, proportion, and position”\(^{20}\) of the stamens and pistils within its flora. Importantly, the primary feature, the *class*, was determined by the number, size, and placement of the plant’s male organs, that is, the stamens or *andria*, from the Greek *aner* meaning ‘husband’. The sub-category of *order* was determined by the female pistils or *gynia*, whose meaning came from the Greek word, *gyne*, which meant ‘wife’.\(^{21}\) The system’s standardization was meant to demystify former confusions by way of a repeatable trace that could be easily followed—in Linnaeus’s words: “The Ariadne thread in botany is classification, without which there is chaos.”\(^{22}\) At a broader level then, classifying an organism and thus assigning its identity was also dependent upon the practitioner’s ability to observe and identify sexual difference. Problematic, however, was that such categorization was challenged by shifts in understandings of difference that were both shaped and encoded by diverse eighteenth-century beliefs, biases, and conventions.

Linnaeus’s new taxonomy owed much to the critical inquiry of philosophers and earlier scientists. From Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and then natural philosopher Andrea Caesalpino (1519-1603), Linnaeus adopted his notion of hierarchy in the natural world, his *scala natura*. The concept of genus was expanded upon from the work of Swiss botanist, Gaspard Bauhin’s *Pinax Theatri Botanici* of 1623. Francis Bacon’s (1526-1627) focus upon observation and experiment gave impetus to Britain’s John Ray’s (1627-1705) classification


\(^{21}\) Linnaeus’s classifying system intuitively mirrored social taxonomies, that is, a site wherein primary agency was male and the female was subordinate. Londa Schiebinger gives deeper attention to this issue in *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (2004).

\(^{22}\) Linné, *Philosophia Botanica*, Aphorism No. 156, 113. Ariadne, from Greek myth, is associated with solving problems, that is, ways out of labyrinths, webs, or moral conflicts. Fundamental to her method was keeping a record of the process and path—the thread—which could be followed should one become confused or mired in complexities. For the naturalist, classification was the thread by which to unravel botanical knowledge. Just as Newton’s laws of gravitation established the mechanics of a heliocentric world, Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification simplified generative understanding of the vegetal world.
that he based upon affinities and differences, and in turn, influenced Linnaean tenets that focused more specifically upon these aspects to determine a species’s ‘family unit’. Ray’s term *anthropomorpha*, which meant ‘man-shaped’, was reconfigured by Linnaeus for his own taxonomy. The notion that plant and animal kingdoms shared a similar law of generation came from Linnaeus’s “great teacher” Holland’s Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738). France’s Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656-1708) and Sebastian Vaillant (1669-1722) added to Linnaeus’s investigations by way of their inquiries on genus, species, and the sexual organs of flowers. Stephen Hales in his *Vegetable Staticks* published in 1727 incited debates on the purpose of pollen that opened up new considerations for Linnaean categorization. And certainly the advent of influential institutions, for example the Royal Society of London founded in 1662 or the French Académie Royale des Sciences established in 1666 which were dedicated to the pursuit and accumulation of knowledge in the natural world, did much to substantiate botany’s promise of new reach and discovery.

---


26 Introductory notes from *Systema Naturae* of 1735 cite Sebastien Vaillant’s *Sermo de Structura Florum* (1718) (a treatise that established the sexual function of the pistils and stamens) as influential groundwork for Linnaeus and his formulations of a ‘sexual system’ of classification.

27 Peter Dear Revolutionizing the Sciences: European Knowledge and Its Ambitions, 1500-1700 (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 129. An appetite for greater exploration of the natural world took its lead from seventeenth-century natural philosophy, that is, studies in physics and astronomy whose established knowledge, discipline, and inductive method seemed to conflate with the fundamentals of natural history and its practices. The acquisition of natural history’s knowledge via the empirical (as suggested by Francis Bacon) was also seen to align in part with philosopher John Locke’s 1690 *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 5th ed. (London: J. Churchill, 1706) wherein evidence through experiment, sensory perception, and self-reflective criticality were encouraged. Locke’s *Essay* also posited new knowledge as resembling that of a “white paper, void of all
Where Linnaeus differed from his predecessors, however, was in his focus upon the counting of genital organs to assign classification as established in *Systema Naturae* of 1735 and in his simplified two-name labeling process, binomial nomenclature, as established in *Species Plantarum* of 1753. Eminent botanist and historian William Stearn notes that Linnaeus chose Latin as his botanical language because of its association with classical scholarship, institutional power of the judiciary and church, and its widespread use throughout European countries. In addition, the language, considered both systematic and stable, conflated the rationality and order seen to underpin both Linnaean classification and Enlightenment ideals. The Linnaean sexual system of classification, then, promised easy access, ensured ordered stability within cataloguing the natural world, and as science historian Mary Winsor has argued, critically “joined naturalists together into a working community” worldwide.

Characters,” that is, a *tabula rasa* that was naturally equipped with “materials of reason” (Book II, Ch. 1, 51). So it was with Linnaean formulations. Here, natural history emerged as a clean slate of knowledge based upon the rationale of observing, describing, and classifying—a systematic ordering of knowledge that discovered and managed relationships in the natural world. The seemingly shared interest of ‘science’ with natural philosophers was however, contentious terrain. Natural history’s universal appeal was its standardized method of observing and counting reproductive parts, then assigning a simplified two-name label. This stood in opposition to the ‘pure science’ of natural philosophy (physics, mathematics, and chemistry) that was fixed through rigorous falsification and proofs. Only later in the eighteenth century through justification by way of mathematical classification, cultural popularity, and economic prowess was botany validated as science.

28See Stafleu, *Linnaeus and the Linnaeans* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1971) and Stearn’s “Appendix” to Wilfrid Blunt’s *The Compleat Naturalist* (1971). Both explain that binomial nomenclature was merely a simple labeling of a ‘trivial name’ or *nomen trivial* that identified the genus (a group possessing sexual organs that were similarly constructed like fruits or flowers) and species of the lifeform. Stearn gives the example, as does Lynn Barber in *The Heyday of Natural History 1820-1850* (London: Cape, 1980), of the simplifying process. For example, the milfoil plant was formerly identified as *Achillea foliis duplicato-pinnatis glabris, laciniis linearibus acture laciniatis* but via binomial nomenclature, it becomes *Achillea millefolium*. The *achillea* is the genus and *millefolium* is the species. Such simplification universalized identification and in turn made easier the global exchange of botanical information an easier process.


While Linnaeus’s unveiling of new knowledge of the natural world provoked interest and discussion, there are two aspects of his system that are key to the investigations in this chapter. Firstly, the new discourse that was contingent upon the sexual difference of reproductive organs joined the naturalist’s terrain to a Foucauldian space of “knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak about it.” Secondly, and as I have foreshadowed in the Introduction to this chapter, this new knowledge was embedded with tensions that hinted at other relationships within the natural world, namely, one’s useful purpose or function within a system, and the notion of identity through performance and concealment or disguise. Thus, an Enlightenment thinker such as Jean Condorcet would praise the Linnaean system for making “‘botany accessible as never before’,” but there were still critics.

**Problems and Tensions**

Throughout the century, Linnaeus’s formulations met with opposition from the eminent Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788), France’s director of the Jardin du Roi (Jardin du Plantes) since 1739. Buffon denounced generalized system building, in particular Linnaeus’s ‘traffic in artificiality’ by way of an arbitrary focus upon “a single characteristic [sexual difference] chosen by the taxonomist as the criterion of the class.” The naturalist’s seemingly random choice of reproductive parts appeared contrary to

---


32 Jean Antoine Condorcet, Enlightenment philosopher and mathematician, in eulogizing Linnaeus at the Academie des Science, Paris as quoted in Roger L. Williams, *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France: the spirit of the Enlightenment* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 24. What Newton had resolved in the mechanical world, Linnaeus was seen to have provided for the material (natural) world—a logical and simplified system of order.

scientific objectivity. Buffon thus argued that an artificial ordering of the natural world responded “to a requirement of the human mind rather than a mirror of the truth of Nature.”

Other ambivalences were raised by way of Linnaeus’s florid descriptions of his system that played out uncomfortably through his botanical vernacular that clearly suggested affinities with the social world. For example in *Systema Naturae*, botanical “nuptials” were celebrated in “bridal beds” of petals. In *Philosophia Botanica* of 1751, plant parts were alarmingly human: “the filaments the *spermatic vessels*; the pollen the *male semen*; the stigma the extremity of the *female organ*; the stylus the *vagina*; the germen the *ovarium*; the pericarpium the *impregnated ovary*; and the seeds the *eggs*.” Linnaeus could shock with his graphic detail in the English translation made available for Britons: “The calyx could also be regarded as the *lips of the cunt* or the *foreskin*.” Also of note was that in the plant world, sexual relationships ranged from monogamy to polygamy, from homosexual to bisexual, and to incest. And, then there was ‘mixed’ sexuality, the hermaphrodite.

Contemporaries of Linnaeus noted the ways in which Linnaeus’s system transgressed social boundaries. Academician Johann Siegesbeck of St. Petersburg, denounced Linnaeus’s system as “‘lewd... with its loathsome harlotry’” and intolerable to God. Anxieties over


38 As quoted in Carl Linné, *Philosophia Botanica* (1751), 105.


40 As quoted in Williams, *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France*, 24. Allegedly, Linnaeus’s ‘revenge’ upon Johann Siegesbeck was to name a useless weed, *siegesbeckia*, after this critic.
botany’s moral dissolution were further voiced by such critics as Reverend Richard Polwhele who warned that “boys and girls botanizing together” heightened “illicit knowledge” and sexual exploration as did touching and probing a plant’s “organs of unhallow’d lust.” He claimed that such practice was a precursor to sexual chaos and social decay. How could a system that was meant to contain, promote as its practice the wanton inspection of genitalia in the open and unregulated outdoors and within mixed company? The Bishop of Carlisle, Reverend Goodenough clashed with botanist and founder of the Linnaean Society James Edward Smith over botany’s “gross prurience” and its questionable suitability for female study. Similarly, the German philosopher and naturalist Goethe was concerned that particularly young girls not be subject to the “dogma of sexuality inherent in the new science.”

English botanist William Withering suggested in 1787 that in practicing the Linnaean system, especially in relation to “the Ladies,” it would be “proper to drop the sexual distinctions” as the language could be too explicit. University of Edinburgh botanist Charles Alston (1683-1760) charged that Linnaeus misread the role of pollen and self-fertilization, asking how could stamens (males) cowering in the shadow of pistils (females) possibly fertilize them? In 1790, William Smellie in The Philosophy of Nature had summed

---


43 As quoted by Stearn, “Appendix,” 245.


up decades of discontent when he attacked the system as “beyond all decent limits.”

Linnaeus’s sexual classification of plants then, provided a forum wherein practitioners could speculate and debate about sexuality—their own, that of others, and of course, even plants—but it was contentious, discursive terrain.

A particular area of concern was that Linnaeus candidly exposed unanticipated affinities or ‘relatedness’ of species within genera. In Figure 1.3, *Clavis Systematis Sexualis* or “Key of the Sexual System” from the tenth edition of *Systema Naturae*, Linnaeus designated some classes as “DIFFINITAS” or without affinity and others as “AFFINITAS” or with affinity. For those species with ‘affinity’, Linnaeus uses the term “coherent inter,” that is, to unite together or cohere and relate as in “brotherhoods,” “confederate males,” “feminine males,” and even “polygamies”—in other words, “stamens cohere” with various others.”

In *Philosophia Botanica* of 1751 he proposed that “related [plants] agree in habit, manner of reproduction, properties, potencies and use.” This notion of ‘relatedness’ was seen to have developed through generations of reproductive processes that seemed to have adapted to various threats such as climate, predators, or pestilence. Clearly, the thought of adaptation and its social parallels would raise anxious responses from Britons where a fixed

---


47 Figure 1.3 is the Latinized form. The English translation comes by way of Erasmus Darwin, “Key of the Sexual System,” *The Families of Plants* (Lichfield: Botanical Society of Lichfield, 1787), lxxvii. It can also be found in Carl von Linné, *Carolii Linneae Systema Naturae; a photographic facsimile of the first volume of the tenth edition* (1758) (London: British Museum, 1939). Many contemporary publications have copies, ranging from Linnaean scholar Frans Stafléu’s *Linnaeus and the Linnaeans: The spreading of their ideas in systematic botany, 1735-1789* (Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1971) to Janet Browne’s “Botany for Gentlemen: Erasmus Darwin and ‘The Loves of the Plants’,” *Isis* 80, no. 4 (December 1989): 592-621.

48 Linné, *Philosophia Botanica*, 149. He also recognizes here that “affinities” could be a problem (149).
chain of being was prescribed to by a wide cultural spectrum.\textsuperscript{49} Relatedness or affinity was developed further in Linnaeus’s \textit{Genera plantarum} of 1764 when he posited that “Nature blended the Genera whence [came] as many \textit{species}… and Chance blended the \textit{Species}.”\textsuperscript{50}

This dictum endorsed affinity to suggest that Nature, not the Creator, did the ‘blending’ to produce species. The issue of affinity or relatedness then, also subtly suggested that a species could have possibly arisen not at the moment of creation, but afterwards via hybridization.\textsuperscript{51} Hybridization in turn implied that a species had shown the ability to adapt or acclimatize to conditions within the natural world in order ensure further generation. That Linnaeus’s contemporary, polymath Erasmus Darwin said as much in his various natural history writings throughout the eighteenth century did much to fuel concerns over affinity, notions of adaptability, and evolutionary trace.\textsuperscript{52}

Despite Linnaeus’s own admission that he was merely “God’s registrar,”\textsuperscript{53} his formulations raised a number of tensions and contradictions for contemporaries. At one level his system challenged conventional religious belief, in other words, God’s Omnipotent perfection and purity. For example, Linnaeus’s system deemed the \textit{essence} of the plant, its

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.} According to Stafleu, Linnaeus’s phrase “genericas has miscuit Natura,” the use of ‘miscere’ is taken as ‘hybridize’. While Linnaeus at this point cannot be called an evolutionist, the seeming mutability and fluidity of generative processes suggests that ideas of adaptation and natural selection are the ‘future improvements’ borne out by the knowledge he knew would be refined by discoveries of other naturalists.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Erasmus Darwin’s \textit{The Economy of Vegetation} (one part of \textit{The Botanic Garden} of 1791) and \textit{Zoonomia} (1794) both refer to issues of ‘evolution’ that I later address. Furthermore, Linnaeus’s included man and apes in the same order of \textit{Anthropomorpha}, and this did much to intensify concerns around the nature of man’s relatedness or ‘affinity’ to other species.
\end{itemize}
fructification, as *essential*, that is, invariable and constant because, as acknowledged by Linnaeus in *Systema Naturae*, the plant was determined through God’s divine hand.⁵⁴ The deference to God’s mastery appealed to some skeptics, but raised concerns for others engaged by the new taxonomy. If Linnaeus’s system was merely a “laying bare the totality of God’s work,”⁵⁵ then how could some plants lack the *essential* organs that were supposed to be Divinely ordained to all? And how were these and other exceptions in God’s Handiwork to be reasoned, for example, where a plant had male and female organs concurrently?⁵⁶ For that matter, how could Divine workmanship that was based upon a fixed chain of being allow for such formulations as those in Linnaeus’s *Fundamenta Botanica* of 1736 that logically posited plants and animals (including insects) as “equal...[in] origin, nutrition, aging, disease, death, movement, internal propulsion of fluids, and general anatomy”?⁵⁷ If such sweeping equanimity was ordained through God’s perfection and merely recorded by Linnaeus, then how could fault be found or exclusion imposed upon any variations or irregularities? Put another way, *exceptions* or those inconsistences to encoded belief and the possible porous borders that could affect classification processes—in particular, in relation to social parallels of modern class or gender divides—unsettled worlds in want of fixed grids.

Linnaean categorization then, in terms of sexual difference and in terms of what constituted exceptions and affinities or lack thereof, was complicated in that its definition arose out of a decidedly western European perception of the norm, an interpretation that

---

⁵⁴ Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, 18. Also see Williams, *Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France*, 24. In later years Linnaeus was to be less driven by the notion of fixity.


collided with understandings within wider global cultural contexts. Certainly different cultures had varied interpretations or understandings of a range of concepts extending from issues of sexuality and gender to that of family and community, or of notions of value and utility. Indeed in *Systema Naturae* of 1735, Linnaeus seemed to defy notions of difference by positioning Man and animal in the same family order of *Anthropomorpha*, a troubling concept for those who wanted familiar boundaries that distinguished the human from the bestial. Some comfort was found in Linnaeus’s own admission in *Systema Naturae* that the system was not ideal, but that “as long as a natural system is lacking, artificial systems will definitely be needed.”

Natural history framed a world of mutable proportion, a world whose difference and variation was held in tension by taxonomy’s thread of logic and precision. Nonetheless, the simplicity and clarity of the system were challenged by troubling exceptions, unusual affinities, hybridities, and fluctuations or mutabilities within the natural world. These shifts and changes could suggest, I argue, that modernity’s own fluctuations and transformations lay at the very heart of the new natural history.

**Caricature and Linnaean Affinities: The Naturalist as ‘Macaroni’**

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, anxieties around the Linnaean system surface most obviously in the visual realm of caricature. Caricature appealed to middle and upper class appetites for celebrity—that is, the consuming of fashion and notoriety that fed

---


59 Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, 23. Tore Frängsmyr in *Linnaeus and the Linnaeans* (1971) quotes Linnaeus that “Natural orders without a key do not constitute a method. And so an artificial method has only diagnostic value since it is not possible or it is hardly possible to find the key to the natural method” (135).
desires to be seen yet distanced from society’s lower orders. Social and political satires were loaded with scathing wit, intemperate mockery, exaggerated physical features, and foibles laid bare. And at their foundation was a censure meant to inform as well as reform. Through hyperbole, the caricature attacked the façade of cosmopolitan savior faire and decried its appetite for sensation and exposure. Albeit often associated with less refined tastes, caricatures had wide appeal for their readability, their affordability, and their ability to circulate much like the topics and names in the news that caricatures referenced.

This thesis will ultimately examine several caricatures produced in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In particular a subset that satirized the cultural phenomenon of the ‘macaroni’—fashionable gentlemen and aristocrats associated with both foreign travel and loose sexual morals—provide an arena where public perceptions of Linnaean classification could be conflated with modern concerns around sexuality, masculinity, and the modern British nation.

---

60 Constance Simon in English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century (London: B. T. Batsford, 1907) points out production and costs in relation to printmaker Matthew Darly, for example, who started his career by publishing the “humorous sketches” of several artists (namely Henry Bunbury and George Townshend). In 1776 Simon reports, Darly produced a comprehensive series called “‘Darly’s comic prints of Characters, Caricatures and Macaronies’ by Bunbury, Darly, Sandby, Topham and others,” that sold for £4 4s a set. Given that these productions were conventionally of at least twenty prints as noted by historian Tim Clayton in The English Print 1688-1802 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) and that at this time the pound sterling was worth 20 shillings according to Roy Porter in English Society in the Eighteenth Century (London: Penguin, 1982), 317, it would seem that the macaroni caricatures were relatively inexpensive.

61 Aileen Ribeiro, “The Macaronis,” History Today 28, no. 7 (July 1978): 463-468. On caricature see Diana Donald’s publications The Age of Caricature (London: Yale University Press, 1996) and Followers of Fashion (London: Hayward Gallery, 2002). Stella Tillyard in “Celebrity in 18th Century London,” History Today 55, no. 6 (June 2005) points out that caricature, a popular print form that mocked diverse aspects of contemporaneous British culture in the eighteenth century, gained momentum when the Licensing Act lapsed in 1695. What that meant was the controls on the number of printing presses, publications, and practitioners in the printing business eased and as a result an extensive print culture flourished and in turn made for a more informed middle class. Weak laws around personal libel allowed for “almost anything” to be written about “almost anyone,” Tillyard notes, and by the 1750s even high-profile public figures were vilified and openly referred to by their actual names, initials, or titles. Private life became a public commodity and celebrity antics and extravagances provided both escape from and defiance to everyday life.
In Britain, the name ‘macaroni’ initially referred to predominately moneyed young aristocrats and social elites returned home from their prescribed Grand Tour. The Macaroni Club, which they subsequently established, was named as an in-joke after a cheap pasta dish and in opposition to the aging British patriots who frequented a club called the Sublime Society of Steaks. The macaronis were mocked for their continental dress of “hats, feathers, [and] long curls,” and these references to continental fashion carried over to notions of feminization that were at odds with constructions of masculinity in the British

---

62 Wealth financed Grand Tours for these young aristocrats. The purpose of the Tour was promoted as pedagogical, that is, meant to offer up the sophistication and culture of Italy and France. J. H. Plumb in Men and Places (London: Cresset Press, 1963) identifies the Tour as “the most expensive form of education ever devised by European society” (57). Laurence Sterne’s “Sermon on the Prodigal Son” from The Sermons of Mr. Yorick, Vol. 3 (Altenburgh: Bottl. Richter, 1777) suggests that such travel was also meant to release young men from the effeminizing “tenderness” of their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers and expose them to “wholesome hardship” (60-62). Also quoted in Michèle Cohen’s Fashioning Masculinity (London: Routledge, 1996), 58. Cohen also credits Richard Lassels in his 1670 publication The Voyage of Italy as the first to call this practice the ‘Grand Tour’ (54). Deirdre Lynch’s “Overloaded Portraits” in Body and Text in the Eighteenth Century (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), identifies that during the 1700s in Britain there was a fashion for portraits and caricatures in Italian settings which Lynch claims “started England’s caricature craze [and] enabled print sellers to profit from the vanity of well-to-do amateur” travelers (119).

63 Giuseppe Marco Antonio Baretti in Easy phraseology, for the use of young ladies, who intend to learn the colloquial part of the Italian language (London: G. Robinson, PaterRow, 1775) noted the macaroni’s pompous and affected dress, in Baretti’s words, “di vestire pomposamente assettato” and characterized the maccherone as “a man of gross understanding, a dolt, a fool, a vulgar fellow” (39-40). Baretti, Secretary for Foreign Correspondence to the Royal Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, explained that ‘maccherone’ grew out of a Newmarket club of young men who boasted of their continental travel, shunned the Beefsteak Club, and adopted macaroni, a dish ‘so cheap [it was] considered a very gross and vulgar food’. Historian Paul Langford in A Polite and Commercial People (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) notes that the Sublime Society of Steaks club was also called ‘The Beefsteak Club’: “The macaronis took their origin from a society of enthusiasts for Italian culture who were determined to display their contempt for the values of an opposing club, the Beefsteak Club” (576).

64 Horace Walpole, Horace Walpole’s correspondence with Henry Seymour Conway, Lady Ailesbury, Lord and Lady Hertford, Mrs. Harris (1764) ed. W. S. Lewis, Vol. 38 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 306. This reference is to be found in a letter of February 6, 1764 from Horace Walpole to the Earl of Hertford. According to Diana Donald in Followers of Fashion (London: Hayward Gallery, 2002), sumptuary laws that once encoded dress codes and meant to control what people wore, protect domestic production, and encode class rank had long dissipated by the mid-eighteenth century. Nonetheless, fashion was thought to be “intrinsically harmful to society…treacherously seductive, irrational, and fickle”…and “taste was given a moral tone” (10-15). Such outward façade and preoccupation with fashion was seen as a female preoccupation and thus that association with macaroni excess held uncomfortable overtones for Britain whose involvements in the Seven Years War raised anxieties in relation to these “unmanly” men and their questionable readiness to defend the nation. Also see Diana Donald, The Age of Caricature (London: Yale University Press, 1996), 75-83 and Miles Ogborn, Spaces of Modernity: London’s Geographies, 1680-1780 (London: The Guilford Press, 1998), 133-143.
nation. In other words, macaroni fashion excess challenged the discreet black attire that defined self-disciplined and patriotic gentry, and worried a nation whose political and economic security was understood to rely upon manly action and productivity. In question as well was the well-travelled macaroni’s loyalty to the British Crown. This was evoked in Robert Hitchcock’s play, The Macaroni of 1773 when the character, Lord Promise, summed up society’s sentiments in his complaint about a young macaroni named Epicene: “I wanted you to be a man of spirit… but I see you…shew the world what a contemptible creature an Englishman dwindles into, when he adopts the follies and vices of other nations.” That the period’s most prominent and outspoken macaroni, Charles Fox, was not only a radical Whig politician but also a critic of the monarchical policies of George III and a supporter of the American and later French revolutions, exacerbated associations between the macaroni and critiques of the nation.


Linnaean natural history would also be seen to raise republicanism and revolution that would emerge in the 1790s in caricature. See my discussion in Chapter Four of James Gillray’s The South Sea Caterpillar (1796). Fox’s activities are noted in Norman Pearson in Society Sketches in the Eighteenth Century (London: Edward Arnold, 1911), 245-248, and Dorothy George in Hogarth to Cruikshank: Social Change in Graphic Satire, (New York: Walker and Company, 1967), 59. Fox’s penchant for red shoes was said to be inspired by Charlemagne who reputedly wore scarlet leather shoes when crowned Emperor. Historian Pearson also indicates that Fox was a notorious gambler, and even the £154,000 that Fox’s friend Lord Holland left in his will for the payment of Fox’s debts was only of “temporary” assistance (247). These excesses were perceived as irresponsible and morally weak especially a time when Britons were crippled by national taxation and huge
Mocked then for lavish hairdos, elaborate tricorn hats, and overdress the macaroni was the butt of jokes, plays, and satirical commentary. By 1771, printmaker Matthew Darly took up the macaroni as a subject in a series of six sets of caricatures. Indeed, Darly dubbed his new locale at 39 Strand Street as “The Macaroni Print-Shop” and both this site and a display of his macaroni satires are clearly featured in one of his prints of 1772 (Figure 1.4). While Darly’s series of macaroni caricatures represented a wide gamut of characters—bakers, lawyers, auctioneers, artisans, gamblers, bankers and politicians—he devoted several to well known naturalists. One published in 1773 by Darly, *The Aurelian Macaroni* (Figure 1.5) depicts a youthful naturalist, an *aurelian* or butterfly collector replete with clap net and displaying a print of lepidoptera specimens. The naturalist is garbed in a vest with snail shell


69 For detailed reference to the print known as “The Macaroni Print Shop” see the comprehensive catalogue and commentary of Frederic George Stephens, *Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* Vol. IV (1883), 784-786.

70 Matthew Darly’s other “naturalist” macaronis include: “The Fly-Catching Macaroni” July 12, 1772 (BMC 4695) of Sir Joseph Banks; “The Simpling Macaroni” July 13, 1772 (BMC 4696) of Daniel Solander; “The Botanic Macaroni” November 14, 1772 (BMC 5046) of Sir Joseph Banks; “No. XXV, Miss B—N and No. XXVI, The Circumnavigator” Oct. 1, 1773 (BMC 5146) of Joseph Banks and his mistress; and, “A Polite Artist on St. Luke’s Day” Oct. 18, 1773 (BMC 5168) of botanist, John Hill. Darly’s various macaroni representations also include butchers and bakers, the military, artists, libertines, equestrians, lady macaronis, politicians, and kings. For discussion of lawyers and auctioneers see Shearer West and British Museum website on caricature. Mary Dorothy George’s *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, Vol. 5-11 (1935-1954) is a remarkably diverse and comprehensive documentation of prints and drawings, and the historical context of each and their themes. Volumes 5-11 cover 12,500 prints between 1771 and 1832.
buttons and a butterfly-like tricorn hat from which protrude locks of curly hair that are in fact, caterpillars or aureola.\footnote{These features of the print have been noted in M. Dorothy George, \textit{Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires}, Vol. V (1935). Also see Alan Bewell, “A Passion that Transforms,” (2006) and Amelia Rauser, \textit{Caricature Unmasked}, (2008). To some viewers the locks of curly hair may call up unsettling associations with fashionable actress Dorothy Jordan who was renowned for a similar “mop of brown curls,” a potent sign of both her female sexual identity and her ability as a “natural” performer who easily morphed into roles of masculine gender according to historian Gill Perry in “Staging Gender and “Hairy Signs”: Representing Dorothy Jordan’s Curls,” \textit{Eighteenth-Century Studies} 38, no.1 (2004): 145-163.} Caricature in the eighteenth century worked on many levels depending on the viewer’s interest, knowledge base, and proclivities, and \textit{The Aurelian Macaroni} offered a range of associations for consumers and viewers. At its most obvious level Darly’s caricature brings into conjunction the current fashion for natural history, in this case, moth and butterfly collecting and “the macaroni” whose association with fashionable excess led to these macaroni prints becoming “fashionable” in themselves.\footnote{Rauser, \textit{Caricature Unmasked}, 63.}

Darly’s \textit{The Aurelian Macaroni} referenced a prominent contributor to the field. As art historian, M. Dorothy George and others have noted, the caricature satirized the well-known Linnaean entomologist Moses Harris\footnote{George, \textit{Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires}, Vol. V, 134. Also see Michael Salmon, \textit{The Aurelian Legacy} (2000) and Alan Bewell, “A Passion That Transforms,” (2006). George points out that Moses Harris (1730-1788), officer of the Aurelian Society and entomological illustrator, was the subject of Darly’s satire. Harris’s was not the first publication on insects. Eleazar Albin published the first English book on butterflies and moths, \textit{A Natural History of English Insects} (1720). Of note in Harris’s preface to \textit{The Aurelian} is the customary author’s apology for a ‘humble’ study. As quoted in Harry B. Weiss, “Two Entomologists of the Eighteenth Century—Eleazar Albin and Moses Harris”, \textit{The Scientific Monthly}, December, 1926, Harris wondered “to whom such apology should be made,” since those who object “are generally men of small capacity and low wit, having a mean conception of things in general”(563). While his apology pays homage to the customary practice that prefaced such publications, his acerbic tone would seem to accent an independence that underscored the marginality of aurelians and macaronis. Of further note is that Harris’s aurelian interests led to his formulations around a system of colours and a colour wheel. According to Robert O’Hara in \textit{Picturing Knowledge: Historical and Philosophical Problems Concerning the Use of Art in Science} (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), Harris’s theoretical model of concentric colour circles earned him the moniker of the ‘first discoverer of a regular system of colours’. Harris isolated red, yellow and blue as principle colors; the blending of those colours led to the mediate colours were of orange, purple and green. Harris’s theory argued that from principle colors, all other colours originated. More importantly his color observations resulted in a theory of subtraction in colour, that is, by mixing all three principal colours, one gets black. This theory emerged from his observation of the ‘affinity’ and blending of colours in the scales of butterfly and other insect’s wings.} whose major study, \textit{The Aurelian: or, natural history
of English Insects; namely, Moths and Butterflies, together with the Plants on which they Feed published in 1766 was considered “the most splendid of all English entomological books.” Harris’s work not only linked the study of butterflies to plants and the botanical world, but demonstrated the interdependence of their respective generative processes. And while the engravings he produced for the publication underscored the symbiotic links between botany and entomology, it was the frontispiece to his publication The Aurelian, in fact a self-portrait featuring Harris (Figure 1.6) sitting in nature in gentlemanly dress with a butterfly clap-net on his knees and a box of butterflies in his hand, that shares a resonance with Darly’s The Aurelian Macaroni.

In contrast to the self-satisfied pose of the gentleman scholar that characterizes Harris’s frontispiece of 1766, Darly’s caricature of the aurelian evokes a naturalist who is both pampered and effete. Such languor, perhaps, is designed to mock the ‘universal’ accessibility of Linnaeus’s practices to even the most leisured of fashionable moderns.

---

74 Moses Harris, The Aurelian: or, natural history of English insects; namely, moths and butterflies. Together with the plants on which they feed; and their standard names, as given and established by the Society of Aurelians. Draw, engraved and coloured, from the natural subjects themselves. (London, 1766), 3, 28. Further references to this publication of Moses Harris will be truncated to The Aurelian. According to Sharon Valiant in “Maria Sibylla Merian: Recovering an Eighteenth-Century Legend,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 26, no. 3 (Spring 1993), Harris’s publication originally had forty-one plates drawn, engraved and hand-coloured by Harris and was considered “the most splendid of all English entomological books” (473).

75 Historian of science Mary Winsor has observed in “The Development of Linnaean Insect Classification,” Taxon 25, no. 1 (February 1976) that Linnaeus’s classification of insects “displayed as much or more concern with natural relations as with purely logical systematization,” that is, the interconnectedness between Linnaean kingdoms and thus the relationships here between the insect and vegetal worlds (61). Philip Ritterbush in Overtures to Biology (1964) observes the parallels between the vegetal and entomological worlds by noting that “buds of flowers were held to be analogous to the pupal stages of insects,” thus underscoring fundamental truths around development in the natural world, whether botanical or entomological (116).

76 Dorothy George’s in Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires (1935) acknowledged the link between the caricature and the frontispiece. This point has subsequently been made in such works as Alan Bewell’s “A Passion that Transforms” (2006). The frontispiece is signed by Moses Harris and considered a self-portrait, especially since all the engravings within this publication were “drawn, engraved, and coloured by the author” according to historian Harry B. Weiss in “Two Entomologists of the Eighteenth Century—Eleazar Albin and Moses Harris,” The Scientific Monthly 23, no. 6 (December 1926). Also see Michael A. Salmon, The Aurelian Legacy, 32. In addition, Michael Salmon gives explanation of the use of clap nets and racket nets.
Similar to the *aureolus*, that is, the transformative cocoon stage of the butterfly, this satirical figure invites viewers to contemplate his transitory state. The butterfly collector is mobile, but not quite; his eye engages, but with the vacant interest of being seen rather than catching the butterflies which he apparently seeks. The printed illustration in his hand might point to the specimens that are his goal, but the empty net suggests fruitless efforts. He is in ‘the field’ so to speak, but out of place in the fashionable attire of the macaroni—ultra-chic snug breeches, fitted stockings, buckle shoes, silk vest over ruffle-cuffed shirt, bagwig, and tricorn hat. We might assume he is involved in butterfly collecting, but could this dandy’s languorous pose and open disheveled shirt point to the macaroni’s association with loose sexual morals, that is, what popular accounts have described as his “wench[ing] without passion” during Grand Tour exploits? Or does the erotic tension reference critique of both Harris’s and Linnaean concerns with sexual classification and activity as a part of the penetration of and mastery over the natural world?

But is fashionable excess the flashpoint for both this pastiche of collecting in the natural world’s three Kingdoms and the macaroni’s social visibility? While literary historian, Alan Bewell has observed that Darly’s *The Aurelian Macaroni* expresses “anxieties about the dangers of the naturalist collector whose relationship to butterflies is linked to exoticism, luxury, and gender-crossing,” the significance of these anxieties and how they are raised by the image requires investigation.

---


Unsettling Associations

As a leading aurelian, Moses Harris isolated and demystified the butterfly’s shape-shifting, explaining in *The Aurelian* of 1766 that a chrysalis and ultimately a butterfly, was produced by “copulation [and] purging themselves from their Dung and Filth.” My argument is that hidden transcripts of both affinities or relatedness and their unsettling underpinnings within the natural world play a role in the caricature of *The Aurelian Macaroni.* Indeed the chrysalis or aureolus for which this macaroni is named brings both transformation and mobility to the fore.

The naturalist and the macaroni conflate through their affinities, namely, their similarly marginalized stature, unusual interests, and resistance to encoded social conventions and hierarchies. Mikhail Bakhtin identifies the eighteenth century as a transitional period wherein the stimulus for laughter shifted from universal body functions (scatological, for example) to external markers such as the individual’s physiology or eccentricity. Here the macaroni and naturalist share in their odd, and for some, frivolous

---

79 Moses Harris, *The Aurelian*, 3, 28. That idea of shape shifting—of transforming and changing—is borne out in camouflage techniques of butterflies and moths. Linnaeus in his *Institutions of Entomology* trans. Thomas Yeats (London: R. Horsfield, 1773) noted butterfly “metamorphosis” and their coloration by which they could camouflage themselves in order to trap prey or elude danger (2-14). Today, a strategy in color shift is called aposematism, a ‘warning coloration’ that occurs when a predator approaches. The ability of one species to camouflage itself as another, such as the Viceroy butterfly’s mimicry of the Monarch’s color patterns, is nature’s way of optimizing species survival. For a discussion of *generatio spontanea* see Frans A. Stafleu, *Linnaeus and the Linnaean* (1971) and Frank N. Egerton “A History of the Ecological Sciences, Part 30: Invertebrate Zoology and Parasitology during the 1700s,” *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of American* 89, no. 4 (October 2008): 407-433. Throughout the 1700s the belief in the possibility that new generations emerged spontaneously from dead material, in other words, *generatio spontanea*, was rigorously debated. Even in the 1770s with the explosive advance of the natural sciences, many natural scientists thought that the creationist belief underpinning Linnaean natural history was questionable as was ‘*generatio spontanea*’.  


daily pursuits of collecting fashions or natural history specimens. The eccentricity of their practices is complicated in the satire by an apparent shared preoccupation with sexual and gender roles. But out of these practices arose mobilities that challenged convention to pose new cultural considerations. Trans-national travel interests and affinity for the different suggest both the naturalist and macaroni as entities in flux with their mobility and interstitial position locating them upon a threshold of change.

Continental travel exposed macaronis to what Gerald Newman calls in a different context, “alien cultural influence and the associated moral disease…dissipation and effeminacy.”83 Those corrosive influences seeped into elite travel in another way. Venture to other lands was often tainted with the idea of national dissatisfaction, that is, in one popular account of macaronis “their isle [Britain] was a sort of prison: and the first use they make of their love of liberty, is to get out of it.”84

The aurelian’s freedom of movement and action problematizes the stability and social loyalties of not just youthful globe-trotting naturalists but indeed of botany itself, a discipline known for its adjustment to standardizing, interdisciplinary demands. Darly’s aurelian macaroni has an apparent satiation and complacency about him. And even if in a foreign territory, this would-be collector of butterflies seems comfortably protected by what appears to be an oak tree given the customary knotty occlusions along its trunk. The oak was

---


84 Jean Bernard Le Blanc, Letters on the English and French nations: containing curious and useful observations on their constitutions natural and political. Vol. 1 (London, 1747), 37. The political overtones are palpable here. As Jeremy Black has argued in Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783 (2008) affinity to the foreign through emulation of fashion was important in that there was “a strong sense of inferiority to the cultural life and products of France and Italy” who were leaders in fashion and in particular “women’s clothes and behaviour” (179). Given this association, young ‘gulls’ such as these seemingly obtuse collectors could be seen as especially susceptible to corruptive foreign influence.
used in the building of British trade and naval warships and as such was a long-established metaphor for liberty, stability, and aristocratic agency thought to underpin British nationhood.  

British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) described the English aristocracy as “‘the great oaks that shade a country’.” With considerable irony and some tension then, the naturalist macaroni of Darly’s satire sits inertly beneath the tree’s branches, ostensibly enjoying the security of his British birthright, the oak, while his lax pose suggests little effort to ensure its continuity. Almost suspended and disconnected from the world around him, the young and effete aurelian would seem ill-equipped if not disinterested in defending British patrician values from which he arose. The aurelian, then, was an equivocal species whose unpredictable affinities made him neither wholly naturalist nor macaroni, neither patriot nor traitor. Aligned with macaroni affectations, the naturalist and his practices become uncertain conduits through which Britain’s patriarchal values, codes, and duties could be compromised. His affinity for the excesses of foreign taste and travel


86 As quoted in Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London, 1983), 218. In portraiture, the oak was often appropriated by landed families to frame their pedigree and politics (the oak as symbol of British liberty). Such is Johann Zoffany’s *Earl of Lincoln and his Family* (1765). Here, the Earl and his family sit under the oak as they overlook their extensive landscape park, Sheringham Park.

87 Sarah Jordan in *The Anxieties of Idleness* (Lewisburg Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 2003), 153-155 points out that this apparent rupture between parasitic complacency and industry underpinned feared social decay and the cliché of idle hands being susceptible to devilish temptation. Although speculation, it is interesting to consider that *The Aurelian Macaroni* may have further troubled informed viewers who would know that until the 1760s the oak was known as a Jacobite symbol. The young aurelian, positioned at the foot of the oak, already seen as receptive to foreign fashion tastes, could also register possible foreign political sympathies given that key eighteenth-century Jacobite symbolism was “the oak leaf…the grub and butterfly” as noted by Murray Pittock in “The Culture of Jacobitism,” in *Culture and Society in Britain 1660-1800*, ed. Jeremy Black (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997). Jacobites were the Catholic Stuart rebels in Scotland who rallied throughout the century, often with support of the French, to restore James II and his Stuart successors to the English throne that they had lost to the Hanovers in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. *The Aurelian Macaroni* was armed with all three of these trigger points. Under the oak tree, with butterfly placards in hand, this young ‘grub’ that was indeed a butterfly *aureolus* about to change form, and thus could call up dangerous affinities. Here, the aurelian’s loyalties are manifest as unstable, potentiably mutable, but certainly unpredictable. In other words, Linnaean taxonomy and the reign of science could be seen to pose undermining associations (as did Jacobitism) to British hierarchies based on a Protestant King and aristocracy.
could be seen to translate as political equivocation, a trait that was troubling to a nation already reeling from colonial resistances, relentless foreign wars, military losses, and soaring taxation.

But exceptions—artificiality or affinity—that underpinned anxieties around the macaroni’s questionable loyalties to traditional forms of the status quo play out in the caricature through yet another trajectory: the macaroni and aurelian’s sexuality. Although sexual difference determined botanical classification, how was that difference negotiated if at issue was sexual ambiguity? Darly’s caricature raises this issue in positing the aurelian as having hybrid affinities, that is, one whose sexuality is neither one nor the other but ambiguous. 88 The aurelian’s hat and tunic buttons are signs which provoke mediation of this problematic.

Moral discourses of the eighteenth century positioned nature and fashion as polar opposites with Nature being about truth and fashion about deceit. 89 With the influx of a new commodity culture, fashion’s alignment with privileged taste flourished, especially in the gendered space of female whims. In women, however, such intemperance was forgivable because weak wills were considered natural to females. The macaroni’s gravitation towards fashion, however, was seen as shamelessly “debauch’d with Effeminacy” 90 and the aurelian

---

88 This association I address more fully later in this chapter in reference to Susan Shapiro in “‘Yon Plumed Dandebrat,‘” The Review of English Studies 39, no. 155 (August 1988): 400-412, who quotes from The Treasury: or Impartial Compendium, No. 3259 (London, 1771) that any macaroni was critiqued for being “neither male nor female, a thing of neuter gender.”

89 Diana Donald in Followers of Fashion (2002) notes that in the eighteenth-century’s moral discourses “‘nature’ and ‘fashion’ were antithetical with the former standing for “truth, candour, beauty, and constancy of form” and the fashion being about “artifice, transience, and a corrupt kind of eroticism” (10). That some Linnaean tenets were seen as demonstrating fluctuation from conventional beliefs in relation to nature could have unsettling impact upon those who witnessed such ambiguity within the macaroni and natural history.

naturalist as macaroni raised related associations. Significantly the butterfly tricorn in the caricature could evoke the naturalist’s sexual affinity with women, his effeminacy, because the hat itself was in the form of a popular botanical collectible, the winged butterfly pea plant or what Linnaeus named the *Clitoria ternatea.*

Moses Harris’s *The Ruby Tyger, The Sweet-Scented Pea* (Figure 1.7) from his 1766 publication *The Aurelian* depicts the sweet-pea plant (*Clitoria*), its delicate and colourful wings spread like those of the numerous ruby tygers. Historian of science Francois Delaporte notes that Linnaeus, as with many other florals, recognized the flower’s womanly traits of “sweet fragrances, lively colors, [and] most elegant shape.” Darly’s possible pun upon the naturalist-macaroni’s head-gear as the *Clitoria* plant as opposed to the requisite macaroni tricorn, suggests a loaded attack upon discourses in relation to macaroni masculinity, potential affinities with femininity, and the concern with the sexual basis of botanical practice.

---

91 Paul Frantz, “Nomenclatural Notes on the Genus *Clitoria*,” *Castanea* 65, no. 2 (June 2000): 85-92. Although other botanists such as Breyne in 1678 and Petiver in 1704 used the term *clitoria ternatae* to identify a plant, Paul Frantz points out that “the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature establishes Linnaeus (1753) as the official staring date for correct names.” Ternatea refers to one of the Moluccas Islands in east Indonesia (East Indies) from which the plant originated. Alan Bewell in “‘On the Banks of the South Seas’: botany and sexual controversy in the late eighteenth century,” in *Visions of Empire*, eds. David Miller and Peter Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) notes that Linnaeus in using sexual terminology for plants, named the butterfly pea plant, *clitoria*, and while he also suggests elsewhere in “A Passion that Transforms,” (2006) that this aurelian’s hat can be seen as a butterfly, he does to my knowledge make a connection of the hat to the butterfly pea plant.


93 William Stearn in the Appendix to Wilfrid Blunt’s seminal biography of Linnaeus, *The Compleat Naturalist*, notes how Linnaeus’s choice of sexualized and anthropomorphic terms “amused some of his contemporaries but scandalized others” (245). Stearn continues by quoting from a letter written by Reverend Samuel Goodenough to Linnaean scholar J. E. Smith in January of 1808 wherein Goodenough, with apparent irony, states that “It is possible that many virtuous students might not be able to make out the similitude of ‘Clitoria’” (245). The use of the term and its possible implications for the naturalist were not obscure to those with botanical interests. Of further note is that Natalie Angier in *Woman: An Intimate Geography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999) notes that “a second-century source suggests” that *clitoris* is a derivation of the Greek verb *kleitoriazin* meaning “to titillate lasciviously, to seek pleasure” (61), an association with aurelian in Darly’s image as possibly interested in sexual pleasure.
butterfly could also visually respond to both the sexual underpinnings of Linnaean classification and contemporaneous accounts that warned “there are men-butterflies…things that suffer themselves to be blown about by every wind of folly,”\textsuperscript{94} the point is that liaisons with foreign influences could not only corrupt but also work to undermine values that constituted the stability of masculine norms of British eighteenth-century society.\textsuperscript{95} That the aurelian macaroni’s hair or wig are in fact “writhing caterpillars,”\textsuperscript{96}—an interstitial stage of the butterfly—also raises the issue of change or transformation. As an aureolus or cocoon stage of development, the caterpillar curls could also be read as larva or maggots, that is, organisms that feed upon carrion. By analogy the image could suggest that this aurelian is a mere parasite that finds sustenance in the luxuriant excess of his gilded birthright while engaging with others of his “maccherone” ilk who were conversely seen in the 1770s and reported a such in popular accounts, as those of “gross understanding, fool[s], vulgar fellow[s].”\textsuperscript{97} Similarly in the eighteenth century, butterfly-catching in itself was viewed by some as a frivolous practice of idle minds.\textsuperscript{98} Called up here is the aurelian’s

\textsuperscript{94} Eliza Haywood, \textit{The Female Spectator}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed., Vol. 2 (London, 1744), 290.

\textsuperscript{95} The tricorn or Nivernois was named after the Duc de Nivernois, the French Ambassador to London from 1762-1763, at the end of the Seven Years War. See Hilda Amphlett, \textit{Hats} (Chalfont St Giles: Sadler, 1974). Perhaps called up here could be a more political commentary, that is, the factious relations between Britain and France during the Seven Years War and the residual undercurrent of strained relations. That the aurelian wears a tricorn could heighten speculation around the mask of his couture and anxiety around his possible allegiances or susceptibility to French foreign influence, especially since his Grand Tour often took him there.


\textsuperscript{97} Baretti, \textit{Easy phraseology}, 39-40.

alignment to the organic and aforementioned ‘dung and filth’, that is, unstable bodies on society’s margins who had the capability of transforming the social in unpredictable ways.\(^9\)

Hair contributed to that transformative potential as well as the identity and categorization of an entity.\(^1\) In his 1758 edition of *Systema Naturae* Linnaeus categorized *Homo Sapiens*, and one of their defining characteristics was hair—*Europeanus* had long blond “flowing” hair, *Americanus* had “black straight and thick” hair, *Asiaticus* had “black” hair, and the *Afer*’s hair was black and “kinked.”\(^2\) These defining attributes conflate with issues with reference to sexual identity or ambiguity and the eighteenth-century fashion for wearing wigs.\(^3\) While British patricians wore wigs in public, macaroni fashion was characterized by “masses of artificial hair,” a factor associated with “superficial” tendencies and thus potential masculine ambiguity.\(^4\)

Art historian Marcia Pointon argues that artificial hair, the wig, was an exemplar of stable patrician power, and the more ornate the wig, the more elevated the status.\(^5\) The aurelian’s extraordinary caterpillar curls, an exaggerated hairpiece here, are ironic for they do

---


100 Alan Bewell’s “A Passion that Transforms” (2006) notes that the aurelian’s curls allude to Medusa and as such “raise anxieties” around “cross-gendering” and the naturalist, but gives no further explanation. I would suggest that in terms of my position on the aurelian’s disconcerting ‘affinity’ that Medusa could refer to the notion of a dialectic status—the collision of beauty and horror, of creativity and destruction—to posit the aurelian as ambivalent, a trait shared with many of Linnaeus’s formulations and their manifestations in the natural world.


104 Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 117. The size of the wig also held ambivalent overtones as suggested by Amelia Rauser, “Hair, Authenticity and the Self-Made Macaroni” in *Eighteenth-Century* Studies 38, no. 1 (2004): 101-117. Here Rauser refers to the familiar “analogy between large wig and large genitalia,” but qualifies that in some macaroni images this notion can be “undercut by the suggestion of masculine overcompensation” (107).
not guarantee stature but have an undercurrent of ambivalent and reductive force. The macaroni who would ordinarily flaunt his opposition to paternal virtues by wearing “big hair”\textsuperscript{105} would seem to hypocritically subscribe to the very values to which he claims indifference. Furthermore, the aurelian’s curls that attract the viewer’s eye could also accentuate the disjuncture between the naturalist’s supposed practice of a focused look into natural phenomena and that of this dazed and ornamented narcissist whose gaze at the viewer might suggest his “wanton”\textsuperscript{106} desire is not just for natural history.

The snail shells on the aurelian’s jacket further underscore equivocal sexuality. In the same family as Linnaean mollusca, \textit{gastropoda} (snails) may generally look the same but they are diverse in terms of form, behaviour, and habitat. Those differences are evident in the snail’s sexual performance. \textit{Gastropoda} engage in elaborate foreplay, parading and entwining their bodies during courtship, displaying their disproportionately large sexual organs, and hurling ‘love darts’ at one another.\textsuperscript{107} Eventually they inseminate one another for

\textsuperscript{105} As quoted in Rosenthal, “Raising Hair,” 10.

\textsuperscript{106} Gill Perry, “Staging Gender and “Hairy Signs”: Representing Dorothy Jordan’s Curls,” \textit{Eighteenth-Century Studies} 38, no. 1 (2004): 145-163. Perry reaffirms that the “potential of curl” was to “evoke desire, and also to possess attributes of wantonness” (150). Such artifice is further complicated in that the kinds of wigs befitting privileged tastes like that of the aurelian macaroni were, as art historian Marcia Pointon notes in \textit{Hanging The Head} (1993) made of women’s hair, often that of “harlots,” (121) an association that I suggest would imprint the aurelian with sexual improprieties and moral decay. Art historian Gill Perry points out that in the early 1770s actress Dorothy Jordan was renowned for a similar “mop of brown curls,” a potent sign of both her female sexual identity and her ability as a “natural” performer who easily morphed into roles of masculine gender (148). Perry also reaffirms the well established belief of the female performer with “the loose and lowest class” of society, a factor that in my discussion calls up unsettling association of the privileged aurelian with those of the lower orders. Such parallels of the aurelian to borderline bodies—through gender and class—could point to him as dangerously unstable and perhaps even an infectious entity. Surely such associations were borne out in the naturalist-macaroni’s apparent affinity for cross-dressing with floral patterns, ruffles, and wigs—elements that also registered the ‘feminine’ as historian Michèle Cohen has discussed in \textit{Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century} (1996).

\textsuperscript{107} Janet L. Leonard, “Sexual Selection: Lessons from Hermaphrodite Mating Systems,” \textit{Integrative Comparative Biology} 45, no. 2 (2005): 355 and also in John Blatchford, “Garden Snails: Hermaphrodites Who Spear Their Partners During Courtship,” (August 18, 2007): \url{http://other-invertebrates.suite101.com/article.cfm/garden_snails} The \textit{dolichophallus} (snail) translated means ‘long penis.’ Given my discussion around the aurelian’s wriggling caterpillar curls, the intertwining of bodies posited by the snails also calls to mind what Gill Perry has noted in his article “Staging Gender and “Hairy Signs” (Footnote
as hermaphrodites, snails have both male and female reproductive organs and can be reciprocal partners. The hermaphroditic snails on the naturalist-macaroni’s tunic from neck to knee serve as strategic satirical signs of his body’s sexual ambiguity, a factor confirmed in contemporaneous text where the macaroni is called “a creature dull and droney, Of doubtful sex, and called a Macaroni.”

The macaroni’s ostensible affinity for ambiguous sexuality unsettled the conventional status quo and raised anxieties. In popular accounts, publics wondered would the macaroni “saunter into the City to show [him]self to the Brutes” or “make such large advances to the feminine gender that in a little time ‘twill be difficult to tell to which sex you belong.” The macaroni was thus critiqued for his being “a kind of animal, neither male nor female, a thing of neuter gender.” Indeed, as Robert Hitchcock’s popular play noted, this ambiguity around sexuality was manifest in the aberration of the hermaphrodite:

108 Ibid., but specifically Janet Leonard’s “Sexual Selection: Lessons from Hermaphrodite Mating Systems,” 355-356. Leonard’s own studies and those she cites by others have shown that “aerial mating” by twisting and hanging from a tree is evident in land slugs. Amongst giant banana slugs “apophallation” is practiced, that is, “copulation is occasionally terminated by amputation of the penis of one or both individuals.” In another hermaphroditic group, that of the leech or sea slug, behaviour called “hypodermic insemination” occurs where individuals in “an attempt to ward off damaging the penis during insertion” injects sperm just under the partner’s “skin” (355).

109 Cited in N. Pearson, Society Sketches in the Eighteenth Century (London: Edward Arnold, 1911), 239. Susan Shapiro’s “‘Yon Plumed Dandebrat’: Male ‘Effeminacy’ in English Satire and Criticism” (1988) argues that the “most common associations with male ‘effeminacy’ were uxoriousness, foppery, libertinism, omnisexuality, [and ironically], asexuality, but only very rarely exclusive homosexuality” (401). The possible affinity of the aurelian macaroni to these many sexual types, I argue, underscored his equivocation or exclusion (exception) from the heterosexual norm, and thus embodied a flux and unpredictability that could pose a threat to the traditional male virtues thought to underpin stalwart nationhood.

110 John Cooke, The macaroni jester, and pantheon of wit; containing all that has lately transpired in the regions of politeness, whim and novelty. (London, 1773), 103.


112 From The Treasury: or Impartial Compendium, No. 3259 (London, 1771), 75 as quoted in Susan Shapiro, “‘Yon Plumed Dandebrat’,” 410.
But Macaronis are a sex
Which do philosophers perplex;
Tho’ all the priests of Venus’s rites
Agree they are Hermaphrodites.  

But in the Darly caricature, to what extent is the naturalist-macaroni a catalyst for new cultural consideration? In other words, do such images as Darly’s challenge the viewer, in the words of Foucault, to “find an adjustment” and move beyond “signs and similitudes [that] were wrapped around one another in an endless spiral?”  

Not to be overlooked is that since the early Renaissance hermaphrodites were categorized as monsters, and thus not human. As prodigies of nature, they call up Linnaean terminology of “Paradoxa (Monsters),” and an in-between sexuality was still attempted to be resolved through binary belief: they were either messages of God to indicate His displeasure or abstract signs of corruption within a culture.  

Medical treatises of the day challenged encoded beliefs about hermaphroditism. Linnaeus’s *Systema Naturae* in each of its ten editions consistently acknowledged the frequency of hermaphrodites in the botanic world. And, there was no rule that precluded zoological taxa, particularly *Homo sapiens* (man) from similar incidence. Linnaeus explained succinctly: entities having different sexual organs concurrently “were hermaphrodites...called

---

113 For full publication of this poem see Henry Bate Dudley, *The Vauxhall affray; or, the Macaronis defeated: being a compilation of all the letters, squibs on both sides of that dispute*, 3rd ed. (London: J. Williams, 1773).


116 That the hermaphrodite lacked the ‘essential’ sexual parts that were supposed to be divined through God’s creations also marginalized these individuals as unsanctioned entities.
hybrids (mixed)." The public responded with renewed interest in natural history but also with morbid fascination. In January of 1750, the Gentleman’s Magazine published graphic medical descriptions of the genital configurations of hermaphrodite Michael Anne Drouvert. What also lived large in British memory was the case of Marie/Marin le Marcis, a French hermaphrodite who was tried and convicted on charges of sodomy because she/he assumed the male persona in a relationship with Jean le Febure. Their intention to marry was what triggered public outrage. Similarly, the Royal Society’s Philosophical Transactions focused its scientific gaze upon hermaphrodite Anna Wilde of Ringwood, Hampshire, stating that she/he was only fit ““for the view of the Learned’.” Sexual ambiguities such as those evident in the transgendered mobilities of Britain’s Hannah Snell (1723-1792) and her contemporary, the equally enigmatic Chevalier, or Madame d’Eon, marked sexual transformation as a site of both sensational fodder for public consumption and reconsideration of the nature of humanity.

Thomas Laqueur argues in Making Sex that during the second half of the eighteenth-century models of sexual difference shifted from a “one body” to “two body” model. No

117 Linnaeus, Systema Naturae, 23. Similar exceptions were evident in categories of his Amphibia and Paradoxa (Monsters).


119 Elizabeth Wahl, Invisible Relations: representations of female intimacy in the Age of Enlightenment (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 25-30. Thomas Lacquer’s Making Sex (1990) extends the narrative of Marie/Marin le Marcis, the French hermaphrodite, and explains that her conviction rested upon her not providing the court with visible proof of an external penis. A Dr. Jacques Duval “probed his/her vulva and proved it not a clitoris by rubbing until it ejaculated a thick masculine semen”(137). This intervention saved Marie/Marin from execution, but called into question medical practice and violation of women/men. Marie/Marin eventually was allowed to adopt her new gender but not until age twenty-five. Until then, she was to forgo wearing woman’s clothing or engaging in intercourse with either male or females. Who monitored this and how is not known.

120 As quoted in Ruth Gilbert, Early Modern Hermaphrodites (London: Palgrave, 2002), 145.

longer homologues of one another where female genitalia was seen merely as “inverted” such that she was “a less perfect man,” categorization shifted to gender distinction where outside or inside genitalia was but a “diagnostic sign.”  

122 For hermaphrodites then, as Laqueur argues, what was pivotal is not “what sex they really are, but to which gender the architecture of their bodies most readily lent itself [while] maintaining the category.”  

123 The nature of humanity especially concerning the artificiality of classification challenged conventional thinking. Although society seemed fascinated, certainty was distanced. The porous boundaries that seemed to be surfacing, especially in relation to issues of sex and gender, heightened anxieties as well as provoked new considerations of masculinity. As a discursive space, The Aurelian Macaroni through natural history signaled a shift in society’s consideration of sexual difference or in the notion of Linnaean exceptions.

Various public interests were unclear about these new considerations. Boundaries were often blurred as the notion of ‘exception’ was discussed through a generalized notion of ‘difference’ as anything that deviated from conventional social norms. For example, in many newspapers of 1772, reports concerning homosexual scandals, and in particular the trial of Captain Robert Jones for sodomy (for which he received a Royal pardon), demonstrated the competing debates about sexual categorization.  

124 There was no relief in the knowledge that former references to all types of macaronis, especially the term ‘molly or fop,’ literally meant

122 Ibid., 135.

123 Ibid.

“effeminate sodomite.”\textsuperscript{125} The leap from naturalist macaronis to hermaphrodites was a convenient way to marshal anyone who seemed to defy logic, disrupt conventional order, or threaten the nation’s stability and by association, its image of nationhood. The naturalist-macaroni’s alleged indifference to masculine virtues, family values, and paternal instincts thus conflated with speculation concerning sexual slippage. Such ambivalences and ambiguities also surfaced through natural history’s new knowledge that spoke of unusual affinities or relatedness, and of sexual differences and systems that were artificially constructed. Lacquer has noted that the “weak, womanly male partner” whether “a pathicus, the one being penetrated; cinaedus, the one who engages in unnatural lust; mollis, the passive, effeminate one,” was considered “flawed” not because his actions violated “natural heterosexuality” but rather for their embodiment of “radical, culturally unacceptable reversal of power and prestige.”\textsuperscript{126} Whether aurelian, macaroni, or a subjectivity somewhere in-between, this entity brought into public consciousness unsettling considerations regarding sexuality and its role in sustaining the power and prestige perceived to be keynote to British nationhood. Underpinning these anxieties as well would seem to be ongoing social tensions in relation to who exercised power over whom.

Ambiguity around sexuality embedded within \textit{The Aurelian Macaroni} intensified anxieties with reference to a generation’s capability to fulfill national expectations. Firstly, called into question was the ability to defend British virtues against the foreign insurrection whether that was ongoing friction with continental powers or unrest in the American colonies. Secondly, the naturalist-macaroni’s questionable commitment to fulfilling paternal

\textsuperscript{125} Cohen, \textit{Fashioning Masculinity}, Chapter 2, passim. Also see Norton Rictor, \textit{Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century England} at \url{http://www.infopt.demon.co.uk/macaroni.htm}.

\textsuperscript{126} Laqueur, \textit{Making Sex}, 53.
and patrician duty was troubled by the knowledge that Britain’s landed establishment was caught up in a demographic crisis. This crisis, as historian Linda Colley argues, was characterized by families “not reproducing themselves,” by losing their estates, and ultimately being replaced by a new British landed establishment.\textsuperscript{127} Thirdly, anxiety was heightened by writers of the day who in likening dominant male sexuality to “a wonderful machine” equated vibrant manhood to the momentum behind Britain’s industrial drive and productivity.\textsuperscript{128} If popular accounts were accurate in their assessment of the macaroni as being a ‘thing’ of “weakness, softness, [and] delicacy,”\textsuperscript{129} how could he father a stalwart nation or ensure economic vibrancy and cultural continuities? Uncertainty was also compounded by new medical science that implied ‘weak blood’ adjusted to “changes [that were] inheritable, and thus, in time produce[d] different species.”\textsuperscript{130} In Linnaean terms, this deduction translated as the aforementioned ‘blending’, ‘mixing’ and ‘future improvements’ that were addressed in Linnaeus’s publications,\textsuperscript{131} concepts that through analogy hinted at future slippages that could impact landed gentry’s political grip.

Disciplining social behaviour and difference, no matter what class or gender, underpinned tensions around issues of self and nation. Held in tension were the science or biology of sex and the performance of gender. With that in mind, Darly’s caricature with its mockery of the macaroni-naturalist’s affinity for fashion excess, self-indulgent consumerism,

\textsuperscript{127} Colley, \textit{Britons}, 156. Colley says that the failure to produce male heirs was evident in areas such as Yorkshire where “of the ninety-three baronetcies created between 1611 and 1880, fifty-one were already extinct by the latter date” (157).


\textsuperscript{129} Shapiro, “‘Yon Plumed Dandebrat’,” 400.

\textsuperscript{130} Jacques Barzun, \textit{From Dawn to Decadence: 1500 to the Present} (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), 455. Ominous hints at adaptation and evolution over time had not yet gained full momentum.

\textsuperscript{131} These are the aforementioned \textit{Species Plantarum, Systema Naturae, and Philosophia Botanica}. 
questionable political verve, and ambiguous sexuality would seem to be not only an attempt
to reign in masculine defiance and reaffirm patriotic virtues, but on a broader level manage
and control emerging exceptions, new social shifts, and even public exchanges in Britain’s
transforming cultural terrain.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that Darly’s *The Aurelian Macaroni* signals anxieties around cultural
shifts in Georgian Britain. As a discursive site, the subject of Darly’s caricature, that is the
aurelian and at a broader level natural history itself, exposed tensions especially in relation to
notions of sexual difference and affinities that Linnaean formulations brought to the fore.
Certainly Darly’s caricature opened up the paradox of Linnaean classification, namely, its
prescribed grid seemed stable, but inherent exceptions pointed to a knowledge that was in
flux.

Both the aurelian and the Linnaean formulations for which he stood allowed for the
emergence of new selfhoods, that is, the beginning of more porous definitions of sexuality,
one that merged with gender issues to redefine its socially dominant form—masculinity. On
the threshold was the beginning of a different way of seeing, a change that in Foucault’s
words saw power shifted from the individual to include all “‘living things’ and were “ruled
by processes and biological laws.”132 To this end, *The Aurelian Macaroni* is not just a
caricature that exaggerated the excess of a commodity culture, the insouciance of youth, or
the uncertainty wrought by new knowledge, but is a representation that signaled
transformation in how one related to a changing world. *The Aurelian Macaroni’s* negotiation

---

of natural history’s knowledge and its entangled terrains of selfhood is the threshold for entry into Chapter Two’s further exploration of botanophilia’s role in cultural transformation within Georgian Britain.
CHAPTER TWO

New Dynamics in Natural History’s Domain

Introduction

The transition from fashionable hobby to productive global enterprise helped legitimate botany as a valid scientific pursuit. Botanizing gained popularity too through its conflation with Imperial mandates and the imagined fruition waiting in distant geographies. Linnaeus’s universally applicable classification system lent momentum to global plant pursuit, that is, botany’s outreach. Taxonomic order was seen to have the potential to contain and control the natural and unnatural, especially in these unknown new worlds. However, Linnaean tenets also generated uncertainty, and while exceptions such as affinities (see Chapter One) raised concerns, so did notions of hybridity. As outlined by the ‘father of botany’ in his Systema Naturae, such entities that had shared traits were “mixed.”¹ Given that Linnaeus chose to explain his system by way of language that asserted human sexual relations, ‘mixity’, at the simplest of levels, could translate through analogy into social terrains that in turn provoked new considerations around the dynamics of sexuality and race.

In this chapter I build upon Linnaeus’s formulations concerning similarity and difference to demonstrate how his term hybrid or mixed was at issue in relation to botany’s move into new social, political, and cultural domains. Linnaeus’s mixedness brought forth the idea of a combining of traits, a fusion of diverse elements, or a lack of uniformity. Such variation inherent to mixity teased out the concept of movement, that is, combining, circulating or interchanging in some way. As I will argue, those mobilities and their

affiliation with naturalist practices underpinned public anxieties around botany’s outreach.

Particular to my argument is that eighteenth-century visual culture that ranged from satirical prints to formal portraiture, themselves also mobile and circulating through middle and upper class viewers, captured this moment by allowing for discourses to emerge around botanical outreach and its relation to sexuality, class, and race.

Exposure to wider worlds and its peoples was also impacted by the notion of hybridity that in contemporary terms points to what Homi Bhabha’s terms as ‘in-betweenness’, that is, “where difference is neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in-between.”2 This concept surfaces in images of this chapter that range from caricature to formal portraits displayed in the early 1770s by the Royal Academy’s Thomas Gainsborough and Benjamin West.3 As a caricature of renowned British naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, Matthew Darly’s The Fly-Catching Macaroni published in 1772 (Figure 2.1) takes up notions of the hybrid within the expanding sites of botany’s outward reach. Ostensibly for more polished palettes but still addressing botany’s hybrid trajectory, Benjamin West’s portrait Mr. Joseph Banks, (Figure 2.2) commissioned by Banks’s family and first displayed at the Royal Academy in 1773,4 depicted the well known naturalist Banks amidst his South

---

2 Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 2004), 313.

3 Benjamin West (1738-1820) was American born painter of portraits and historical subjects. Upon moving to Britain in the early 1760s, under the patronage of George III he painted the Royal family and later became a court-sponsored painter. His friendship with British painter Sir Joshua Reynolds led to their being two of the founding members of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768. Succeeding Reynolds, West served as the second President of the Royal Academy from 1792 to 1805 and then 1806-1820. Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) was a British landscape and portrait painter and member of the Royal Academy who also enjoyed the patronage of George III.

4 Andrew Potter, Research Librarian, via email message of November 20, 2009 (London: Royal Academy of Arts Library picturelibrary@royalacademy.org.uk). Mr. Potter indicated the painting, commissioned for Banks’s family, was first shown at the Royal Academy in 1773. It was also shown at the “1862 International Exhibition at South Kensington,” perhaps resonant even ninety years later of Banks’s profound agency within development of global and international botanical enterprises. Banks’s biographer Harold Carter in Sir Joseph Banks 1743-1820 (British Museum Publications, 1988), states that while the provenance of the painting is
Pacific regalia, markers of global claim. While others have examined this portrait in terms of Banks’s “cross-dressing” as an “appropriation of the power of an alien culture,”\(^5\) or as a form of connoisseurship of that culture,\(^6\) in my analysis I suggest the portrait, a staple through which empire was produced, helped mediate botany’s agency in cultural change and negotiate the naturalist’s unsettling mixity as bourgeois professional, scientific explorer, and cultural anthropologist. I also explore anxieties in relation to race and botany’s global enterprises through Matthew Darly’s caricature published in 1772, *A Mungo Macaroni* (Figure 2.3). This image of Julian Soubise, a freed black slave known as a “man about town,”\(^7\) opens up considerations of how Linnaean hybridity and eighteenth-century fears in relation to racial difference unsettled status quos. As a product of the triangular slave trade,\(^8\) Soubise, a former labourer in and now by-product of botanical outreach, unsettled various Britons I argue, with his potential to transform and as a result co-opt as well as possibly

unclear, it was “very likely that West was commissioned by Robert Banks Hodgkinson,” the uncle of Banks (99).


\(^7\) M. Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires: Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Vol. V (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1935), 120. In her commentary on William Austin’s engraving entitled *The Eccentric Duchess of Queensbury fencing with her protégé the Creole Soubise (1773)* (BMC 5120), George identifies Soubise as “one of the most conspicuous fops of the town” (120). Felicity Nussbaum in *The Limits of the Human* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) notes that in some versions of this image an alternate title is given, namely “The Duchess of Queensberry playing at folio with her favorite Lap Dog Mungo after expending near £10,000 to make him a”— (7).

\(^8\) As mentioned in this thesis’s Introduction, triangular trade refers to the commercial practice that saw resources shipped from England or North America to the West Indies where sugar was obtained and used to make rum, for example, and in turn was taken to Africa along with guns and tools to be traded for slaves. These slaves were then carried to the West Indies, North America or England to be sold as plantation labourers.
corrupt notions of Britishness. A representation within the tradition of academic art, Thomas Gainsborough’s 1768 portrait of former slave and writer Ignatius Sancho (Figure 2.4) exposes similar race anxieties concerning the black man’s capacity to penetrate hegemonic worlds. In this chapter, caricature’s earthy appeal is held in tension with portraiture’s more sophisticated eye to negotiate cultural unease around hybridities emerging in Georgian Britain’s cultural terrains.

A Green Slate: New Grounds for Re-visioning the Naturalist-Macaroni

Botany’s reach beyond domestic borders into new botanoscapes gained legitimacy through an association with professional as opposed to amateur interests, with influential patrons and social networks, and with the potential usefulness of botanical resource. Under its banner of national progress and economic recovery, this outreach flourished. The pursuit of vegetal resource in distant geographies was also given momentum through a new form of naturalist, a disciplined yet dynamic scientific explorer. By establishing contact and taking plant resource from global locales to be acclimatized back home, these naturalist-explorers

---

9 This portrait was later engraved and used as the frontispiece to Sancho’s *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African* (1782). Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780) was a well-known freed black Briton (and former slave) who distinguished himself as a gifted composer, writer, and drama critic. He was active in the abolitionist movement and in mentoring other freed slaves, one of whom was Soubise. In *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African* published in 1782, over 150 letters by Sancho chronicle his experience as a slave, his family life, his political thoughts and activities in the arts, as well as contemporaneous events such as the Gordon riots of 1780.

10 As mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, I have created the term ‘botanoscope’ to register the fluidities underpinning botanical sites and global enterprises. Arjun Appadurai in “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” from *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) use the term ‘scape’ in relation to global cultural flow (often from colonial sites). His definition of ‘scape’ can apply to botanical spaces, that is ‘scape’ as the “fluid” nature of terrains, one that is contingent upon “perspectival constructs inflected by… the situatedness” of different sorts of subjectivities—social, political, and economic (328-329).
facilitated Britain’s subsequent claim to those geographies. Driving botany’s engine was Joseph Banks, a Linnaean naturalist whose influence in the development and advancement of natural history in Britain earned him the accolade of “The Liberal Patron of Science, and the Enlightened Cultivator of Natural Knowledge.” His presence as botanical scientist aboard sailings to Newfoundland and Labrador in 1766 led to Banks’s most renowned voyage to the South Pacific locales from 1768 to 1772 as resident botanist aboard Captain James Cook’s Endeavour. This well published voyage of discovery opened up Britain’s imperial geobotanizing and global plant transfers. Indeed, by early 1773 Banks would oversee the Royal Gardens at Kew and manage its botanical specimens. As Britain’s chief engineer of

---

11 John Gascoigne in *Science in the Service of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) calls Banks a “scientific explorer” although not Britain’s first and notes that promoting naturalists as part of voyages of discovery was a means by which governments could leverage funding in the name of “strategic and imperial advantage” (127).


13 Meant to imprint national pride and prowess, The Endeavour’s voyage was sanctioned at the highest political levels through George III’s personal “Promotion of Natural Knowledge” while being serviced by the Royal Navy at the King’s command according to Harold B. Carter in *Sir Joseph Banks 1743-1820* (London: British Museum Publications, 1988). Posited under the mandate of “Discovery of the Southern Continent” and observation of the transit of Venus in June of 1769, the voyage would also accommodate botanical pursuit, and uniquely so through “a collaboration of civilian science under royal patronage…with private enterprise under Admiralty management” (74-75). The ‘Southern Continent’ was a phrase denoting Polynesia, Australia and ultimately New Zealand. Carter recounts that accompanying Banks were naturalists (Sweden’s Daniel Solander and Herman Spöring), botanical illustrators (Sydney Parkinson and Alexander Buchan), servants, horticultural assistants, carpenters, and Banks’s two greyhounds. Of note is that Cook’s Endeavour was not the first European ship to visit Otaheite. John Hawkesworth, literary scholar and writer of *An abridgment of Captain Cook’s first and second voyages* first published in 1773, points out that Captain Wallis of the British ship the Dolphin had landed in Tahiti, then known as Georges Island, and returned to England in May 1768. In addition, Emma Spary in *Utopia’s Garden* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) points out that French Captain Bougainville in the mid-1760s voyaged to Tahiti, known then by the French as ‘La Nouvelle Cythère’ or the New Island of Love. Also see Glyndwr Williams, “The Endeavour Voyage,” *Science and Exploration in the Pacific*, ed. M. Lincoln, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998).

botanical enterprise, namely “one of the country’s foremost naturalists,”15 it is fitting that Banks should be a target of caricature’s social critique, a form that appealed to diverse interests.

In 1772, Matthew Darly’s *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* of the same year (Figure 2.1), a satire of Joseph Banks displayed in the window of Darly’s popular Strand Street print-shop, *The Macaroni Print-Shop* (Figure 1.4), captured public attention.16 In dandified attire—ruffled shirt, hat with a plume, macaroni queue, and sword—this was the “flycatcher” Joseph Banks as has been identified by numerous scholars.17 In the image he wields round, bag-net rackets in an attempt to catch a butterfly, and all the while standing astride two globes labeled as the “Antartick Circle” and the “Artick Circle.”18 Underscoring the precariousness of his stance, an anxious grimace marks his face and animal ears—those of an ass—protrude

plants, “bottles of pickled animals” as well as animal bone specimens such as those of the ‘kangooroo’ (88). As ‘Director’ of the Royal Gardens at Kew and President of the Royal Society (of Science), Banks established worldwide networks, his hand shaping Britain’s global trade initiatives and transfers of botanical product to colonies or back to Kew. As my thesis will discuss, Banks and his connections were instrumental in building Britain’s botanical empire and fulfilling the nation’s and Monarchy’s mandate of progress and ‘improvement’, and especially so in light of his close friendship with the King that historian Ray Desmond also addresses (88-9).


16 Notable for being fashionably in the news, Banks was also the subject of another Matthew Darly print published in 1772, *The Botanic Macaroni* (BMC 5046). Here Banks is shown as scrutinizing a flower specimen but also displaying, as Dorothy George notes in *A Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum* (1935), his “gouty leg,” perhaps attesting to his high living. Biographer Harold Carter informs that this gout kept Banks wheelchair bound in his later years. The only other Darly work on Banks is the engraving published in 1773 (see Footnote 70 of Chapter One)—double cameo portraits of Banks and his mistress, “The Circumnavigator” and “Miss B----N” (BMC 5146).


18 See Michael Salmon’s *The Aurelian Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) for descriptions of various butterfly nets. Salmon interestingly points out that chasing butterflies has a long history with illustrations by Jehan de Grise from the mid-fourteenth century Flemish manuscript *The Romance of Alexander* as the “earliest known depictions of people chasing butterflies” (68).
beneath his tricorn. The text “I rove from Pole to Pole, you ask me why/ I tell you Truth, to catch a—Fly,” would seem to mock Banks as master naturalist of Britain’s global plant pursuit.\textsuperscript{19} In 1772, Banks was in the public eye for his famed journey on the \textit{Endeavour}, and his status as collector, scientific explorer, and confidante of George III had been registered in his new role at Kew Gardens.\textsuperscript{20} The print acknowledges this publicity and at one level attests to Banks’s dedicated spirit of rigorous inquiry and productive work.\textsuperscript{21} As the inimitable botanical explorer of the South Seas, Fellow of the Royal Society, and cultural icon at the tender age of twenty-three, Joseph Banks represented the new face of botanical enterprise.

But caricature’s purpose of mockery and censure would suggest that this landscape was not as harmonious as it first might seem. Perhaps calling up John Locke’s notion of the \textit{tabula rasa} from his \textit{An Essay Concerning Human Understanding} of 1690, the Banksian era posited a clean slate but an unknown one, and as such knowledge, imagination, and botany’s reach were about to be written upon new lands that would require deft negotiation of

\textsuperscript{19} Stephens, \textit{Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum}, 782. Stephens makes clear that this is indeed Banks after he and his colleague and friend, naturalist Daniel Solander returned firstly from the South Pacific (Antarick Circle) in June of 1772 and then from their subsequent short journey to the northwest coast of Scotland and Iceland (Artick Circle) in November of 1772. Richard Drayton in \textit{Nature’s Government} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) indicates that Banks contributed £10,000 of his own money to the \textit{Endeavour}’s expedition (66).


\textsuperscript{21} The eminent French naturalist Georges Cuvier in his “Historical Eloge of the late Sir Joseph Banks, Baronet, President of the Royal Society,” read to the Royal Academy of France on April 2, 1821 but also published in \textit{The Edinburgh New Philosophical Journal}, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: October-December, 1827), spoke eloquently and admiringly of Banks’s momentous contribution to science, his tireless “energy,” and his being at the vanguard of botanical advances (1-21). On another note, although Banks was a man of some financial means having inherited land from his ‘squire’ father, he was not of the surfeit, aristocratic set. Ray Desmond notes in \textit{Kew: The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens} that when Banks entered the college of Christ Church at Oxford he did so as a “gentleman-commoner” (85). Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in \textit{Men and Women of the English middle class, 1780-1850} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) argue that “the single greatest distinction between the aristocracy and the middle class was the imperative for members of the latter to actively seek an income rather than expect to live from rents and emoluments of office while spending their time in honour-enhancing activities such as politics, hunting or social appearances” (20). Banks liked the physical work of natural history and that separated him from elite types.
challenges ranging from national skepticism to other cultures and their influences. These tensions within botany’s expansion are positioned, I suggest, through the ambivalences embedded within the caricature’s unmarked backdrop.

Firstly, in The Fly-Catching Macaroni while the fly-catcher’s stance astride two globes might be masterful to some, to others the pose could translate to ‘out of balance’—that is, connoting a critique of the eighteenth century’s insatiable appetite for celebrity and addiction to passing fads. Certainly state funding given to the Endeavour is here trivialized as serving only to swat or catch ‘flies’.22 Perhaps this explorer’s straddling of two globes could remind viewers of Banks’s reputed sexual conquests in Otaheite, of discomfort over monies wasted on planet gazing, and of looking to plants as salvation for Britain’s crumbling economy.23 Similarly called up could also have been allusions to polarized cultures, that is, troubling differences between British codes and practices in ‘primitive’ new worlds. As one example that was reported in London papers, Banks’s journal of January 16, 1770 told of encounters in New Zealand where “the Indians have the custom of eating their enemies,” proof of which was offered to Banks by way of human bones “gnawed but not intirely pickd off.”24 Or perhaps at another level as noted by historian Noah Heringman, Darly’s The Fly-Catching Macaroni could parallel other representations such as Thomas Burnett’s

22 For funding of Endeavour see Harold Carter, Sir Joseph Banks 1743-1820 (London: British Museum, 1988), 58-65. On another note, ‘flies’ was an insider term for butterfly. However, while that might be the reference here, butterfly collecting was considered by many to be an idle pursuit. (See Chapter One of this thesis.)

23 Gascoigne, Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment, 9. According to Gascoigne, the Navy Board was skeptical of civilian involvement in the voyages of discovery and complaints were forward to the First Lord of the Admiralty of Banks’s attitude of self-entitlement, and that every effort should be made to accommodate him (9).

frontispiece to his geologic treatise *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* of 1681 (Figure 2.5), that in turn could point to deeper social slippages. In Burnett’s frontispiece, Christ stands at the apex of two globes, reaching outward, His body is turned in forward momentum—a position that seems evident in Darly’s caricature where Banks similarly twists with arms raised in open invitation or sweeping benediction. Is society abandoning religious belief to be indoctrinated by botany’s celebrity and its promised redemption from economic woes? Was the caricature pointing to awareness of the on-going tension between science and religion that saw new taxonomies challenge established beliefs at a time when how worlds evolved was still at the apex of public consideration?

Secondly, the tabula rasa in this caricature marks out another shift, namely, that botanical collecting was slowly shifting from the fanciful pastime of the idle rich to that of serious entrepreneurs and their individual efforts. That cultural repositioning was in part mobilized by Banks and his rejection of aristocratic travel tours to France and Italy: “‘Every blockhead does that; my Grand Tour shall be one round the whole globe.’” In the spirit of Linnaean apostles who traveled the world in pursuit of plants and in Banks’s own description of Linnaeus as “that God of my adoration,” Banks balanced botanical discovery with the

---

25 The comparison was drawn to my attention through Noah Heringman’s article, “‘Peter Pindar,’ Joseph Banks, and the Case Against Natural History”, *Wordsworth Circle* 35:1 (Winter, 2004): 21-30. In this short article, Heringman suggests that the “stance invites comparison with Burnet’s frontispiece,” but does no comparison himself. Fundamentally, Burnet’s *Sacred Theory of the Earth* explains the Earth’s development with reference to Noah’s flood. Burnet was something of a radical in that he proposed a theory that saw “the flood” as waters that were buried deep beneath the earth’s crust, an explanation that didn’t align with religious belief. He also showed the earth’s development in ‘circles’ of the earth, perhaps an allusion to his belief in the cyclical nature of time (that contradicts Biblical time) and that as quoted by Burnet in Stephen Gould’s *Time’s Arrow, Time’s Cycle* (London: Harvard University Press, 1987). “If space is infinite, we may be at any point in space. If time is infinite, we may be at any point in time” (49). These revolutionary formulations that turned worlds upside down could be a parallel to Joseph Banks’s radical new approach to unveiling new worlds through botanical outreach.


27 Joseph Banks to Jean Florimond Boudon de Saint-Amans (alias Amand), February 27, 1792 in Neil
economic utility of various resources. Here, the unmarked backdrop accentuated what we come to know: Joseph Banks made botanical claims in the untapped geographies of the South Seas, namely Otaheite (Tahiti), Australia, and New Zealand through his travels with Captain James Cook’s *Endeavour* (1768-1771). As key naturalist, Banks became pivotal to the movement of natural history’s resources, the negotiation of differences in other cultures, the ambivalences of transnational agendas, and shifting national mandates.

Significantly then, this “fly-catching” macaroni demonstrates a kind of hybridity or mixity that lent itself to actively engaging in a web of inter-relationships. Put another way, Banks came to master global outreach by way of a Linnaean tenet found in *Philosophica Botanica* of 1751 that saw “All the taxa show relationships on all sides, like the countries on a map of the world.” Negotiating botany’s global grid seemed Banks’s forte. Yet if so, should “a fly-catching macaroni” be the mediator of a new global interface that saw unexplored regions waiting to be stamped with Britain’s imprint? To be remembered is that ventures abroad, such as the recent and relentless Seven Years War (1755-1763), may have resulted in Britain’s gain of new territory but at a monumental human and financial cost.

---

28 Disciplined scientific inquiry marked out the naturalist’s purpose aboard, as evidenced in the technologies and books carried in the *Endeavour’s Library of Natural History*: Linnaeus’s *Species Plantarum, Systema Naturae*, and *Regnum Animale* and Buffon’s *Histoire Naturelle*.

29 Spary, *Utopia’s Garden*, 76.


31 Nancy Koehn in *The Power of Commerce* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994) indicates that Britain spent £160 million in simultaneous maritime and continental strategies, a figure that was double of what Britain’s gross national product was in 1760, and in twentieth century terms would be analogous to the United States, for example, having a $10 trillion cost for fighting a war (5). John Brewer notes in *The Sinews of Power* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989) that the huge cost of the Seven Years War was felt through rising taxes and
Banks’s mediation of the two globes thus not only notes and plays with the renowned naturalist’s control of new botanical ventures but depicts a pivotal moment wherein diverse worlds—national and global, scientific and aesthetic, mechanical, and material—united to manage changes mobilized by botany’s outreach. This skillful mediation of the old with the new appears to be subtly referenced in *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* through the carving of Minerva’s owl on the hilt of Bank’s sword. The owl, a well-known sign of Minerva the Roman goddess of wisdom, sits atop the sword as if guardian of the naturalist and representative of the learning embedded within botany’s new enterprises. Associations with Minerva and the stability of classical traditions could go far in easing public anxiety around natural history’s associated mobilities such as penetrating paradise, defiling Edenic worlds, rupturing ‘natural’ order, and posing challenges to a fixed Chain of Being. In Darly’s *The Fly-Catching Macaroni*, the naturalist as a dynamic mediator of the old and new, is also shown within a precarious state, potentially unbalanced as global outreach is reduced to swatting at ‘flies’. Within this frame, the naturalist emerges then as a ‘mixed’ or hybrid subjectivity, that is, one who is not fixed in one world or the other but somewhere in between.

---

prices, particularly for example, “a twenty-six per cent increase in the wholesale price of a barrel of beer” (158), a cost that would impact a cross-section of Britons.

Linnaean taxonomies and practitioners followed what is referred to today as a “nested hierarchy,” that is, at the simplest of levels, group relationships (species, genera, orders, classes and kingdoms) that were nested one within the other, each level of equal rank, “none was higher than any other,” as noted by Jonathan Marks, *Human Biodiversity: Genes, Race, and History* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), 7. This view contravened conventional chains of being that ranged from the highest orders (social, political, economic, or religious) at the top down to the lowest orders at the bottom. Through social analogy, such potential upturning of encoded class hierarchies could raise anxieties for publics who wanted the certainty of maintaining their status quo.
Ordering New Terrains

The new terrains were also ambivalent. Distant geographies intrigued the British for their apparent unsullied abundance, curious cultural practices, and as potential for botanical resource and enterprises. Conversely however, these sites with their seemingly transgressive rituals or new mixities posed a risk to the imperial nation. In The Fly-Catching Macaroni, the butterfly for which Banks reaches could metaphorically reference the beginning of a pivotal cultural shift that saw Britain’s commitment to harvesting global resource. Banks recounted in his journal and later retold to those in London salons of how, in May of 1770 in Otahiete, he came upon “4 acres crowded with them [butterflies]: the eye could not be turnd in any direction without seeing millions…a velvet black to blue…with many brimstone colourd spots.” Such a proliferation signaled broader resource potentials within distant locales, for example Otahiete’s breadfruit, the hemp of New Zealand, or trade exchanges emerging from any of the “3000 plants, 110 new genera and 1300 new species collected” during the Endeavour’s voyage. As historian John Gascoigne has established, Banks viewed imperial botanical sites as “emporium[s] of raw materials” that would benefit “national self-sufficiency and autonomy.” Here, it would seem, Banks as part virtuosi botanist and part bourgeois merchant tapped into Linnaeus’s notion of oeconomia, that is, the

33 Banks, The Endeavour Journal, Vol. 2, 1-2. The beautiful and prolific butterflies speak to Otaheite’s exotic allure—its geographic body feminized and penetrated for botanical riches. The diaries of Lady Mary Coke’s (1727-1811), an eighteenth-century writer and socially connected aristocrat, reference the attendance of Banks and Solander at fashionable London salons upon their return from the Endeavour, and how they narrated stories such as these of their travels.


35 Gascoigne, Science in the Service of Empire, 106.
utility of plants for human use.\(^{36}\) But such impressive botanizing, as I will argue, was not without a darker underbelly, namely, uncertainties around marshalling new mobilities and knowledge in distant and domestic terrains, as well as controlling emerging mixities that seemed to contest British norms.

As a ‘fly-catcher’, a hybrid entity not quite in new worlds or old, Banks by 1772 would seem to have effected a workable middle ground. He negotiated interchanges at the highest of levels, specifically with King George III, yet navigated successful exchanges with other naturalists, botanical illustrators, and horticulturists. Nonetheless, such successes were not without criticism. Contemporaneous critic Peter Pindar condemned Banks’s botanizing as opportunistic. In one of his satirical poems “Sir Joseph Banks and the Emperor of Morocco” Pindar attacks the naturalist’s celebrity as ludicrous, suggesting that praises of Banks are sung only by toadies and “Insectmongers.”\(^ {37}\) Pindar mocks Banks’s botanical intentions and puns upon the pursuit of a Monarch as perhaps this naturalist’s effort to secure Monarchical patronage: “with tears” Banks “cry’d…To unknown fields behold the Monarch fly!/ Zounds!


\(^{37}\) Peter Pindar, “Sir Joseph Banks and the Emperor of Morocco,” in *The Works of Peter Pindar*, Vol. 2 (London: Reprinted for J. Walker, 1794), 511. Noah Heringman in “‘Peter Pindar,’ Joseph Banks, and the Case Against Natural History’,” *Wordsworth Circle* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2004) notes that Peter Pindar (John Wolcot) between 1772 and 1797 published at least fifteen lampoons of Joseph Banks (22). According to Edward Smith in *The Life of Sir Joseph Banks* (1911), Peter Pindar (1738-1819), was a pen name for John Wolcot, M.D., an unsuccessful London physician who made his mark by writing entertaining satires upon various subjects. This particular poem appeared formally in a folio published in 1788 but was thought to be in circulation well before that date. “Sir Joseph Banks and the Emperor of Morocco” in some publications is accompanied by an engraving which is unsigned and without a caption. The image evokes Darly’s *Fly-Catching Macaroni* in that Banks similarly holds butterfly bat-rackets in his hands while he reaches and seemingly flails at a butterfly just beyond his reach. In this engraving however, Banks appears to be in a small botanic garden upon whose plants and attending gardener he tromps in his rabid pursuit. An image can be seen through a link at International League of Antiquarian Booksellers: [http://www.ilab.org/db/book17_708_292.html](http://www.ilab.org/db/book17_708_292.html).
Not to catch him, what an ass was I!” Pindar maintains his critique of the naturalist in another satire entitled “Advice to the Future Laureat” where he advises young elites in search of ‘success’ to “Go to the fields, and gain a nation’s Thanks/Catch grasshoppers and butterflies for Banks.” Notably, Banksian biographer Edward Smith argues that Pindar’s metaphorical allusions to ‘the Monarch’ and ‘a Nation’s thanks’ refers to George III’s patronage. Perhaps also unsettling to a nation still struggling under taxation from war involvement was the puzzling generosity of the notoriously thrifty George III and his eagerness to enable financing for ‘scientific’ venture like that of the _Endeavour_’s voyage. That drive toward botanical discovery and enterprise was seen to underpin George III’s appointment in 1773 of Banks as Director and Chief Supervisor of the Royal Gardens at Kew. Pindar’s apparent mockery and skepticism over Banks’s meteoric rise to prominence would seem to echo public speculations concerning this “de facto director’s” opportune friendship and subsequent business dealings with the King. Clearly, new world botanizing

---


39 _Ibid._, “Advice to the Future Laureat,” 452.

40 Smith, _The Life of Sir Joseph Banks_, 178. Pindar’s use of the phrase “go to the fields” is not transparent. For example, literary historian Noah Heringman in “‘Peter Pindar,’ Joseph Banks, and the Case Against Natural History,” argues that for Wolcot (Pindar), Banks’s specimen-hunting “mark[ed] him as a country squire masquerading as a philosopher,” and that Pindar’s lampoons in general signal objection to Banks’s “amateurism” and his “influence” with the King (25-26).

41 According to Edward Smith in _The Life of Sir Joseph Banks_, Banks “conceived the notion of making Kew the depository of every known plant” useful to people of Europe and under his guidance Kew became known as the “Mecca of Botanists” (94-95). Also see Richard Drayton’s _Nature’s Government_ (2000), Ray Desmond’s _Kew: The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens_ (1995), and John Gascoigne’s _Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment_ (1994). As cited in historian Richard Holmes’s _The Age of Wonder_ (2009) Banks established more than 50,000 trees and shrubs at Kew many of which were ‘naturalized’, for example, monkey-puzzle trees, magnolias, and sequoia evergreens (56).

42 In _Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment_ (1994) historian John Gascoigne calls Banks the “de facto Director” (1). Ray Desmond in _Kew_ (1995) points out that Banks was able to use “British merchants in Lisbon to organize the smuggling of Merino sheep into Portugal” and from there bring to Britain for the King (90). This procedure was taken because according to Richard Drayton in _Nature’s Government_ (2000) King George “imported merino sheep, the object of a Spanish royal monopoly, through Banks’s secret help” (87).
did not elide old world politicking and patronage. At a time when war, political rupture, and urban decay seemed relentless, anxious viewers might side with both Darly as caricaturist and Pindar as literary satirist in seeing the madness in Royal sponsorship of fly-catching missions and in patronage of a naturalist with rather vacuous scientific qualifications.

Banks’s hybrid character was further highlighted through other details within *The Fly-Catching Macaroni*. His discreet queue aligned him with elite sensibilities—judges, aristocrats, and kings wore wigs. Edward Beetham noted in his contemporaneous *Moral Lectures on Heads* that without a wig, the head was a “simple, naked, unembellished appearance,” and the man was thus an object of ridicule and distaste. Yet, for this flycatcher, the wig held contradictions. On one hand, it was associated with polite taste, but conversely the wig incited anxiety as a known carrier of disease such as infestations of lice, blight from the potato powder used on it, or smallpox. These associations, notes art historian Marcia Pointon, were seen to be a result of wigs being made from the hair of society’s moral ‘dirt’ such as prostitutes, rural girls, or dead bodies. Ironically, in an effort to separate oneself from the lower ranks and appear as elite patriarchs, the male wig-wearer cross-dressed with hair of socially inferior females, a practice that emasculated them through the very economies of that lower class. Such ambivalences spoke of masculinity as a site of ambiguity and mixity.

High art representations of imperial enterprise offered more assured depictions of the naturalist. In the portrait of *Mr. Joseph Banks* (Figure 2.2) displayed in 1773 at the British

---


Royal Academy, Benjamin West, history and portrait painter, represented that transitional moment when botany moved into the territory of valued enterprise and largely so at the hands of Banks as a productive man of science. West’s portrait, as numerous commentators have noted, depicted Banks as a young naturalist-explorer surrounded by the markers of his South Pacific discovery and claim. On the surface, the portrait seems to securely contain new worlds within British ideals through reference to Banks’s military attire, and the staples of elite portraiture—neoclassical pillars and drapery that provide the backdrop for his figure. Safely framed by these British traditions, Banks is wearing and pointing to his cloak made of

47 As confirmed by Andrew Potter, Research Librarian at The Royal Academy of Arts, 2009. See Footnote 4 of Chapter Two of this thesis.

48 Joanna Woodall in Portraiture: Facing the Subject (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997) argues that portraiture’s reference to classical or “antique authority” contributed to depicting “progressive intellectual endeavour” and that portraits of the individual often demonstrated “notions of exemplary virtue” (4, 15). Jeremy Black in Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave, 2008) argues that “social stability” was linked with “portraiture” by “emphasizing the power and immutability of the elite leadership of society” (163).

49 Aspects of West’s portrait as various registers of Joseph Banks’s global travels have been discussed in Patricia Fara, “Images of a Man of Science,” History Today 48 (October 1998); Gillian Russell’s “Fashionable Sociability and the Pacific,” A New Imperial History, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Harriet Guest, “Curiously Marked,” Painting and the Politics of Culture, ed. John Barrell, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and, Jeremy Coote and Sophie Forgan in Curiosities from the Endeavour, Exhibition at Captain Cook Memorial Museum Whitby, 2004. My exploration follows a different path to those historians mentioned above. I point to Banks’s interest in the “technologies” of the South Pacific cultures as markers of that ‘exotic’ culture’s remarkable sophistication in terms of their innovative strategies and use of tools by which to manufacture products out of botanical resource. Coote and Forgan’s article does mention “tools” in general, but does not address specifics other than noting that “bamboo nose flutes and a wooden-handled bone chisels” are not apparent in this portrait of Joseph Banks but were characteristic of South Pacific culture. Also see Neil Chambers, ed., The Letters of Sir Joseph Banks: a selection, 1768-1820 (London: Imperial College Press, 2000).

50 Jeremy Black in The British and the Grand Tour (London: Dover, N.H.: Croom Helm, 1985) posits that many grand tourists had “their portraits painted, often in elevating poses in classical surroundings,” a representation that was sent home as marker of their exposure to a classical education abroad (214). Patricia Fara in “Benjamin West’s portrait of Joseph Banks,” Endeavour 24, no. 1 (March 2000) has subsequently noted that “Grand Tourists often brought home portraits as souvenirs of those returning from their Grand Tour showing them in heroic poses against classical ruins” (1). Banks is similarly positioned as such in this portrait of him as an “imperial scientific explorer”(1).
flax, a resource that Banks was instrumental in having transplanted to Britain from New Zealand. Notably, at his feet is a book opened to an illustration of *Phormium tenax*, or New Zealand flax. Perhaps his pointing gesture purposefully aligns Banks with those poses and noble ideals embedded within the classical tradition while conversely negotiating the dynamics that validated the naturalist’s botanical explorations. As hybrid here, Banks bridges old and new worlds—aesthetic and terrestrial. Possession, however, was not just vegetal but cultural. In West’s portrait, Banks stands and slightly bows to the viewer as if presenting both flax cape and the variety of objects with which he is surrounded to his British patrons and the King. These objects speak of distant and exotic customs and the remarkable industry and technologies to be subsumed and transformed. West has depicted the Tahitian adze, a Maori long club (*taiaha*), a paddle, baskets, ceremonial white dog-hair neck ornament, a Maori amulet (*hei tiki*), and a bark cloth beater. These objects point to

51 As noted in a description of portrait at British Museum website http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search.


53 Banksian biographer, historian Harold Carter in *Sir Joseph Banks* (1988) notes that in this portrait at Banks’s feet is an open folio that shows the drawing of the *planta utilissima*, that is, the New Zealand flax plant (99). A. R. Ferguson also identifies the image as New Zealand flax in “Sir Joseph Banks and the Transfer of Crop Plants,” *New Zealand Journal* 11, no. 2 (2008): 9.


55 See Footnote 49 of Chapter Two of this thesis. As mentioned, my exploration of Banks’s hybridity here is through a perspective that recognizes his ability to shed beliefs about Britain’s assumed technological superiority and see the intuitive, co-operative, and productive capabilities of the Otahitians. In his journal of the *Endeavour* voyage edited by J. C. Beaglehole, in June of 1769 Banks says that their technological ability “exceeds belief” and is similar to “the best workman in Europe” (Vol. 1, 303-304). These comments are in particular reference to Otahitian funeral monuments, the *marai* which were pyramid-like structures that were “118 by 110 paces,” the cornerstone of which was “4 feet 7 inches by 2 feet 4 inches” (Vol. 1, 303). The *marai*’s stone steps were inlaid with coral. With no “quarry” within distance, Banks marveled that the Otahitians found and “could raise so large a structure without the assistance of iron tools to shape their stones or mortar to join them” (Vol. 1, 304). These monuments also had elaborate altars upon which offerings, namely dogs, pigs, fruits, and flowers were made to their gods.
indigenous know-how: tool making, house construction, transportation and navigation, religious rituals, aesthetic sensibilities in carving skill and creating ornamentation for costumes, and converting plants into useable cloth for clothes or containers. Such innovation seemed to elude some British viewers who continued to see Otaheitians as “noble savages” or infantilized the “natives” as quaint curiosities. These perspectives would seem to reflect what Michael Adas has emphasized in *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (1989), that in the eighteenth century images of a culture’s technology were used to assert western superiority at a time of imperial expansion. West’s portrait seemingly bespoke empire propaganda by positing Banks, the naturalist, as taxonomizing the world, marketing bio-power, mastering colonial industry, and subsuming indigenous knowledge. Here, the center of botanical enterprise was not an effete macaroni, but a multivalent hybrid, that is, a new kind of naturalist with an interdisciplinary mix—part geographic surveyor, botanical prospector, political negotiator, network administrator, and cultural ethnographer.

56 Such beliefs may have been in part prompted by the writings of eminent eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau who not only published an explanation of the Linnaean systems, *Letters on the Elements of Botany* (written in the early 1770s but translated by naturalist Thomas Martyn in 1787) but is credited for being instrumental in the circulation of the phrase “noble savage,” a concept of the unsullied ‘natural’ man in such sites as the Caribbean islands. In an ambivalent way, however, there may be here in this image a subtle allusion that calls up the kind of “transmutations” that Rousseau spoke of in his *Second Discourse* of 1755 as quoted in Nicholas Dent’s *Rousseau* (New York: Routledge, 2005) where in explaining the notion of ‘noble savage’ Rousseau challenges the reader to consider “how shall man hope to see himself as nature made him across all the changes which the succession of place and time must have produced in his original constitution” (58-59). Roxann Wheeler in *The Complexion of Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000) argues that “the primary form that eighteenth-century racism took was the conviction that people in remote parts of Europe and Asia, most of all Africa, all of American and the Pacific were inferior because they had not become commercial people as quickly or as easily as Europeans” (301). In the eighteenth-century print culture, Africans were cast generically as the ‘noble savage’ as evident in Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*, a narrative that was staged in London and played popularly to audiences well into the 1760s.


Although wrapped in registers of ‘exotic’ difference, for informed viewers the West portrait might also call to mind new tenets around humankind’s productivity, in particular, Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* of 1759 that suggested those whose interest might seem to be motivated by “selfish interest” (one of many types of “different passions”) were indeed “led by an invisible hand” through which these individuals would share with “the poor the produce of all their improvements.”

West’s portrait opened up these productive new understandings around botany, that is to say, the shift of its terrain from that of virtuosi hobby to rigorous scientific inquiry and new ‘science’s’ elevation to productive enterprise that in turn anticipated “improvements” which would bring national fruition.

But as this chapter has argued, mixities unsettled. For example, while flax was much needed to refurbish canvas sails of crippled British war ships, the indigenous dress, tools, and ephemera in West’s portrait suggested sophisticated indigenous technologies that conflicted with Britain’s assumed superiority over remote locales. In addition, exposure to exotic worlds could also posit dangerous temptation and moral mixity. For example, in June of 1773, the same year that West’s portrait was exhibited, *The London Magazine* featured an article on the inhabitants of Otaheite and reported that during the gifting of plants and cloth to Banks, an Otaheitian woman took up “her garments all round her to the waist…with an air of perfect innocence and simplicity.” The article also detailed the Polynesian “pleasures of the Arreoy”, that is, a tribal custom where “every woman is common to every man” and

---


61 See Footnote 55 of this chapter for Banks’s acknowledgement of Otaheitian technological expertise.

where unwanted offspring at birth are “murdered.” Exposing such cultural difference to the ship’s crew or even publics in England raised fears that this seemingly moral mixity might co-opt and corrupt stalwart British values. Proof of this potential decay emerged already at home through an increase of “erotic” publications whose sexual analogies materialized through botanical, nautical, and utopian landscapes, as well as through moral erosions in marriages to which George III responded with his Royal Marriages Act (1772), or ultimately by way of radical, educated female voices—bluestockings—who allegedly unsexed themselves through demands for new freedoms and mobilities. West’s portrait of Mr. Joseph Banks, where the naturalist ‘brings home’ Otaheitian objects and bows deferentially to patron and viewing public, safely contains such associations.

63 Ibid.

64 Carolus Linnaeus, Reflections on the study of nature; and a Dissertation of the Sexes of Plants, trans. J. E. Smith (Dublin: L. White, 1786), 55-56. Linnaeus suggested that plant hybridity was the result “a genus [or type] was nothing else than a number of plants sprung from the same mother by different fathers,” what some of society saw as the promiscuous sexual mixing of males and females. Importantly he goes on to question whether these “species are the offspring of time,” thus planting the idea of development of a species over time, a concept that had shifted from his very early formulations that had been couched in the notion of ‘fixity’ by God. Linnaeus stresses the point of hybrid potential by saying that in terms of inheritance, the “mule offspring is the exact image of its mother in its medullary substance, internal nature, or fructification, but resembles its father in leaves” (54-55). Positing the female as determinant of new generations was unsettling to those who did not want to consider alternatives to a male hegemonic system.


66 Elizabeth Montague founded the Blue Stockings Society midcentury in response to elite women and their advocacy for education, exposure to learned texts, political awareness and expanded knowledge, such as botany. Later in the century such influential voices as Mary Wollstonecraft in A Vindication of Rights of Woman (London: J. Johnson, 1792) through botanical analogy encouraged women to free themselves from society’s gendered conventions. Also see Nicole Pohl and B. Schellenberg, eds., Reconsidering the Bluestockings (San Marino: Huntington Library, 2003).
Botany Helps Order New Regimes

Theorist of science Bruno Latour has noted that “how to be familiar with things, people and events which are distant,” is to make them “mobile, stable, and combinable.”67

Certainly Banks demystified botany’s enterprise by making Captain Cook’s Endeavour, during their voyage of discovery from 1768 to 1771, into a floating laboratory, a site that provided a stable and secure place to document, preserve, and store plant specimens, that is, to amass herbariums.68 The ship had been well equipped with botanical reference books, diaries, and illustrations for ready reference to established knowledge and methods that could help familiarize naturalist with ways to process foreign plants or environments.69 Routines underpinning the work of classifying modeled order and control of new knowledge. In a world where a profusion of new botanicals or foreign geographies could provoke uncertainty, botany’s systematics provided a stabilizing paradigm.

Innovative use of botanical resource moved in tandem with Linnaean oeconomia, that is, the “science of natural products and their use for humans.”70 This is evident when Banks


68 To preserve shape, form and color of the plants that are collected in the field, the specimens (or seeds) are mounted between sheets of paper and pressed and dried. The specimens are labeled according to date, physical attributes, location found, and habitat (earth quality, altitude, humidity). The sheets of specimens are then filed into a protective case to minimize deterioration. David Philip Miller’s “Joseph Banks, empire, and “centers of calculation” in late Hanoverian London,” from Visions of Empire (1996) explores how Joseph Banks managed to make himself a “center of calculation” through his widespread involvement in diverse botanical activities.


encouraged lemon juice as a solution to the Endeavour’s scurvy problem. He described in his journals how he “flew to the lemon juice” as a means “to prevent the scurvy,” a tactic that cured “swelld gums and some pimples inside my [Banks’s] mouth.”71 As a result, lemons, cabbage for sauerkraut, and wort juice were deemed as vital to health and survival of naval crews.72 Good health, after all, ensured a productive crew and continued transport of goods for the nation’s coffers. As historian David Mackay has established, since naval prowess was seen to directly correlate with Britain’s naval and military prowess and thus the nation’s political stability, the naturalist’s solution to scurvy received high praise by way of the Admiralty’s adoption of this dietary regime for all its future voyages.73 A regulated ship was a healthy ship, and as a microcosm for Britain itself, capable leadership was key to establishing social harmony.74

Natural history’s discipline and curatives, therefore, seemed to promise some stability when moving from one world geography to another. Yet, worries persisted in relation to controlling pollutions such as disease, foreign penetrations, or cultural slippages thought to underly social decay. For example, from London coffeehouses to private salons, one public fear was the exposure to what Banks’s observed in Otaheite as “the dreadfull Contagion–

71 Banks, The Endeavour Journal of Joseph Banks 1768-1771, Vol.1, 251. While in Brazil in December of 1768, Banks writes extensively about the ‘Limes, Sweet Lemons, citrons, Plantanes, Mangos, Mamme apples, and casshou’, all of which are prolific.


73 David Mackay, In the Wake of Cook: Exploration, Science, and Empire, 1780-1801 (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 40-44.

74 Christopher Lawrence in “Disciplining Disease” from Visions of Empire, eds. David Miller and Peter Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) states that “small-scale means of ordering the world were the norm in many eighteenth-century contexts: estates, ships, and small manufactories.” As such, he goes on to say that “the paternalistic world of Cook’s ships was seen as a model of how order and health should be maintained” not just on board, “but in society at large” (82).
venereal disease.” Underpinning such worries was an implied failure of leadership, in general, to maintain control over its citizens. These fears around sexual temptation and moral slippages surfaced during Banks’s *Endeavour’s* voyage.

According to Banks, Tahitians allegedly had a fondness for iron “nails above every other thing,” and as a result the *Endeavour* crew solicited sexual favours from native women in trade for nails. Ultimately, with some ship parts actually collapsing because of pilfered nails, sanctions were put in place: taking “spike nails was punished with two dozen lashes.” Preserving moral order, at least on the outside, was key to civil order. Noteworthy, however, was that the British seemed only concerned for their own welfare, health, or commodities and not for what was being done to the Tahitians. Here, *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* could seem to point to a rather disturbing aspect of outreach, namely, the mutability of moral virtue in the pursuit of commodity desire. Whether lemons or libertine sex, an unsettling acquiescence to foreign influence was implied as well as the feared impact of prescription to it. As social anthropologist Mary Douglas has noted elsewhere, “the processes of ingestion portray political absorption,” and here, the explorer’s susceptibility to disease or moral temptation stood as signs of potential disorder and possible betrayal of British ideals. Botany had the potential to quell economic and social ills back home, but concurrently securing those resources posed temptations that contradicted the perceived stability of British values.

---


76 John Hawkesworth, *An abridgment of Captain Cook’s first and second voyages*, 7th ed. (London: G. Kearsley, 1793), 207. In his *An account of the voyages undertaken by the order of His present Majesty for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere*, 2nd ed. (1773), Hawkesworth reported that on Captain Wallis’s 1766 voyage of the *Dolphin* “Chastity [was] not considered a virtue…and the size of the nail that was demanded for the enjoyment of the lady, was always in proportion to her charms.”


While Banks seemed himself a mixed strain who could negotiate the ambivalent worlds of scientific discovery and exotic fruition or of economic botany and anthropological study, for publics at home what really intrigued were tales from the peripheries that spoke of moral mixity and hinted at sexual adventure. Sexuality, natural history, and Joseph Banks fueled public interest following his return from the *Endeavour* voyage in 1772.

Especially in regard to Otaheite, Banks regaled publics with accounts of what seemed morally ambiguous practices. He spoke of “stripping off my European clothes” to merely a “small cloth round the waist” and being unashamed of his “nakedness” for the two Otaheitian women with him “were no more covered” than he.\(^{79}\) Whether imagined as rakish adventure or moral decay, these accounts fueled public discourse around sexuality and moral virtue in relation to botany’s outreach. Exotic practices, however, continued to intrigue as well as disturb.\(^{80}\) A case in point reported by John Hawkesworth’s account in the early 1770s of *Captain Cook’s First and Second Voyages* that was based upon Banks’ journal, referred to a kind of free love, that is, the aforementioned ‘arreoy’ of Otaheite.\(^{81}\) Bank’s journal stated that the practice embraced “free liberty in love, without a possibility of being troubled or disturb’d by its consequences.”\(^{82}\) In other words, any progeny would be dispensed with, or as Banks


\(^{80}\) According to contemporary historian Richard Holmes in *The Age of Wonder* (2009), numerous popular accounts of Banks appeared in the *Westminster Journal and Gentleman’s Magazine* that lionized his activities along with those of fellow naturalist, the Swede Daniel Solander. In addition, Dr. John Hawkesworth’s 1773 *Account of the Voyages Undertaken to the Southern Hemisphere* (1773) capitalized upon Banks’s journal entries that spoke of Banks’s fascination with a particular native woman named Otheothea, with the practice of tattooing, and with rituals of dance.

\(^{81}\) John Hawkesworth, *An abridgment of Captain Cook’s first and second voyages*, 7\(^{th}\) ed. (London, 1793) states that the during the “Arreoy” women dance to “excite the desire of the male sex, and which are often gratified upon the spot. In case any of the women prove with child [they] may destroy the helpless infant as soon as it is brought into the world” (46).

put it “smotherd at the moment of their birth.” These alleged native practices titillated yet also registered as morally dissolute. Polygamy and infanticide were un-British and complicity in the form of participation tainted values that could shatter stability.

Or were they? Transcripts from trials at the Old Bailey in London, for example, attested that infanticide practiced by women who were labeled as “‘butcher[s] of their own bowels,’” was not uncommon across classes and in urban and rural sites. Perhaps what emerged as disturbing was that the cultural divide thought to distant Britons from ‘primitive’ worlds had resonance in Britain’s homeland. Otaheite’s apparent moral flux could also be seen to materialize in the private transgressions amongst the nation’s elite women: the elderly Duchess of Queensbury’s dalliance with former slave, Julius Soubise, Lady Grosvenor’s much publicized affair with the Duke of Cumberland, and the adulteries of gentry’s Mrs. Arabin and Lady Anne Foley whose infidelities played out “in shrubberies.”

---

83 Ibid.


87 Sarah Lloyd, “Armour in the Shrubbery: Reading the Detail of English Adultery Trial Publications of the 1780s,” Eighteenth-Century Studies 39, no.4 (2006): 421-442. Julie Peakman in Mighty Lewd Books (2003) argues that “the flowering shrub or shrubberies” was “a metaphor for the female sex organs.” Peakman cites as evidence Philynges Clitorides’s (thought to be Thomas Stretzer) Natural History of the Frutex Vulvaria, or Flowering Shrub (London: 1732). This publication is a graphic, thirty-five page exposé of the ‘superior’ attributes of the English female’s sexual organs, particularly that of a small vagina as being preferable to that of other European women. Continuing through metaphor, mentioned here too are debates between “Naturalists and Botanists” pertaining to the “degeneracy of our Trees of Life; how much then, beauteous Ladies, must the whole Nation be obliged to your indefatigable Endeavours to restore their Vigour by inoculating none but the finest Plants upon your flowering Shrubs” (Preface). George III responded to moral mixity not only through his own marital fidelity, but in his reforms around the Royal Marriages Act of 1772. These statutes criminalized illegal royal marriages and focused a panoptic eye upon moral equivocation nationwide. The focus upon moral decay and reform led by George III had political implications especially in colonial botanical sites such India and in the corruptions within the East India Company, a troubling enterprise that I do not attempt to reconcile here. New ventures in botanical enterprises in Otaheite, for example, would certainly ease the ongoing concerns around the complicated and exploitative relations with India and the negotiations of the East India Act that
Cultivating Botany’s Popularity

Concerns regarding issues of sexuality, Joseph Banks, and the mixity of virtue and vice were given published form in the year following Darly’s caricature of the fly-catcher.88 The Town and Country Magazine in 1773, for example, warned about botany’s sexual tenor and Banks as the dangerous conduit:

That curiosity which leads a voyager to such remote parts of the globe as Mr B—will stimulate him when at home to penetrate into the most secret recesses of nature…it cannot be supposed that the most engaging part of it [nature], the fair sex, has escaped his notice; and if we may…conclude from his amorous descriptions, females of most countries that he has visited, have undergone every critical inspection by him.89

In other words, exploration of nature and sexuality abroad drew parallels to similar exploration at home. But this observation would seem to be double-edged. As much as publics worried about botany’s threat to sexual mores, casting Banks as heroic adventurer began in the early 1770s but was not passed until 1784. Historian Arthur Burns in Rethinking the Age of Reform: Britain, 1780-1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) states that disillusionment with England’s moral dearth, as observed in politician Henry Grattan’s words in 1770 that the age was “so luxurious, so venal and so unproductive,” found vent in the early 1770s “in a campaign against venality, corruption, and abuse in the East India Company, seen to be embodied in the person of Robert Clive who committed suicide in 1774” (82).

88 According to Banksian scholar John Gascoigne in Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment (1994), Banks “amours in Tahiti” were widely exploited by Grub Street satirists (50). Alan Bewell, Noah Heringman and more recently historian Sam George has noted in Botany, Sexuality and Women’s Writing (2008), the 1779 poem attributed to James Perry entitled Mimosa or, the sensitive plant dedicated to Mr. Banks clearly evokes Banks sexual intrigues by likening his search for new “sensitive plants” to that of seeking out females “that is, the vagina,” and the females he encounters worldwide are “fascinated by the amazing qualities of the English mimosa, his ‘sensitive plant’ (the penis)” (109). The mimosa plant was known for its sentience, not unlike the prized Venus flytrap plant (Dionaea muscipula) which had caused sensation for its visible response to touch, that is, as reported in the Annual Register of 1775, 2nd ed. (London, 1777) their ability to “close their leaves, and bend their joints upon the least touch: and this has astonished us” (93). Erasmus Darwin in Phytologia (London: J. Johnson, 1800) wrote of how the “Venus’s fly-trap closes its leaves…and pierces them [insects] with prickles” and that their “muscles must be endued with nerves of sense as well as motion” (Section 8, p. 133). The Venus flytrap also held sexual overtones—its nickname being that of “tipitiwitchet, or twitching fur stole” with its “touch-sensitive, flesh-colored leaves” drawing “predictable analogies to predatory female sexuality” according to Thomas Hallock in “Male Pleasure and the Genders of Eighteenth-Century Botanic Exchange,” The William and Mary Quarterly 62, no. 4 (October 2005): 697-718.

89 Town and Country Magazine; or Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment, (September 1773), 457-458.
and rake did much to increase interest in the botanical. Here, through the caricature of Banks as a macaroni, printmaker Darly leveraged the notion that ‘sex sells’, an old adage that when united with the opportunities of botany’s outreach could be seen to reshape “private vice into public virtue.”

Rakishness as defined in eighteenth-century popular accounts, was likened to “lascivious, obscene” behaviour, that unbecoming of a civilized man. Such portrayal calls to attention the Linnaean taxonomy of Systema Naturae that posited a familial relationship between man and animal in their classification as Anthropomorpha and later as Primates. In respect to Darly’s macaroni caricature, the fly-catcher’s animal hybridity visually plays out through the ‘ass’ or mule ears that prick out of his tricorn, a notion given further texture by way of Edward Beetham’s various editions in the 1770s and 1780s of Moral Lectures on Heads that noted “macaroni” derived from “the Greek Onos which signifies an ass.” While this allusion calls up Linnaeus’s example of the hybrid as “mule offspring,” at this point I

---

90 Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, 117.

91 The Attic Miscellany; and characteristic mirror of men and things. 3rd ed., Vol. 1 (London: Bentley and Co., 1791), 80. In The Fly-Catching Macaroni, Banks’s amorous adventures and ‘animal’ associations are called up through his ‘ass’ ears. It is notable that The Repository: or Treasury of Politics and literature of 1771 also described the ‘animal’ tendencies of macaronis by reporting that they were described as “a kind of animal [that] wenched without passion.”

92 Linnaeus, Systema Naturae, n.p. and Systema Naturae, Tenth Edition, 18. Interestingly, this formulation would seem to anticipate the man/animal evolutionary link. French naturalist, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, (Director of the Jardin du Roi in Paris) authored the 36-volume Histoire Naturelle (1753). In Histoire Naturelle Vol. 5 (London: J. S. Barr, 1792) Buffon argued an evolutionary hypothesis of a ‘single-family’ model that linked horses and asses. Therein he posited that these families “can only have been formed by crossing, successive variation…that the monkey belongs to the family of man, and he is a man degenerated; that man and the monkey had but one common origin, like the horse and the ass; that each family, as well in animals as in vegetables, come from the same origin…one species…has produced all the races of animals which now exist” (184-185).

93 Beetham, Moral Lectures on Heads, 29-31.

94 See above Footnote 92. Linnaeus in his early treatise on Sexes of Plants that establishes foundational thoughts on hybridity, makes reference to the offspring of mixed parentage as “mule offspring.” See Linnaeus, Reflections on the study of nature, 54.
focus upon the association of ass, mule, or donkey ears to sexual conquest and moral equivocation.

Antiquity underscored the sexual voracity of the *equus asinus* or donkey. Vase paintings of sixth-century Dionysiac scenes clearly depicted the donkey as “invariably in a state of sexual arousal—a beast with a bacchanalian appetite.”95 According to historian of sexuality Patricia Crawford, language of sexual encounter in Britain’s eighteenth century “was of evacuation…and satisfaction,”96 and a man’s activity in the sexual act was crudely described as leaving “nothing standing but his ears.”97 In addition, young men who showed no sexual restraint were likened to “wild asses.”98 Were the fly-catcher’s erect ass ears a visual pun upon his dangerous sexuality—an unbridled animal lust masked by privileged sensibilities? Like other macaronis who were “a kind of animal [that] wenched without passion,”99 Banks was reputed to have left women with “more shock waves in their hearts than in his.”100 The very public break of his alleged betrothal to Harriet Blosset in the 1770s was a case in point. According to Banksian biographer Harold Carter, Miss Blosset, perhaps in “targeting of Banks” with “her amorous darts,” misinterpreted the naturalist’s

95 Guy Michael Hedreen, *Sirens in Attic-Black-figure Vase-painting: Myth and Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 17. Matthew Darly would have known about vase decoration and design. He was an “Ornamental Architect” himself and had published a book in 1767 entitled *Sixty Vases by English, French and Italian Masters* that was followed by an exhibition of works according to Constance Simon in *English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century* (1907).


“embarrassed” courtesy as an “understanding” between them. Contemporaneous botanical writer and publisher Dr. Robert Thornton, author of The Temple of Flora (and subject of Chapter Three), wrote that the break was a “mortifying disappointment” to Miss Blosset and her mother, and chastised Banks for favouring “uncultivated climates...a flower, or even a butterfly” over this lady. Given sociologist Richard Sennett’s observation that the deviation from social norms is “a field for the disclosure of personality,” it follows then that even if Banks were not wholly culpable, polite society would see his manners as uncultivated. Nonetheless, the incident is significant for its indication of a principle shift in the larger field of masculine politesse. With less tolerance for violence, wrongful acts were no longer righted through duels but now moved to more litigious resolution. Thus, this ‘misunderstanding’ was resolved by a £5000 award to Miss Blosset’s for the cost of “worked waistcoats for her absent beau.” And with that Banks, having claimed that botany was his mistress, went on to father an illegitimate child with his other mistress, a “Miss B—n.”

---

101 Ibid., 67-69 and 150-152.
102 From James Lee, An Introduction to Botany, 4th Edition, (London: J. F. and C. Rivington, 1788) as cited in Charles Lyte, Sir Joseph Banks, 147. According to Lyte, this excerpt is from a brief biographical sketch written by Robert Thornton to James Lee, who was ‘guardian to the young lady.’ His attack extended to Banks’s eventual wife, Dorothea Hugessen, a ‘weighty lady’ who without a dowry of ‘sixty thousand pounds, double the sum might not have procured her any other husband.’ Here too Banks’s motivation is cast as mercenary in the service of pursuit of his botanical interests.
105 As quoted from Lady Mary Coke’s Journals, 1771 in Charles Lyte, Sir Joseph Banks, 147. That the betrayed Miss Blosset eventually married “a virtuous clergyman,” Dr. Dessalis according to Lady Coke’s journals, seemed to accentuate Banks’s offensive behaviour.
106 Carter, Sir Joseph Banks, 151. Carter submits that in a letter of November 10, 1773, Johann Fabricius, a naturalist-colleague organizing Banks’s entomological collection, wrote Banks to send his “compliments and wishes,” suggesting “if the child was a boy he’d be clever and strong like his father [Banks], and if a girl, she will be pretty and genteel like her mother.” According to Carter, from 1775-1778 Banks had an ‘acknowledged mistress’, Mrs. Sarah Wells, who was well-known and accepted amongst Banks’s friends and who often hosted salons at Banks’s home in Soho. Carter hints that Sarah Wells quite likely was the mother of this child. In 1779
While this rakish naturalist may have distanced himself from effeminacy, his retraction spoke of the common touch, a trait for which hybridity and botany were scapegoats.

Underpinning this anecdote of apparent rakishness were deeper anxieties concerning social slippages. The ass ears of the naturalist in *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* could call up wider erosions of sexual virtue seen amongst polite sensibilities: philandering fops, bluestocking activists, excessive consumer avarice, and political betrayals. Such insidious decay was no less threatening to a wider public who witnessed corrosion in aspects of their everyday life. As urban centers and London grew, so did attendant poverty, hunger, disease, and crime. Venereal disease remained an ongoing register of such change, an especially worrisome issue in light of its widespread seepage throughout the nation’s defenders, Britain’s military and naval service, and Britain’s mounting confrontations with the American colonies as evident in the Boston Tea Party and Massacre of the early 1770s.

Social slippages whether in the mixedness of new sensibilities or the diversity of emerging

---

107 In addition, papers such as the *London Courant* cited by Valerie Frith in *Women and History* (1995) noted changes that had begun in 1770s where women’s debating societies openly condemned the Salique (Salic) Law. The Salic Law “was the rule that certain aristocratic and dynastic families barred women and descendants of the female line from succeeding to titles and offices” (170). This law, if changed, could begin to rupture the prescribed right of all property and inheritances to go to males.

108 Richard Brown in *Society and Economy in Modern Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1991) recounts that internal migration grew rapidly after 1750. In particular, London and its environs grew from “575,000 to a population of 900,000 by 1801” with the influx largely fueled by industrial change or failed crops. Some 14,000 mainly Irish Catholics populated this area in the 1780s (420).

colonial powers spoke of fluctuation and change and began to redefine Britain’s cultural terrain.

**Networks and Flows of Communication**

Despite Banks’s apparent rakishness, botany flourished in part through his very public role in mobilizing what political and colonial commentator of the 1770s Abbé Raynal called a “revolution in commerce” where continents or “two hemispheres” were joined via “communication of flying bridges.” While those ‘flying bridges of communication’ that optimized botany’s outreach are evoked by the two globes that Darly’s botanist straddles, the conduits of communication had three major forms: the written in the form of Banks’s letters and library, the oral such as salons, and the technological in terms of botany and Banks’s skilled workers. These discursive flows served as antecedents to modern ‘virtual spaces’ of shared information and networking, and thus merit further consideration.

Firstly, an inter-network of communications that bridged naturalists from around the world was evident in the sheer volume of Banks’s written correspondence. Surviving correspondence amounts to well over 20,000 letters, 14,000 of which were to Banks, an indication of how central he was to botany’s outreach. Here text in the form of his letters took on strategic agency as an information site through which Banks exerted and maintained control of botanic place, product, and process, and by which his reach became worldwide.

---


112 Banks had wide international network of naturalist interests ranging from academic to commercial worlds: kings, aristocrats, socialites, scientists, sea captains and horticulturalists. His letters and diaries show the diversity and of his contacts: King George III (friend, confidante, patron, and business partner), Sir Hans Sloane.
Exchanges of seeds and plants involved over 120 plant collectors and specifically the commission of twenty-one plant hunters whom he sent global at the annual salary of £150.\(^\text{113}\)

Seeds or plant samples arrived via letters from distant practitioners such as Upper Canada’s Catharine Parr Traill or Mungo Park in Senegal. These botanical specimens were part of a remarkable private herbarium and botanical library at Banks’s Soho residence that held 22,000 books, 30,000 dried specimens of some 3600 species, 1400 of which were new to British botanists.\(^\text{114}\) As such, Soho was a nexus for the interchange of botanical knowledge and product among international naturalists, horticulturalists, artists, collectors, and students of natural history.\(^\text{115}\) Banks’s letters and library as ‘bridges of communication’ were key to a shift in how botanical information was shared and disseminated. Despite his apparent hybridity that located him between scholarly inquiry and practical application, Banks could not be overlooked as pivotal to mobilizing and valorizing botanical inter-networking.

Secondly, salons or \textit{au courant} ‘chat rooms’ in private homes, country estates, and clubs were also spaces of sociability through which botanical knowledge was disseminated and circulated. Salons and celebrity went hand in hand. For example, upon returning in 1772


\(^\text{114}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 195 and also Natural History Museum, London at \url{http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/science-of-natural-history/biographies/joseph-banks/index.html}. Banks’s sister, Sophia transcribed, documented, and organized his 30,000 herbarium at Soho.

\(^\text{115}\) Banks’s home at 32 Soho Square became known by many of his contemporaries, including Carl Thunberg the former Linnaean apostle but by the 1770s known as the ‘father of South African botany, as the “Academy of Natural History” as cited in Phillip Ritterbush, \textit{Overtures to Biology} (1964) and John Gascoigne, \textit{Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment} (1994).
from their *Endeavour*, Banks and fellow naturalist David Solander were feted in a wide range of celebrated homes—from that of politician Lord Sandwich to writer Dr. Samuel Johnson. The hook of sun, sex, and imagined sin did not harm the cachet of seeing the returning heroes and hearing first-hand their tales of exploration. Thus, Lady Mary Coke, salon hostess and well-connected observer of the eighteenth-century social scene, recorded in her journal of August 9, 1771 that “the people who are most talked of at present are Mr. Banks, and Doctor Solander…their voyage round the world… is very amusing.”  

Paradoxically, the naturalist seemed as much a commodity as the botanics he amassed and equally ironic was that his promotion and that of botany was furthered through *female* “fashionable sociability.” Indeed, tales of exotic exploits and discoveries were shared face-to-face through salons hosted by influential women such as pre-eminent natural history collector, the Duchess of Portland Margaret Cavendish or renowned botanical artist Mary Delany. As conduits of information, the salon’s mobility, its discursive nature, and the visibility of being seen mixing with the elite helped showcase botany’s web of political agency. Polite sociability and networking obscured underpinning anxieties that still associated botany with the

---


117 This term is used in Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 39, 192. This is not to discount, however, Banks’s connections with a diverse male fraternity through such clubs as Dr. Samuel Johnson’s Literary Club. As noted by John Brewer in *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (London: HarperCollins, 1997) this club was for well-read and informed members (economist Adam Smith, historian Edward Gibbon, orientalist William Jones) of which Banks was one, and was concerned with expanded worlds through narratives and knowledge of its members. It was politically neutral (44-45). For female influence also see Gillian Russell’s “An Entertainment of Oddities: Fashionable sociability and the Pacific in the 1770s,” *A New Imperial History*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

118 Ann B. Shteir, “Women in Botany,” *Women and History: Voices of Early Modern England*, ed. Valerie Firth (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1995), 167. Women were pivotal in the exchange of natural history’s knowledge through their all-female debating societies. The names of these societies were La Belle Assemblee, the Female Parliament, the Female Congress and Carlisle House Debates for Women. To some, however, that women played such a pivotal role in the dissemination of botanical knowing, still hinted at botany’s reputation as a feminine sphere.
feminine\textsuperscript{119}—ruptures that spoke of a shift in narrow Euro-centric definitions of manly activity as called up by Banks’s bridging of domains.

The third area that demonstrated botany’s outreach through networks was within the practice itself. \textit{The Fly-Catcher Macaroni} could remind the viewer that behind the naturalist’s allegedly autonomous practice was a succession of skilled practitioners. For example, Peter Collinson and John Fothergill were deft merchants of botanical goods.\textsuperscript{120} In the British North American colonies, Collinson was a valuable contact for flax, hemp, and wine while Fothergill established crops of coffee and breadfruit in the West Indies. Illustrators of natural history were equally invaluable. Sydney Parkinson, family friend of Fothergill, was hired by Banks to serve as a botanical illustrator aboard the \textit{Endeavour} voyage. His 674 drawings and 269 paintings of plants documented important discoveries.\textsuperscript{121}

Whether aboard voyages of discovery or within the Royal Gardens at Kew, men with ‘practical’ skills such as artists, travel guides in foreign geographies, horticulturists for plant preservation, draftsmen and carpenters for new technologies contributed largely to the momentum of botanical enterprise. Aboard voyages of discovery, ‘in-house’ skilled workers crafted skylights, irrigation systems, and in some cases designed stoves to ensure the survival of fragile species.

Noteworthy is that botany’s demand for innovative technologies hooked public interest back home. Elite as well as bourgeois Britons were fascinated by exotic plants and hothouses. As noted in popular accounts: “Stoves of great men, and those in publick (sic)


\textsuperscript{120} Gascoigne, \textit{Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment}, 75-80.

\textsuperscript{121}Natural History Museum, UK at http://www.nhm.ac.uk/jdsml/nature-online/endeavour-botanical/about2.dsml
life, present the astonished spectator with the chief produce of the whole globe.” Here, elite upper class and middle class interests joined ranks as both pursued skilled knowledge of greenhouse workability, crop irrigation, and vegetal disease control. As well, botanical interests saw polite taste join force with manual labour in searching for, digging, hauling, and preserving specimens. To many, this shared interest in botanical technologies and goals of productivity spoke of natural history’s ‘bridging communication’ and stabilizing nationhood.

While the practical hands-on work of plant discovery and its skilled helpers did much to curry botanical enterprise as a site of harmony, such activities opened up a space of potential slippages. Contemporaneous accounts recognized Banks as “The Liberal Patron of Science and the Enlightened Cultivator of Natural Knowledge,” but botany’s association with labour-oriented middling ranks had nagging anxieties. Botany’s more inclusive domain of ‘mixed’ interests, aptitudes, and skills echoed Linnaean tenets that posited underpinnings of hybrid variations and change. For a wider public, the possibility of having to negotiate such shifts was discomforting. But change was at hand, especially given that George III set the uncertain national tone in the early 1770s by endlessly mixing and botanizing amongst the “country folk” and making gestures of solidarity with “agrarian patriots” rather than attending to the ruptures in the American colonies.

---


123 Stephen Copley in “The Fine Arts in Eighteenth-Century Polite Culture,” *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, ed. John Barrell (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), cites the Earl of Egremont, George Wyndham as an example in 1780s of a ‘working’ landowner’ (Petworth) revered for his projects outside Petworth estate—community schools, estate housing, and running water, all of which were seen as social responsible because they helped ensure families were not separated (240-249).


This anxiety around the mixing and mobility of classes via botany’s outreach gives Darly’s *The Fly-Catching Macaroni* some of its resonance. Not only might bourgeois and upper-class viewers be reminded of the nation’s economic dependence upon skilled labour, but also of the emerging shifts in the attitudes of agri-workers whose demands for new knowledge defied their relegation to invisible status. What follows is such a voice in 1771 in the pages of the *Town and Country Magazine of Knowledge, Instruction and Entertainment*, a publication usually meant for an elite readership. Not only does the author of the published letter demonstrate the appeal and widespread accessibility of Linnaean taxonomies and botany but this labourer’s voice, in *this* publication, would seem to register a worrisome shift in class relations. Sex, sustenance, and posterity that are common ground here and shared between the privileged and the labourer, gives a discomforting edge:

I *Has* the misfortune not to be *larned*, and so I *takes* the liberty of *riting* to you to know what is meant by the Sexes of Plants…A gentleman has made book about it, but I *does* not comprehend it. He says *as how* they *makes* love to one another…young turnips, and young cawliflowers…I’m *no skollard*, that’s for cartin, but I sometimes *thinks as how* these gentle-men, who are much more *larneder*, hardly *knows* what they *be* talking… if you will clear this matter up to my satisfaction, I’ll send you a good fat turkey. I *takes* in your Town and Country Magazine, and am *main* pleased with it.¹²⁶

Could this letter be fiction—a planted satire merely meant to mock the new botany cult and its apparent move to a more mixed public sphere? Literacy separated the polite world from the uncultured, but here interest in Linnaeus’s ‘Sexes of Plants’ seemed to dissolve that divide and pose a shared interest in botanical knowing. Of note is that by the 1750s, with the rise of the middle class, “the male literacy rate was around sixty percent and female literacy was about forty percent,” a trajectory that saw the new class of reader as being “the middling

sort, somewhat below the traditional reader that was the gentry and professional.”

And while this letter may not be from a typical middling type, importantly it points to concerns around botany as a legitimate site for discourses around sexual knowing. This interest had wide appeal, but not without anxieties. The writer’s defiant edge—whether part of a satirical joke or not—is borne out in his demand that an explanation be to his satisfaction. Perhaps the tone of righteous entitlement runs more deeply and raises anxieties around labour unrest that had begun to emerge in response to failed domestic harvests, hunger, and family separations that occurred as a result of land reforms such as the Enclosure Acts (1760-1820). Out of jobs, land divided, families displaced, and for some gleaning rights revoked, food would be a central issue over which labourers were willing to rally and riot. This letter would seem to point to a growing awareness that expanding knowledge, especially botanical knowing, while having the potential to solve issues around hunger and poverty also opened up the visibility of ‘other’ classes, in turn signaling potential shifts in power relations.

**Anxieties Move into Uncharted Domestic Terrains**

The anxieties discussed above in relation to disease and absorption, new knowledge, and class mixing surfaced further in the nation’s domestic terrains. Concerns over the impact

---


128 As noted earlier in this thesis, Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* (1988) has established these discursive sites as spaces of “knowledge to be gained from sex and the right to speak about it” (6).

129 Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783*, 34-37. Black gives as example several uprisings against Enclosures—those in Scotland on the Cromartie estates in 1766, in Ireland’s Cork, Kilkenny, and Limerick counties in 1769-76, and in Northamptonshire in England during the same years where there was widespread resistance that materialized through “petitions, threats, attacks on gates, posts, rails, and other crimes” (36).

130 *Ibid.* Black confirms, as have other historians, that wood-gathering and gleaning were now defined as crimes and as such convictions for these new illegal activities were becoming commonplace as evident during the 1770s and 1780s in Berkshire.
of botany’s outreach in Britain would emerge again in caricature in these years through Matthew Darly’s *A Mungo Macaroni* published September 10, 1772 (Figure 2.3). The label ‘mungo’ was a loaded term that had appeared in reference to a character in Isaac Bickerstaffe’s 1768 comic opera, *The Padlock*, a popular play that appealed to mixed bourgeois and upper class audiences.131 ‘Mungo’ was a deprecating name for a black slave stereotype—a passive but much exploited servant who was always at the whim of the owner’s beck and call, or in playwright Bickerstaffe’s words, a “Mungo here, a Mungo dere, Mungo everywhere.”132 *A Mungo Macaroni*, published and displayed in the same year as the fly-catching satire of Banks, referenced a fashionable newsworthy, the former black slave Julius Soubise (1754-1798). Soubise was known as the pampered protégé and rumored paramour of Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensbury (1701-1777).133

131 Bickerstaffe’s *The Padlock* was an extremely popular production—54 productions in the 1768-1769 season alone. The lead role of Mungo, a black servant played in blackface by the white Charles Dibdin, provided comic relief as a foil to the witless Don Diego, Mungo’s acerbic old master. *The Padlock* traced the storyline of Cervantes’s *El Celoso Extremeno*, “The Jealous Estremaduran.” The play tells of an aged Don Diego who ‘adopted’ the young Leonora in hope to make her his bride. Diego padlocks Leonora in his house (that already has grills on the windows), takes the key, and leaves instructions for his ‘Mungo’ to keep watch while he makes goes to make arrangements with Leonora’s parents. In Don Diego’s absence, Leonora takes up with a passing young man, Leander, a situation enabled by Mungo. Don Diego was duped by Mungo. Whether a metaphor for sexual betrayal or around the politics of racial relations, the opera would seem to present Mungo as rising above popular stereotypes to be characterized as smart, compassionate and virtuous, a certain contrast to the plotting Don Diego. *The Padlock* exposes social tensions around the nature of captivity and liberty, submission and rebellion, and betrayal and trust to depict shifts from a binary divided to a more textured worldview.


133 George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, Vol. 5, 82 and 120. According to Felicity Nussbaum in *The Limits of the Human* (2003), Soubise was named by his patroness, the Duchess of Queensbury, after “a hero of the Seven Years’ War”, Charles de Rohan, Prince de Soubise (1715-1787), who “served in the court of Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour,” (7) an association I speculate was also unsettling for its French ‘sympathies.’ The Duchess ‘adopted’ Soubise in 1764 from her cousin, Captain Stair-Douglas, who owned a slave ship upon which he was transporting the boy whom he had originally called ‘Othello’ and known by that name for a time. The aristocrat’s practice of taking or ‘adopting’ young black children as projects was not uncommon. Dorothy George also documents caricaturist William Austin’s published drawing in 1773 *The Duchess of Queensbury and Soubise* of the teenaged Soubise and his patroness, the Duchess of Queensbury, (by this time in her late 60s) in a public fencing match, a parody of Angelo’s famous *L’Ecole des Armes* of 1772. With his epee touching her heart, the balloon’s text reads “Mungo here, Mungo there, and Mungo everywhere,” a reference
Mungo Macaroni, Soubise can be seen as representational of an emerging new hybrid, an in-between racial subjectivity that was becoming more visible in Britain’s landscape, but not seen or acknowledged by many. Not only were such former mungos caught between their black heritage and their eventual status as ‘freed’ individuals but still imprinted by enslavement, their mobility was contingent upon the limitations meted out by Britain upon their humanity.

In Darly’s caricature, the mungo wears the macaroni fashion of dapper white breeches and topcoat. A tiny tricorn, sword, and walking cane complement his elegant but unsettling presence, for in 1772, a black macaroni was relatively rare. The blank backdrop, like that reminiscent of natural history illustrations, seems to accent that he was merely a typical specimen as does the generic and non-descript ‘a’ in the image’s title. The anonymity of this mungo macaroni would seem a deliberate slight however, for this was indeed Julius Soubise, an accomplished fencing master and equestrian, renowned Don Juan, and recognized devotee to opera, the theatre, and music. Soubise’s hybridity was evident through his being a mulatto, the son of a white father and an enslaved Jamaican mother. Additionally, although a

---

134 There are relatively few drawings evident in Dorothy George and Frederick Stephens’s eleven volume compilation of Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum that have “negroe” images, but if so, often young men such as pages, or groomsmen, or servants appear. The only other reference to “mungo” is in relation to Jeremiah Dyson (1722-1776) in, for example, The State Jugglers of 1773 (BMC 5109). Dyson is not black nor has African heritage, rather he was the Clerk to the House of Commons whose mediation of debates within the House earned him a comparison to a “Mungo,” a reference made by an opposition MP. Perhaps also called up is an allusion here to Dyson’s sexuality as established by George Rousseau in Perilous Enlightenment (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991). Although sexual promiscuity is sometimes associated with the ‘mungo’ stereotype, as Rousseau documents Dyson’s was known rather for his homosexuality. Dyson belonged to a “homosocial university club” where he met his “lover” poet, Mark Akenside and where they developed a very “close friendship” with the “Handsome and well made Jamaican, Mr. Freeman” (109-137).

135 Edward Scobie, Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1972), 93. Soubise was educated in music (violin), fencing, and equestrian skills. He was an instructor at the academy of the celebrated Italian riding and fencing master, Domenico Angelo.
man, he was still treated as a blackamoor child, that is, in historian Edward Scobie’s words, a “spoilt…black darling”—a pet acclimatization project of sorts kept by aristocrats in eighteenth-century London.\(^{136}\)

Freedom provided by his benefactress, the Duchess, could not completely erase this mungo’s other hybridity, that is, his position as a by-product or offshoot of botanical outreach. In other words, Soubise, once a child-slave from Britain’s West Indian sugar plantations was recycled as human resource in slavery’s triangular trade, only to be recast as a freed mungo. Here emerges the ‘other’ face of botanical prowess, that is, black human resources that were spin-offs of botanical claim. Even in 1770, Britain’s increased economic wealth was said to be largely the result of the African slave trade.\(^{137}\) But the movement of slaves opened up disturbing new considerations. On one hand, *The Mungo Macaroni* hinted at the black man’s stimulus to economic growth, but concurrently alluded to his presence as a threat to the status quo especially through his ability—here in terms of macaroni fashion and sexual dalliance—to penetrate aristocratic circles, defy moral parameters, and activate abolitionist empaths.\(^{138}\) *A Mungo Macaroni* unveiled debates and anxieties around this uncharted path.

\(^{136}\) *Ibid.*, 89-91. Scobie explains that ‘Black darlings’ were ‘blackamoors’ or black children who were ‘adopted’ (bought, given, traded) to Georgian aristocratic families. If they showed promise, they were educated and tutored in music, riding, and fencing. Scobie also reports that because of Soubise’s physical attractiveness, he was painted and sculpted by artists such as Thomas Gainsborough as was Ignatius Sancho, and by Johann Zoffany.


\(^{138}\) Felicity Nussbaum in *The Limits of the Human* (2003) quotes elite socialite Lady Mary Coke’s diaries and observations that Soubise’s had countless “sexual conquests,” frequent visitations to “nunneries” (the slang term for brothels), and it was rumoured he had impressive “manly parts and abilities.”(8, 208). According to Nussbaum, Soubise’s sexual antics eventually caught up with him. He was accused of raping a woman and was sent to Calcutta, India by the Duchess. The Duchess allegedly died two days later. Soubise spent 21 years in India and died at the age of 44 on August 25, 1798 in a riding accident.
Darly’s caricature also opens up debates and anxieties concerning race mobility. For viewers, Soubise’s stark white attire that was so easily assimilated into the white background of the print left only his black face as a reminder of Jamaican roots and hybrid threats. Perhaps the blank backdrop whitewashed a central fear, that is to say, the burgeoning black populations in Britain, products of triangular trade for the most part, that had reached approximately 20,000 by the late 1760s. In addition, Darly’s informed viewership would connect a mungo macaroni with Bickerstaffe’s popular comedy The Padlock of four years earlier in 1768 and its rather clever protagonist, the black Mungo, who outwitted his white master. This characterization perhaps hinted at a deeper public concern around the issue of loyalty that the play addressed, that is, that the passivity, assumed by various Britons, as stereotypical of the ‘Negroe’ was indeed a disguise that posed uncertain implications. After all, public memory recalled the violent uprisings of Jamaican plantation slaves in the 1760s that saw owners and managers attacked and sugar production crippled. The mandate of the rebel leader, Tacky, had been “the entire extirpation of the white inhabitants,” a tactic borne out in reports of widespread human carnage and razed estate houses and cane fields. A Mungo Macaroni’s seemingly smooth integration of a dapper black man-about-town could therefore image new anxieties in domestic terrains.

139 Scobie, Black Britannia, 63. Scobie also notes that by the late eighteenth century 45,000-50,000 blacks lived throughout Britain (63). Important recent studies of an awareness of the triangular trade in slavery and its links to the British economy include Geoff Quilley and Kay Dian Kriz’s An Economy of Colour (2003) and the more recent study by Kay Dian Kriz, Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement (2008) which exams print culture, satire, and high art to demonstrate the anxious awareness of slavery and its impact on Britain.

140 For a full discussion of the plot see John R. Oldfield, Popular politics and British anti-slavery, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 30-32.

Such fears around race and class were further teased out through specific aspects of the mungo macaroni’s attire. In *A Mungo Macaroni*, the lack of a wig for Soubise could be telling. As noted in Chapter One, fashion defined the macaroni’s identity and his excesses allowed for membership into this group of anti-establishment outsiders. The macaroni’s wig was significant in signaling gilded taste and brotherhood. Thus, a macaroni without a fashionable wig was indeed no macaroni at all—a pariah. On the surface, *A Mungo Macaroni* would seem to suggest that the hybrid Soubise belongs to the macaroni fraternity, but alternatively what surfaces is that as a black man he was an outsider even amongst outsiders. Importantly, the wig was also a marker of patrician authority, dignity, and autonomy.  

Soubise himself wore no wig, and in popular accounts was identified as having “woolly hair” typical of “the Woolly and the Long-hair’d Blacks” with author Lady Montague adding as a racist comparison, “the same general Kind as Mastiffs, Spaniels, Bull-dogs.”  

Again, Soubise is in that interstitial space of belonging, but not belonging. On one hand, as a “pet-project blackamoor” he enjoyed a certain status and protection that could avail mobility in parts of society. On the other hand, that same label registered a degradation that appeared in popular print, namely, “a fashionable woman hath two Implements about her, a Blackamoor, and a little Dog,” a taut allusion to ownership and subjectivity. Such parallels

---

142 Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, 120-124.


144 See Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia* (1972) and Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human* (2003). Nussbaum recounts that despite his being the alleged lover of his 60 year-old benefactress the Duchess of Queensbury, Soubise was the known paramour of the renowned writer and abolitionist Charlotte Smith.

145 From *The Character of a Town Miss* (1675) as quoted in Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 34. These dialectic positions perhaps emerged in *A Mungo Macaroni* through Soubise’s subaltern status as possibly inscribed by the detail of the chained dog’s head affixed to his macaroni sword. Historian Keith Thomas notes in *Man and The Natural*
of Soubise to woolly-hair’d dogs can evoke what historian Richard Sennett’s observes as a central problem for the outsider in the city, that is, “how to arouse belief among those who do not know you.” 146 Both hair and absent wig would seem to suggest hybrids who were neither one nor the other, had restricted mobilities, and in terms of the macaroni satires and London’s fashionable elites, were registered as marginalized entities.

Hybridity’s threat to the stability of established class hierarchies played out one other way in the details of the caricature of *A Mungo Macaroni*. It was not uncommon for print culture to accentuate the physical features of black subjects. The exaggeration of Soubise’s facial features and the representation of a potbelly would seem to underscore what Frances Reynolds later claimed in 1785 about those of African descent: “defect of form and complexion [was] a strong obstacle to their acquiring true taste” and signaled a “defect they may have in their intellectual faculties.” 147 The caricature of Soubise with his fine fashions, polished manners, floral scents, and reputation for relentless skin bleaching, 148 in fact relied

---

World (1984) that chains and “silver padlocks for blacks or dog” were commonplace in the eighteenth century (44). As a vicious pun it would seem, Darly positions the sword’s head such that Soubise’s firm grip and the shape of the canine’s head raise phallic associations that in turn tease out beliefs around this black man’s sexual prowess and his prescribed role in the Duchess’s household.

146 Sennett, *The Fall of the Public Man*, 49. Sennett explains that generating believability is key, that is, the outsider “penetrating barriers familiar to and used by insiders.” Given that Soubise enjoyed freedom of movement and activity, it may be that his “woolly hair” can call up what Shane White and Graham J. White argue in “Slave Hair and African-American Culture in the Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Centuries,” *Journal of Southern History* 61 (1995), that is, that amongst slaves in eighteenth-century America, woolly hair signaled a “flaunt” or affirmation of distinction “and difference even defiance [in] an attempt to revalorize a biological characteristic that white racism had sought to devalue” (58).


148 The effort to redefine cultural terrains is also brought to the fore by *The Mungo Macaroni* whose pains to camouflage his birthright speaks of a new kind mixity in a different light. Julian Soubise, the subject of *A Mungo Macaroni*, was known to use the caustic oil of the Jamaican cashew-nut “to skin [his] face” and acquire a lighter tone as reported in Patrick Browne, *The civil and annual history of Jamaica. Containing I. An Accurate description of that island. II. An history of the natural productions*. Vol. 1 (1789), 226-227. In addition, Monk of the Order of St. Francis, *Nocturnal revels: or, the history of King’s-Place, and other modern nunneries...with the portraits of the most celebrated demireps...of this period* (1779) notes that Soubise’s effort to shift colours as pointed out in a publication of 1779 was literally enacted through his use of “washes, cosmetics, and other
on debates that had begun to question views about the nature of humanity and that in turn threatened traditional racial divides around the notoriety associated with Soubise in the early 1770s. The caricature’s physical deformation had a problematic currency given contemporaneous debates on the relation of the human races to apes, which was topical at this time. Linnaeus’s taxonomy argued differently. Linnaeus posited that Homo Sapiens, a species inclusive of all mankind, had four distinct types with none ‘above’ the other, but rather were based upon place of origin, not colour. This belief was to be further supported by formulations of anatomist, Johann Blumenbach (1752-1840) who having coined the term 

beautiful medicines, to wash a Blackamoor white” (221). Darly’s satire of Julian Soubise as A Mungo Macaroni had additional power in that lightening one’s skin troubled because of its link to bourgeois white female vanities. Parallels to female practices also could imply emasculation of the black male, and perhaps for good reason. Soubise was a notorious philanderer and thus a challenge and threat to white male sexual prowess. Attempts to erase his colour and camouflage his Jamaican mien by way of the botanical perhaps spoke of Soubise’s effort to transcend a widespread eighteenth-century belief that literary historian Michelle Cliff in The Land of Look Behind: Prose and Poetry (Ithaca: Firebrand Books, 1985) has termed a “hierarchy of shades” (59). This hierarchy is a classification that equated ‘white’ with hegemonic privilege and a subaltern’s colour with no power and no culture. Writer Oliver Goldsmith’s History of the Earth and Animated Nature, Vol. 2 (London: J. Nourse, 1774) would seem to corroborate these public sentiments in his observation that “the chief differences in man are rather taken from the tincture of his skin than the variety of his figure” (212). Apparently, British ideals around race were focused more upon similarity than equality, and despite mixities that had begun to populate new terrains, blacks were still marginalized as different, subordinate, or even dangerous. To ‘wash a Blackamoor white’ could also underscore eighteenth-century tensions around Linnaean formulations, in particular his theory that an entity’s development was merely an adaptation to “location or climate,” and that organisms do not differ much according to Linnaeus in Philosophia Botanica (1751) “unless compelled by dire necessity” (235). To suggest that difference was only a surface problem—in the skin—and shaped by climate rather than anatomical conditions, complicated popular belief that wanted fixed racial divisions. In addition, also unsettling was Linnaeus’s aforementioned “nested hierarchy” as explained by historian Jonathan Marks in Human Biodiversity as “several classes, none ‘higher’ than any other…but of the same level,”(7) a construct that could be seen as obscuring presumed black inferiority.

By midcentury, debates intensified between monogenists (those believing that the human family had a single origin) and the opposing polygenists (who believed in multiple species origins). In conjunction with Linnaean tenets that classified man (Homo) and ape (Simia) in the same family order of Anthropomorpha and later as Primates, such images fueled concerns around the porous borders between man and ape. See Footnote 148 of this Chapter. Lisbet Koerner in Linnaeus: Nature and Nation (1999) cites and quotes Linnaeus’s famous letter of February 14, 1747 to Johann Georg Gmelin, a German explorer, that asks whether he (Linnaeus) should “call man ape or vice versa” (87). In 1754 Linnaeus endeavoured to reconcile this issue by stating that other scientists also grappled with finding “any distinguishing mark by which the Apes can be separated from humans” (87). Physician and anthropologist Johann Blumenbach’s (1752-1840) craniometrical research resulted in his division of humans into five varieties. These varieties overlapped. Ultimately, Blumenbach found no bodily difference between Caucasian and Negro—they shared a unity, a common humanity.

According to Linnaeus there were four types of Man from four continents—Americanus, Asiaticus, Africanus, Europeanus.
caucasian saw similarities between Africans and Caucasians in “‘understanding, natural talents, and mental capacities’.” Such claims were disturbing for their contravention to the traditional racial divides of white and non-white populations.

Britain’s shifting demographics also played a role in the topicality of the mungo macaroni. For example, Edward Long, a former Jamaican planter in his Candid Reflections of 1772 warned that the British nation’s terrains were too “embronzed with the African tint,” while anti-abolitionist Samuel Estwick’s tract of 1772 outlined a law to “preserve the race of Britons from stain and contamination” of blacks. Further evidence of shifts in the cultural landscape seemed to surface through the politically charged case of 1772 involving black slave James Somerset. Here, rights of black slaves were recognized and ownership of slaves was somewhat regulated through a legal ruling that stated “‘no master” in England “was allowed…to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted his service.’”

---


153 Edward Long, Candid reflections upon the judgment lately awarded by the Court of King’s Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on what is commonly called the negro-cause, by a planter (London: Lowdnes, 1772), 55. Not to be forgotten is that by the mid-1760s Britain’s black population in major ports such as Bristol, Liverpool and London had frighteningly reached 20,000 according to J. R. Oldfield in “The ‘Ties of soft Humanity’,” The Huntington Library Quarterly 56, no.1 (Winter 1993): 1-14.


155 Ibid., Chapter 5, and National Archives of Britain, James Walvin, “Black Presence: Asian and Black History in Britain, 1500-1850,” at http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/rights/slave_free.htm. The status of blacks as property underpinned the Somerset ruling of 1772. James Somerset, a black slave and property of Charles Stewart, had been transported to England. He ran away but was recaptured on Nov. 26, 1771 and Stewart forced Somerset’s transport back to Jamaica. Granville Sharpe, a British abolitionist, said this was unlawful and helped secure a writ of habeas corpus that ordered Somerset’s return to appear before a British court. Lord Chief Justice Mansfield ruled that James Somerset was unjustly treated and was to be ‘discharged’.
While slaves were not freed as some Britons had believed, some recognition of black rights seemed to have begun.

Increased evidence of mixity and the potential of a black population to negotiate and indeed excel in Britain’s cultural landscape were particularly evident in the accomplishments of Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780), an ex-slave from Africa. In the eighteenth century, literacy was “a sign of European eminence,” a category that Sancho justifiably joined through his articulate production of letters, diaries, narratives, and plays. Similarly, he distinguished himself as a respected theatre critic and music composer, and was viewed by his white contemporaneous literati as “a rarity—a man of utter integrity and strength of character.”

Further recognition of Sancho as erudite was sealed by the posthumous publication of The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African in 1782. Thomas Gainsborough’s portrait of Ignatius Sancho (Figure 2.4) painted at Bath on November 29, 1768 when Sancho was in the employ of the Duke of Montague, and which was later to become the frontispiece engraved by Francesco Bartolozzi for Sancho’s Letters, depicts a poised, bourgeois gentleman—a polished and socially sanctioned individual, albeit one whose gaze does not directly engage with the viewer. In this representation, Sancho seems the distinguished patriot—composed and clear-eyed, a tidy coif, and a classically cut black jacket with gold buttons, red vest, and white shirt. His clothing denotes the transformation from African slave

---

157 Wheeler, The Complexion of Race, 238.
158 As cited in Scobie, Black Britannia, 100.
160 In Portraiture: facing the subject (1997), Joanna Woodall suggests that “gaze polities” were along gendered lines and a direct look was a breach of propriety, especially for subordinate subjects such as women, or interestingly here, perhaps black men whose status, like that of women, was below that of white males.
to mobile and sophisticated Briton. That Sancho’s right hand is positioned inside his vest conveys, as historian Arlene Meyers has argued in a different context, that the sitter can be aligned with “men of breeding.”\textsuperscript{161} Sancho thus appears as a model of British refinement: patriarchal, learned, enlightened and industrious.\textsuperscript{162}

But Sancho’s activities could also have ambivalent overtones. That he embodied British virtues and mentored other blacks in transforming their African roots, for example, Julius Soubise discussed earlier in this chapter. Notably, Sancho admitted that despite his achievements he was still a hybrid, that is, “his complexion” made him “utterly unqualified” to serve in public office.\textsuperscript{163} He also referred to himself as a ‘Blackamoor’, but expressed his fury for “the unchristian and most diabolical usage of my brother Negroes—the illegality—the horrid wickedness of the [slave] traffic.”\textsuperscript{164} As contemporary historian Markman Ellis has noted, for those who were equivocal about abolition, Sancho’s influential voice could be seen as “culturally combative… transgressive and radical.”\textsuperscript{165} That potential for radical dissent was heightened through white supporters who saw themselves as similarly oppressed. Such were the Irish who were stigmatized with blackness because of their “Celtish origins” and the labouring poor, that is, the blackened coalminers and chimney sweeps.\textsuperscript{166} As a result, fears

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{162} Sancho had been taken in by the Duchess of Montague and upon her death in 1751 was left an annual allowance of £30. He managed his money well and in 1774 set up a grocer’s shop in fashionable Mayfair, an establishment patronized by his friends such as the famous actor David Garrick and writer Samuel Johnson.
\item \textsuperscript{164} Ibid. Sancho’s interest in abolition was borne out in Thomas Cooper’s (1759-1839) Letters on the Slave Trade (1787) where Cooper noted “the Letters of Ignatius Sancho” had many passages on abolition.
\item \textsuperscript{166} Nussbaum, The Limits of the Human, 151.
\end{itemize}
around hybridity and its various mixities played out through xenophobic reactions to Scottish and Catholic Irish immigrations to England that had risen to about 40,000 by 1780.\textsuperscript{167} Resistance by any group—voices angry about race, class, or religious persecution—unsettled British ruling authority especially in the 1770s during the uprisings in the American Colonies.\textsuperscript{168}

**Conclusion**

Resources from botanical outreach may have been seen as anodynes for social problems, but they cultured discontents as well. Britain grappled with a changing cultural terrain that featured a more ‘mixed’ version of nationhood. Mobilities emerged and new levels of visibility surfaced to unveil tension between the desire for botanic product and anxieties around difference.

Linnaean notions of hybridity or mixity gave momentum to new understandings that helped negotiate difference and diversity in wider worlds. For eighteenth-century viewers, both caricature and academic high art such as the portraits of Gainsborough and West, embed tensions with reference to this aspect of global outreach. While Darly’s caricatures discussed in this chapter mocked their respective subjects, reciprocal seeing put the viewer under similar scrutiny so that he or she might self-consciously examine his or her own fears and limits. While these images and the portraits by West and Gainsborough’s attest to fascination with exotic product and geographies, such representations also stand as indices of anxiety.

\textsuperscript{167} Linda Colley, *Britons: Foreign the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 329. The Catholics were feared for their long-established Jacobin affiliations already mentioned in Chapter One.

\textsuperscript{168} Historian Patricia Bradley in *Slavery, Propaganda, and the American Revolution* (1999) notes that Bickerstaffe’s *The Padlock* had over 40 performances in the colonies by the mid-1770s and the term ‘mungo’ and ‘macaroni’ emerged within American revolutionary discourses to call up issues around political loyalties.
around emerging porous boundaries in terms of gender, race, and class that had the potential to change the complexion of nationhood. Such discourses play out in new ways within the botanical terrains explored in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER THREE

Virtual Paradise, Mutable Kingdom: Troubling Nationhood in the Botanical Illustrations of Dr. Robert John Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora.*

Introduction

In late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain, Carolus Linnaeus’s classificatory system continued to fascinate Britons, in particular, his formulations based upon sexual difference and their exceptions as well as promised ‘fruition’ that underpinned botany’s utility and displays of vibrant nationhood. A grasp of that knowledge was evoked through botanical illustration but so too were attendant anxieties specifically in relation to aspects of Linnaean knowledge that pointed to exceptions, that is, possible variations that were not fixed, but variable or changeable, and could impact the national landscape.

My exploration of these tensions is framed through a unique botanical publication, Dr. Robert John Thornton’s (1768-1837) *A New Illustration of the Sexual System of Carlos von Linnaeus* (1797-1807).\(^1\) This work was published in three separate parts. In his 1797 *Prospectus*, Thornton indicated that in tracing the “philosophic principles of Botany,” the first part of his publication would address the plant’s “anatomy” and functions of its parts including “the Sexual relationship.”\(^2\) Part two would address food of plants and principles of

---

1 Thornton’s publication was entitled as ‘new’ so that it would be distinguished from John Miller’s *An Illustration of the Sexual System of Linnaeus* published in 1777. According to historian Ray Desmond in *Great Natural History Books and Their Creators* (London: British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2003), Chapter 10, while Thornton had conceived *A New Illustration of the Sexual System of Carlos von Linnaeus* as early as 1791, published the first two parts of this work by 1797, and commissioned botanical plates for the third part in 1798, not until January 1, 1799 did Thornton issue a title page for *The Temple of Flora*, the third part of the entire publication.

agriculture. In the third part, *The Temple of Flora: Or, Garden of Nature*, allegorical scenes and “elegant, picturesque” botanical plates would illustrate twelve classes of the Linnaean sexual system and “render [botany] to every one’s comprehension.”³ My discussion focuses upon select images from this third part often simply called *The Temple of Flora*.⁴ Accompanied by verses of renowned poets and identified by Dr. Thornton as a “National Botanical Work,”⁵ I argue that various plates from *The Temple of Flora* folio can be seen as sites that evoke troubling transformations within the monarchical state, issues in relation to governance, patrimony, sexuality and gender, and shifts in the fabric of both the empire and nation.

As with the range of images explored in previous chapters, botanical illustrations in Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* responded to British botanophiles who were eager to botanize by using Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification. And while these botanical illustrations were also mobile and circulating and offered immediate “specimens” through which to play out scientific discovery, potential subscribers to the publication would also be

---


⁴ Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora, or, Garden of Nature. Part 3* (London, 1799-1807). The plates were hand-coloured (aquatint, stipple and line, mezzotint), expensive processes that spoke of aesthetic and technological expertise. Future references to this third part will be truncated to *The Temple of Flora*. I have used this publication, also catalogued under the title *The Temple of Flora: garden of the botanist, poet, painter and philosopher*, at the Natural History Museum in London. I have also worked from *The Temple of Flora*, ‘with plates faithfully reproduced from original engravings and the work described by Geoffrey Grigson with bibliographic notes by Handasyde Buchanan,’ ed. G. Grigson (London: Collins, 1951). The illustrated plates I use in this thesis are from a digitalized format of Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* at the University of Wisconsin website: [http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/DLDecArts/DLDecArts-idx?id=DLDecArts.ThornTempFlo](http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/DLDecArts/DLDecArts-idx?id=DLDecArts.ThornTempFlo), as are references to Thornton’s text that accompany the plates.

⁵ Robert John Thornton, *Dr. Thornton’s national botanical work* (London: C. Whittingham, c.1800), 2. The poets involved in Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* were members of elite circles: Poet Laureate Henry James Pye, Anna Seward, (‘Swan of Lichfield’), Bernard Shaw (playwright), George Dyer (sympathizer to French resistances) and Erasmus Darwin (polymath and grandfather of Charles Darwin).
attracted by the possibility of viewing images that Thornton had advertised as produced by “the finest Artists of this Country.”

In this chapter, I nuance Linnaeus’s focus upon sexual difference or exceptions through the concept of variation, that is, what Linnaeus became aware of as the potential of variability within a species. Because of commonalities that were seen as shared between aspects of the natural world and that of human society, I argue that the idea of change that underpinned notions of Linnaean variability was able to call up uncertainty—a lack of stability, control, or predictability—that by association could threaten social codes or order. Put another way, the Linnaean system had the potential to unseat the familiar by posing uncertain change to conventional status quos. By taking up themes of nation, governance, sexuality, and gender, this chapter explores how various illustrations within The Temple of Flora, emphasized by Thornton in his Prospectus as a “NATIONAL HOMAGE (sic) to Linnaeus,” address troubling shifts around the Linnaean concept of variety that in turn seemed to materialize as potential mutability in social realms.

---

6 Robert John Thornton, M.D., *March 1, 1799 will be published The New Illustration of the Sexual System of Linnaeus* (London, 1799), ii. Thornton’s key artists were Philip Reinagle (1749-1833), landscape painter who painted eleven images, portraitist Peter Henderson (fourteen images) and ‘moon-scape’ painter, Abraham Pether (1756-1812) (two images). As stated in his aforementioned *Prospectus of The New Illustration of the Sexual System of Linnaeus* (London, 1797), Thornton had 597 subscribers to the folio, 583 among which he claimed were “Kings and Potentates, English and Foreign Nobility, Gentry, Medical Gentlemen” (1).

7 Tod Stuessy, *Plant taxonomy: the systematic evaluation of comparative data* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 139. Stuessy notes that through Linnaeus’s botanical investigations and his horticultural experience in the tulip trade, he became aware of the differences that could result or occur in a species by way of human efforts (139). As is evident in the “Methodus” a broadside included in *Systema Naturae*, these ‘deviant’ forms Linnaeus saw did not deserve the rank of ‘species’ but instead were given that of ‘variety’ or ‘variations’. Stuessy also points this out. Early in his investigations Linnaeus posited a more fixed notion of species divined through the hand of God. However, in the writing of what he calls his dissertation on “The Sexes of Plants” in 1729 he did acknowledge the potential for variability in species by way of plant sexuality by stating that, “a genus [or type] was nothing else than a number of plants sprung from the same mother by different fathers” (55-56).

Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* consisted of a lavish title page, a portrait of Linnaeus, a portrait of well-known botanist Erasmus Darwin, three portraits of Thornton, four hand-painted allegorical scenes, and twenty-eight colored engravings of botanical plants.\(^9\) Thornton explained that in an effort to “render the Science of Botany as simple as possible,” only twelve of Linnaeus’s twenty-four classes would be illustrated.\(^10\) Significantly, Thornton’s floral plates differed radically from botanical images found, for example in studies from Moses Harris’s *The Aurelian: or, Natural History of English Insects* of 1766 (Figure 1.1) where plants and insects in were rendered on a blank white ground enabling the morphology and symbiotic relation of plants, flowers, and insects to be the focus of attention. Instead, as the author himself pointed out, *The Temple of Flora* initiated a new strategy of placing botanical specimens within a landscape setting.\(^11\) This innovation had been announced in Thornton’s earlier *Prospectus* of 1797, when Fellow of the Royal Society and President of the Edinburgh College of Physicians, Dr. Rutherford was quoted to the effect

---

\(^9\) Initially, Thornton had envisioned more botanical illustrations. In *Great Natural History Books and Their Creators* (2003), Ray Desmond notes that Thornton had a “confused concept of the folio’s structure,” but in total there seemed to be a goal of ninety-one botanical plates and twenty-six portraits (115). Costs were prohibitive, however, and the folio was downsized considerably.


\(^11\) Robert John Thornton, M.D. *Advertisement to the New Illustration*, 6. Art historian Charlotte Klonk in Chapter 2 of *Science and The Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Yale University Press, 1996) and William W. Blunt and William Stearn in Chapter 18 of *The Art of Botanical Illustration* (London: Antique Collectors, 1994) have commented on the innovative use of Thornton’s landscape backdrops which were unique in eighteenth-century botanical illustration. In the seventeenth century, floral illustration was diagrammatic—a specimen on a blank backdrop—flat, fixed, isolated, and unnatural. While stem, flower, and leaves were usually visible, there was no evidence of roots, terrain, or natural life, that is, no context for its subjectivity. Blunt and Stearn give mention of one publication, Crispijn van de Passe’s *Hortus Floridus* (1614), as anticipating Thornton’s strategy. Passe’s drawing of the Saffron crocus, for example, had the plant surrounded sparingly with foliage, butterflies, and field mice.
that the folio surpassed “in Elegance and Splendour” any prior works offered in memory of Linnaeus.\(^\text{12}\)

Charlotte Klonk has noted in her discussion of Thornton’s plates that the specimens pictured in the folio had all been introduced to Britain over the course of the eighteenth century.\(^\text{13}\) A key feature of Thornton’s publication, however, was that landscape backdrops made reference to a characteristic climate, topography, and season of bloom associated with each specimen. The *Snowdrops and the Crocus* (Figure 3.1), that opened the series of florals for example, was pictured in a frozen rural countryside. And as Klonk points out, Thornton’s plates of the *Hyacinths* and *Tulips* depict both within landscape settings that alluded to Holland as the country that played a key role in the cultivation of these bulbs.\(^\text{14}\) Significantly several of the plates emphasized more exotic specimens, that is, both plants and regions accessed through imperial expansion and exploration.\(^\text{15}\) Indeed, the publication played to current patriotic and national interests in the 1790s and first years of the 1800s with the texts accompanying several of the plates referencing Britain’s recent conflicts with France in both the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and evoking continuing imperial interests.\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{12}\) Thornton, *Prospectus*, 1. Rutherford was also cited for praising Thornton’s work as being accessible to “everyone.” Everyone, of course, meant a more sophisticated bourgeois or refined upper-class subscriber who had money, time, interest, and ability to import exotic seeds and bulbs, and pursue the leisurely delight of botanical exploration.

\(^{13}\) Charlotte Klonk in Science and The Perception of Nature: British Landscape Art in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries (London: Yale University Press, 1996) states that “all plants shown had been introduced into England by the end of the eighteenth century” (49).

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 57.

\(^{15}\) Such plates from Thornton’s folio as the *Curious American Bog Plants*, *The Sacred Egyptian Bean*, *The Chinese Limodoron*, *Indian Reed Cowslip*, *South American Winged Passion-Flower* or the *South African Artichoke Silver-Tree* all point to Britain’s plant pursuit and acquisition from foreign climes.  

\(^{16}\) As I will discuss more fully such plates as *Tulips* (Figure 3.5) and *The Blue Egyptian Water-Lily* are touch points for this exploration.
The Temple of Flora has been a frequent touch-point for scholars.\(^\text{17}\) Klonk for example has devoted a long and invaluable chapter to the work in her study Science and the Perception of Nature.\(^\text{18}\) However, while Klonk’s account discusses Thornton’s career and that of the artists who illustrated the plates, her analysis of the illustrations focuses primarily on their incorporation of the reigning aesthetic categories of the period—the beautiful, the sublime, or the picturesque.\(^\text{19}\) In contrast my own exploration takes a different approach by examining how the value of Thornton’s folio was not only as a template of floral classification.\(^\text{20}\) I argue that the folio’s floral depictions, unique landscaped backdrops, and accompanying text and poems stand as valuable registers of what was in fact a shifting national landscape. Indeed, as I pursue in this chapter, both images and texts served as conduits through which political and social mutability and variation were acknowledged and diffused.

Several decades ago, historian Clive Bush’s commentary on both Linnaeus and Robert Thornton pointed out that Linnaean “laws of botany” in giving definition to the natural world, by analogy could be seen to point to social paradigms, what Bush calls “laws

\(^\text{17}\) Discussions range from descriptive accounts of picturing plants, the folio’s content, and Thornton’s struggle to see it to publication as in Ray Desmond’s Great Natural History Books and their Creator of 2003, Wilfrid Blunt and William Stearn’s The Art of Botanical Illustration of 1994, and Lys De Bray’s The Art of Botanical Illustration (Bromley: Helm, 1989), to more critical exploration of Thornton’s various scientific interests as in Martin Kemp’s Seen/Unseen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. There are also a wide variety of texts that have used The Temple of Flora’s plate, Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love of 1805 by Philip Reinagle, as an iconic register of the interest Britons have for plants and gardens.

\(^\text{18}\) Klonk, Science and The Perception of Nature, Chapter Two.

\(^\text{19}\) Ibid., Chapter Two, passim and 37.

\(^\text{20}\) See for example W. Blunt and W. Stearn, The Art of Botanical Illustration (London: Antique Collectors, 1994). Blunt’s evaluation of the work as an historian of botanical illustration acknowledges that The Temple of Flora was “probably the most famous of florilegia,” but he argues that the work had “little botanical value” (236).
of society,” a parallel that has been taken up as well by other historians of science.\textsuperscript{21} With this in mind, my inquiry investigates how the illustrations and texts of Thornton’s folio registered the botanical in relation to social and political tensions in the last years of the eighteenth century.

**The Imprint of Botanophilia**

Natural history books had enjoyed popularity throughout the century: John Ray’s *Historia Plantarum* (1704), Elizabeth Blackwell’s *The Curious Herbal* (1739), William Curtis’s *Flora Londinensis* (1777), William Aiton’s *Hortus Kewensis* (1789) and James Smith’s *Introduction to English Botany* (1790-1813) are but a few works that attest to the love of plants. These records of vegetal life were chronicles of national pride, in other words, evidence that Britain as a prolific garden was a leader in scientific knowledge, global resource acquisition, and agricultural innovation and expertise.\textsuperscript{22} Robert Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* also celebrated and capitalized on botanophilia serving at once as endorsement for plantmen and nurseries involved in botanical enterprise, as vicarious travel to ‘exotic’ climes and the intimacies of botanizing, or as ready, portable specimens for practitioners of Linnaean classification.\textsuperscript{23} Noteworthy too is that with botanophilia’s


increased popularity botanical illustration acquired a more refined association as a leisure activity, that is, as “an elegant pursuit” of virtuosi collectors.24

Such association with more elite tastes was curried through two connections formative to Thornton’s folio, first that of landscaped backgrounds and second an association with the eminent natural historian Erasmus Darwin.25 As noted above, Thornton’s The Temple of Flora was the first publication of its kind to use background scenery for the floral image. In Thornton’s words, the resulting “elegant, picturesque” plates would not only express the “different gradations of the flowers, but will generally have, what has not been before attempted. Back-Grounds expressive of the situation to which each naturally belongs.”26

The picturesque alluded to by Thornton in the quote above was defined by the Reverend William Gilpin in his 1794 essay as a “composition [that] consist[ed] in uniting in one whole a variety of parts.”27 As commentators on the picturesque have noted, the

---


25 Erasmus Darwin was a physician, natural historian, philosopher, inventor, abolitionist, prolific poet and pioneer of evolutionary ideas that were advanced by his grandson, Charles. He was the founding member of the influential Derby Philosophical Society and Lunar Society of Birmingham to which leading literary, scientific and industrial leaders belonged and met ‘on the full moon’ to share ideas. Biographer Hesketh Pearson, in Doctor Darwin (New York: Walker, 1964), notes Darwin’s diverse innovations: “sketches for lamps, telescope stands, knitting-looms, surveying machines, water-closets...inventions from an organ to electricity to wooden chessmen, from a double-furrow plough, to an artificial bird” (30).

26 Thornton, Advertisement to the New Illustration, 6.

27 William Gilpin, Three essays: on picturesque beauty; on picturesque travel; and on sketching landscape: to which is added a poem, on landscape painting, 2nd ed. (London: R. Blamire, 1794), 19-20. The picturesque’s ‘smooth, rich’ variety was harmonious and pleasing, a juxtaposition to the aesthetic construction of the sublime
aestheticization of social and economic contrasts and variations which characterized the recommendations of architects of the picturesque such as Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, were given form in a range of landscape imagery in both high art and print culture forms.28 The picturesque in fact would appeal to polite tastes anxious to avoid recognition of visible rural poverty or the effects of enclosures and emparking, practices that saw small villages razed and common land enclosed to make way for large private estates.29

But the landscape settings in Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* served additional purposes for the viewers and consumers of the prints, Thornton’s emphasis that the folio’s “picturesque” plates situated plants where they “naturally belonged,” and his claim that “Each scenery is appropriated to the subject,”30 underscore the way in which plants—and among them exotics—were collected in Britain, their survival resting on the hothouses or special environments provided by collectors among the gentry and aristocracy. Thornton’s use of both landscapes and architecture in the backdrops of his folio would change over different editions.31 Still, the innovative settings of the publication pandered to his moneyed clientele’s curiosity and desire to peruse a range of locales including remote and exotic regions while acknowledging their political agency within the machinery of Britain’s national


31 New backgrounds would be needed as the engraved plates wore down and were refurbished. See Klonk, *The Perception of Nature*, Chapter 2, passim.
and foreign land claims. Picturesque and appropriated backdrops could thus mask tensions yet frame the relations between Linnaean taxonomies and aesthetic sensibilities. *The Temple of Flora* thus offered subscribers the prospect of being seen as cultured collectors at the same time as allowing them to explore both foreign locales as well as each floral’s sexual organs, its pistils and stamens, in the privacy of their own parlours.  

Appeal to elite consumers was also served through the publication’s references to the work of celebrated eighteenth-century polymath, Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802). Darwin’s epic poems, *The Botanic Garden* (1791) of which *The Loves of the Plants* (1789) and his later *Temple of Nature* (1803) were parts, served as models for Thornton’s own folio and were quoted in some of the page-long texts accompanying the illustrations. And no wonder. In his publications, Darwin anthropomorphized vegetal sexuality, sexual relations, and diverse sexual unions emphasizing for readers Linnaeus’s *nuptiae plantarum*, that is, the marriage of plants that saw pistil-wives and stamen-husbands sharing a “marriage bed” where “the male semen” (pollen) united with “the vagina” (stylus). Darwin’s *Loves of the Plants* in *The Botanic Garden* of 1791 with its mock epic tone was both titillating and shocking: the naughty *Collinsonia* for example, engages in a ménage à trois where she

---

32 Anne Secord in her article “Botany on a Plate,” *Isis* 93, no. 11 (March 2002): 28-57 argues that the “pleasure” of looking at botanical “pictures” expanded “aesthetic appreciation” and lent momentum to “the love of plants” which in turn fed into developments in botanical science.

33 Having translated Linnaeus’s works, Darwin was very familiar with the Linnaean system. Thornton’s title, *The Temple of Flora*, puns upon Erasmus Darwin’s epic poem *The Temple of Nature* (1802), giving a public perception of a similar titillating rendition of sexuality, and thus a good seller. Specifically, Darwin’s *The Loves of the Plants* addressed Linnaeus’s sexual system by personifying plants in human terms—vegetal ‘defloration,’ graphic references to genital parts, and vegetal sexual activity versified as libertine, polygamous, and aberrant. Yet, this approach had widespread appeal that narrowed the gap between aristocratic and bourgeois tastes. Thornton’s illustrations that translated the Linnaean system capitalized upon similar provocative associations. Darwin’s *The Botanic Garden* is almost 4300 lines of rhyming couplets and 100,000 words of scientific footnotes as noted by D. G. King-Hele, “Erasmus Darwin, Man of Ideas and Inventor of Words,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 42, no. 2 (July 1988): 163.

“sooths (sic) with smiles the jealous pair [of males] by turns.” In other words, as Darwin footnoted, the female first “bends herself…with one of them and then applies herself to the other.”

35 The “Proud Gloriosa,” a female of mature age, first makes three “chosen swains” the “blushing captives” of her sexual delights, then “three other youths her riper years engage, /The flatter’d victims of her wily age.”

36 Such sexual activity with this older woman held the taboo of incestuous overtones as Darwin continued in verse by warning with “…she own’d a mother’s name/ Desist, rash youth! Refrain your impious flame,/First on that bed your infant form was prefs’d.”

While the overt eroticism of The Loves of the Plants infused a risqué and even pornographic tenor into Thornton’s The Temple of Flora, an alliance with the scientist and writer was not without tensions. A disquieting aspect of Darwin’s theories was his belief that generational change via sexual reproduction underpinned evolution—an idea evoked sixty years before that of Erasmus’s famous grandson, Charles Darwin. In Zoonomia of 1794-1796, Erasmus Darwin posited that a species could adapt and “improve by its own inherent activity...down generations to its posterity,” 38 and in The Temple of Nature published in 1803

35 Erasmus Darwin, “The Loves of the Plants,” The Botanic Garden. Part II Containing the loves of the plants. A poem. With philosophical notes. (Dudlin (sic): J. Moore, 1796), 3-4, lines 51-55. The Meadia plant, what Darwin calls “a laughing belle” with a “wanton air,” (5, lines 62-63), is the same plant as The American Cowslip from Thornton’s folio, and like the Collinsonia has one pistil and two or more stamens.

36 Ibid., 11-12, lines 118-130. The arum, what Darwin describes as a warrior woman who stands “poised with her long lance” (line 195) is like The Dragon Arum illustrated in Thornton’s folio and similar to the Gloriosa with its several stamens and one pistil.

37 Ibid. Darwin’s poetic venture proved to be a success for in a letter of October 25, 1792 to his friend Richard Dixon, the author wrote that he had just “sold a work called “The Botanic Garden” for £900 to Johnson the bookseller near St. Paul’s.” For Thornton’s The Temple of Flora making references to this celebrity, as well as Darwin’s daring intellect and influential connections, would have been both politically and economically opportune.

he noted: “successive generations bloom, /New powers acquire, and larger limbs assume.”  

In addition, Erasmus Darwin’s reputation as atheist, political agitator, sympathizer with revolutionary ideals and target of the Birmingham riots of 1791 was well known.  At a time when radical dissent was rife in France, such associations were dangerous.

Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* with its vivid ambivalences—visual versus text, picturesque settings versus appropriated, and the erotic versus the scientific—spoke to both the fascination and the tensions around the dissemination of botanical knowledge. As I explore in the following sections, the exotic florals with landscaped backdrops that were unique to Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* speak of a productive new space wherein vegetality illustrated both the promise of new knowledge as well as disquieting variabilities in terms of nation, governance, sexuality, and gender.

**Sex in the Garden and Modeling Nationhood**

**genial SPRING!…**

Wide through the world my shafts are sent…

And fields with *blooming life* o’erspread.  

—George Dyer (poem accompanying *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* in Robert Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora*)

---


40 See Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men* (London: Gaber and Faber, 2003). Perhaps such factors contributed to Darwin and members of his Lunar Society, namely Dr. Joseph Priestley, being targeted during the Birmingham Riots of 1791 for their supposed empathy to religious dissenters. Religious practice was, at the simplest of levels, in two camps: the Church of England (Anglicans) and others. In Birmingham, it seemed those of privilege were the Unitarians, or ‘others; those of the labouring class were Church of England. So, possibly Darwin’s associations with the ‘elite’ could incite class and political overtones.

The concept of the nation as a protected, idyllic garden was called up within the dedication to *The Temple of Flora* that depicted Britain as under the “unbounded protection” of “an August King and the best of Queens.”\(^\text{42}\) The King was, of course, George III (1738-1820) who had ascended to the throne in 1760, and a year later married Duchess Sophia Charlotte (1744-1818) of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in northern Germany. George III reigned for fifty-nine years. During that time, the apparent marital fidelity and harmony of the Royals was viewed as remarkable, and their fifteen children modeled national productivity, stability, and all round “laudatory behaviour.”\(^\text{43}\) Under this Monarchy, Britain could be viewed as an ideal and fruitful garden space. As I will show, however, the garden was also troubled.

Dense vegetality—entwined and wet succulents, violent flush of petal and plumage, humid and erotic—Philip Reinagle’s allegorical *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* (1805) (Figure 3.2), placed at the beginning of Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora*, opens the narrative of national fruition under Britain’s George III. Thornton’s accompanying text stresses the links between Linnaeus’s sexual system of classification, Reinagle’s colourful image, and ‘love’ in both the social and botanical worlds. Thornton opens his commentary noting that while already suggested by earlier natural historians, ‘the sexes of Plants’ had required Linnaeus’s studies and theories as confirmation. Six stanzas of verse by English poet George

---

\(^{42}\) Thornton, *The Temple of Flora* (1799-1807), ed. G. Grigson (London: Collins, 1951), 3. Thornton in dedicating the publication to Queen Charlotte points out that the Queen is a “gracious Majesty, bright example of conjugal fidelity and maternal tenderness, patroness of Botany and the Fine Arts.”

\(^{43}\) Jeremy Black, *George III, America’s Last King* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 148-149. Black does acknowledge during George’s period of madness, particularly in 1789-1799 George had “confused” feelings for Elizabeth, Countess of Pembroke one of Queen Charlotte’s ladies of the bedchamber, having imagined he was married to her. There were also rumour of an “intimacy” with a housemaid called Sally, but Black concludes that there “seems no basis for the report” (148-149).
Dyer that follow Thornton’s comments describe how “love” subjects both men and women as well as “the Garden’s Sweet Domain.”

In Reinagle’s image, Cupid, as harbinger of love, ventures along the path of a verdant garden, enclosed by lush growth and sunlit equatorial-like mountains. Turned to the right, his arrow is aimed at a prominent floral specimen in the foreground. With a plume-like flare of iridescent orange petals and beak-like sheath held on a tall and bent stalk, the plant stands out against the green and foliated surroundings. The common name for the specimen, the Bird of Paradise, acknowledges the unusual flower’s resemblance to a long-necked, tropical bird. Important to my analysis is that the unusual floral was also called the Queen Flower or Queen Plant. Its Linnaean name, *Strelitzia reginae*, was chosen by the prominent naturalist Joseph Banks to honour Queen Charlotte and her place of birth: Mecklenberg-*Strelitzia* in Germany. In Reinagle’s image, the bright orange of the Queen plant is echoed by the plumage of what resembles a Regal sunbird (*Cinnyris regius*) perched in a tree in the upper left. The bird not only was a colorful species that could call up the exotics kept in George III’s Royal menagerie, but was also renown as being the chief pollinator of the *Strelitzia* plant. At the simplest of levels then, armed with Love’s weaponry—full quiver, taut bow,


[45] Ibid. In text accompanying a single plate entitled *The Queen Flower*, n.p. Stephen Harris in his introductory commentary that accompanies the 2008 limited edition of Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* published by Britain’s Folio Society states that the *strelitzia* was discovered by Carl Thunberg (one of Linnaeus’s pupils and later known as the father of South African botany for his extensive travels there), in the coastal woods of Easter Cape (South Africa) in 1773, and passed it to Francis Masson, a British plant hunter who introduced the plant to Britain (78).

[46] Judith Pascoe, *The Hummingbird Cabinet* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 56-57. Exotic birds were often made as gifts. Pascoe cites a diary entry of the Queen on September 8, 1789 that acknowledges Barbados Governor Perry’s gift to George III for his aviary—a “most beautiful Peroquet the Plumage of which is Orange blue & Green tipped with red” (57). For birds as chief pollinators see Michael Simpson, *Plant Systematics* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005).
golden arrow—Cupid could be both mediator and herald of the dynasty of George III and his Consort, Queen Charlotte. How fitting that the nationscape of *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* resonated as a botanic site where, in Linnaeus’s words, “individuals multiply by generation.”

Not just Linnaean sexual fruition is addressed, however. In *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love*, Cupid’s presence calls up scientific knowledge in another way. In the eighteenth century, images of putti were commonplace in spaces of scientific activity as a way to “domesticate science, often in the literal sense of bringing it home.” Cupid’s mobility in this garden then could also speak to the nation’s increased interest in botany and particularly through the Linnaean system whose taxonomy of the ‘Vegetal Kingdom’ encouraged the love of plants. In addition, Cupid’s presence here could allude to the Royal couple whose nicknames, “Farmer George” and the “Queen of Botany,” suggested their passion for and patronage of botanophilia. Surely it is no coincidence that Reinagle’s composition showcases

---


48 J. L. Heilbron, “Domesticating Science in the Eighteenth Century,” *Science and the Visual Image in the Enlightenment*, ed. William Shea (Canton, MA: Watson Publishing, 2000), 1. Heilborn’s article includes images of putti involved in ‘scientific’ activity: a putto helping a dialler in Maignan’s *Perspectiva* (1640); assisting in a Galilean experiment in Manfredi’s *Gnomone* (1736); Putti helping in natural philosophy in Fontenelle’s *Oeuvres diverses* (1729). Interestingly, Part One of Linnaeus’s *New Illustration* (also dedicated to Queen Charlotte) has a portrait of Queen Charlotte, ‘Queen of Botany’ around whom are numerous putti with festoons of flowers and her Royal crown. The idea of ‘helping hands’ behind the successes of scientific inquiry is also borne out in depictions of disembodied hands (sometimes from clouds) aiding in experimentations.

49 These were nicknames of the Royal couple as quoted and cited in numerous texts one of which is Ray Desmond’s *Kew: The History of the Royal Botanic Gardens* (London: Harvill Press, 1995), 90. Possibly George III’s interest in botany had been cultivated by his mother, Augusta, who upon her husband Fredrick’s death expanded and developed Richmond and Kew gardens. On a different note, George III had widespread scientific interests from astronomy (and support of British astronomer William Herschel) to animal husbandry. Queen Charlotte studied botany and botanical illustration and taught both to her daughters.
the breadfruit trees in the left middle-ground that Banks had collected in Otaheite, and what appears to be banana and sugar cane on the right—all specimens that register botanical ventures endorsed by George III as part of the global pursuit of botanical resources.\(^\text{50}\)

However, botanophilia’s bloom was overshadowed by uncertainties embodied within Linnaean variety—notions that translated into Britain’s domestic and imperial landscapes. At this point the garden seems a Foucauldian heterotopic space, that is, “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites…are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted” to allow for oppositional debates to emerge.\(^\text{51}\) The poem by George Dyer which accompanied Cupid Inspiring the Plants with Love and which I quote at the outset of this section, refers to this ‘genial garden’ as harmonious. That vision, however, was contested as both desire and discovery partner to reveal the troubled terrain of natural history, sex, and the nation.

**Monarchy Under The Microscope**

The protection of the nation’s profuse bounty and steady progress was promoted through its earthly defender and chief cultivator, ‘Farmer George’, George III.\(^\text{52}\)


\(^{52}\) In *Systema Naturae* of 1735, Linnaeus established that his ordering of the natural world was “attributed to some Omniscient Being, namely God” (18). Linnaeus’s mindful negotiation of science and religion typified what historian John Gascoigne in *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002) observes as a “holy alliance” between the two disciplines that was said to characterize their relationship in the eighteenth century (300). The unity of science and the sacred would seem to be conflated in Philip Reinagle’s *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* (1805) through his depiction of an enclosed garden as metaphor for a unified nation Divinely protected. George III’s Coronation Oath conflated wise governance with a sworn duty to preserve doctrines and practices of the Church of England. Landscape historian Achva Stein’s “Thoughts Occasioned by the Old Testament” in *The Meaning of Gardens*, ed. Mark Francis (London: MIT
Concurrently however, disturbing aspects of Linnaean knowledge, particularly in relation to variability or in the social realm, mutability, penetrated the nation and specifically so through the King. Importantly the Monarch was the nation, and any slippages in monarchical authority risked signaling the nation’s instability and potential vulnerability.

In *Philosophia Botanica* of 1751, Linnaeus noted that within “genera” or groups there are “different natural species,” and within a species there are a number of different strains or “varieties.”53 Built upon a foundation of taxonomic fixity, the concept of mutable boundaries suggested that different strains or confusing varieties could emerge. Linnaean scholar Frans Stafleu observes that Linnaeus throughout many of his works echoed botanist Andrea Cesalpino’s (1519-1603) observation that “if the genera are confused, everything is confused by necessity.”54 Here the suggestion that possible confusion or instability can occur in “everything” points to the uncertainty embedded within notions of variation. The fixity and certainty that Linnaean tenets were presumed to offer, left out the management of exception or differences and in fact called up disquieting notions of changeability within systems, even systems within the nation’s social and political terrains.55

---

53 Linné, *Philosophia Botanica*, 113-114. In Aphorism 155 Linnaeus established that “a system separates the classes by five appropriate divisions: classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties,” and then in Aphorism 158, he contends that “the number of varieties is the number of differing plants that are produced from the seed of the same species.” Finally in Aphorism 159 he says “there are as many Genera as there are similarly constructed fruit-bodies produced by different natural species.” The point is, that despite the perception of “fixity” within his system, it was full of exceptions or slight aberrations.


55 Linné, *Philosophia Botanica*, 258. Aphorism 310. That is, aberrations occurred, but Linnaeus goes onto say in *Philosophia Botanica* that the botanist “does not care [about] small variations.” In other words, that is, that variations were permissible in nature.
Reinagle’s *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love*, with its profuse greenery and shimmering pools images both the nation’s abundance as well as the momentum of change. George III’s ascension in 1760 began with reforms to factions within political parties, with moral censures concerning luxury excess, and with support to the arts and sciences through The Royal Academy of Art and science’s Royal Society.\(^{56}\) One initiative telling of a shift in political temperament under his rule was George III’s effort to fortify his “intent[ion] to be a ‘Patriot King’” and he did this by allowing men to hold office who demonstrated ability over political party loyalty.\(^{57}\) Such re-ordering was contentious and especially where his botanical interests were concerned. George III’s promotion of science and particularly men who showed specialized ability saw Captain James Cook and Joseph Banks, along with the latter’s contingent of plant hunters, join ranks in the *Endeavour’s* 1769 voyage of discovery to the Southern Continent. Although advertised as a voyage to chart the transit of Venus, a marked objective of the journey as noted in Chapter Two, involved geo-botanizing and its economic opportunities. Importantly, this voyage was also unique for its conflation of naval expertise and service, private scientific enterprise, and the actualization of monarchical patronage.\(^{58}\)

\(^{56}\) Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1701-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 206-207. Political issues that were grappled with concerned the responsibility of the Cabinet and to what extent George III would need to choose ministers from amongst those who might have the ear of Parliament. The Whigs had been the dominant party between 1714-1760. According to Colley, the Tory associations with Jacobites contributed to their downfall. George III wanted to be free of Whig influences (who wanted constitutional monarchy where the powers of the monarch are restricted by the nation’s constitution and laws) and effectively did that through the initial appointment of Lord Bute to Prime Minister. This was short-lived, however. Also see O'Gorman, Frank, and Diana Donald. *Ordering the World in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

\(^{57}\) Jeremy Black, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (London: Arnold, 1997), 202. A crisis early on in George III’s reign would seem to have taken exception to his ‘Patriot King’ image, namely, when John Wilkes through his newspaper, the *North Briton*, denounced the Peace of Paris of 1763, and as Black explains, “with the implication that George had lied in his speech from the throne,” by having forfeited too much to foreign powers, particularly France (247). Wilkes was charged with sedition.

Such ventures that united national prowess with botanical enterprise forged a shift that saw an increase in projects that linked botany to science and technology and which in turn gave impetus not only to a new class of professional entrepreneurs, but also helped set the nation on a productive new course.\(^{59}\) George III’s’ dedication to botanical interests and practices and his agri-improvements were widely known\(^{60}\) and particularly evident in the monarch’s development of the Royal Gardens at Kew, a site considered as “metaphor for the stability and bliss of the state”\(^{61}\) and in the appointment of Joseph Banks as the Director of the Royal Gardens in 1773, under whose management Kew’s acquisitions grew from 3,000 to 11,000 species.\(^{62}\) As a scientific center and chief transfer depot for global product, Kew served as a nexus of botanical knowledge and global claim. By the early 1800s, Britain had become “the most important centre for comparative biological thinking, and in particular for phytogeography,” or the geographic distribution of plants, a status to which both Kew Gardens and the King’s support were central.\(^{63}\)

---

\(^{59}\) See Drayton, *Nature’s Government* (2000) and also Alan Q. Morton’s *Science in the Eighteenth Century: The King George III Collection* (London: Science Museum Publications, 1993). Not necessarily seen, but underpinning Britain as idyllic gardenscape were diverse industries that hinged upon botanical enterprise: horticulturists and illustrators for voyages of discovery, ship-building to accommodate resource freight, navigational technologies, botanical tools and preservation techniques, and commercial enterprises ranging from fashion to food.

\(^{60}\) Desmond, *Kew*, 90.


\(^{63}\) As cited in Drayton, *Nature’s Government*, 127. Kew was transfer depot and research center for exotic botanicals. In 1853 Kew was first opened on Sunday afternoons to the public. Not until the 1890s was the public allowed access to Kew each weekday morning. Also see Ray Desmond, “Transformation of the Royal Gardens at Kew,” *Sir Joseph Banks: A Global Perspective*, ed. R. Banks (London: Royal Botanic Gardens Pub., 1994), 112.
Philip Reinagle’s botanoscape of *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* I suggest references this notion of the Royal Gardens at Kew as acclimatization center and site of Britain’s imperial reach by imaging several of the important plants that had been brought back to Kew. These include the Otaheitian breadfruit tree on the left, the West Indies banana trees on the right, and in the right foreground the prominent South African Bird of Paradise specimen and the indigenous South Pacific taro plant with its heart shaped leaves.

Yet, while a floral plate evoking the global enterprise of George III might attest to the ‘improvement’ mandate of the ruler, not all was well within the nation. Abroad, foreign wars remained a threat in the 1790s, and certainly at home botany and its agricultural application as endorsed by the Monarch was complicated by land reforms in Britain. Between 1760 and 1820, Parliament passed the Enclosure Acts where common land used by rural interests was incorporated into larger estates. Ostensibly, the purpose was to efficiently produce more on less land, realize greater profits, and keep rural discontent contained in vice-like grids. For agrarian workers, these tracts provided a mean livelihood when crops were good and no sustenance in years when crops failed. Poverty, disease, and crime were also rife. Urban centers witnessed an influx of the migrating poor and governance saw the “annual expenditure in the total poor rates top £4 million.”

As the shifting nationscape was challenged by these new ruptures that reconfigured familiar social and economic status quos—a mutation from former fixed grids of social

---

64 Stephen Brumwell and W. A. Speck, *Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Cassell & Co., 2001), 300. Dorothy George in *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1965) cites the records kept between 1774 and 1781 from the Westminster Dispensary by a Dr. Bland who investigated the proportion of native Londoners to ‘immigrants.’ His records showed that only 25% of the 3236 people interviewed were born in London, 50% were from counties in England and Wales, 18% were from Scotland and Ireland and 7% were other ‘foreigners’ (111). What these early figures suggest is that populations were highly mobile, thus shifting urban and rural demographics. Richard Brown in *Society and Economy in Modern Britain 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1991) states that the Irish were always a significant factor in immigration—between “1780 and 1840, for example, 1.8 million left Ireland for mainland Britain, North America, or Australia” (26).
separation—other forms of political strife and dissension emerged in the last two decades of the century. One major area where mutability surfaced was in relation to the health and stability of George III. The King’s health was the nation’s prowess, and that was under threat when in 1788 the monarch’s episodes of ‘madness’ or mental instability peaked and sent shock waves through the nation. Fitness to govern was thought to be demonstrated through public sensibilities and actions that articulated the integrity of one’s ‘natural’ feelings and inner self. Troubling then was that George III’s ‘natural self’ and personal character seemed to transform during his affliction into a strange animal-human mixity, an apparent hybridity or mutability that Linnaeus’s *Genera Morborum* (1763) and even *Systema Naturae* (1735) had addressed. Fundamentally, Linnaeus said “symptoms or external signs” are significant classifiers. The King’s outward symptoms—described as animal-like “noises [like] the howling of a dog,” left the nation “in a state of agitation,” as did his bizarre ramblings that

---


66 Richard Pulteney in *A general view of the writing of Linnaeus* (London: T. Payne and B. White, 1781), 169-179 summarizes Linnaeus’s series of lectures on the classifying of diseases entitled *Genera Morborum and published in 1763 where he identifies “symptoms” as significant registers and should be observed closely (169-179). *Genera Morborum* establishes that the causes, effects, and signs of disease are important and gives eleven classes of disease. “Class V is *Mentales*” or mental disturbances of which there are several varieties ranging from “delirium to idiotic insanity to madness,” to name a few. Of further concern here around the King’s animal-like “symptoms” are tenets recalled in *Systema Naturae* that posited *Anthropomorpha* as a category shared between man (*Homo*) and animals, namely, apes (*Simia*). In *Systema Naturae*, Linnaeus also observed the tenuous border between man and animal in stating that *all* “Animals grow, live and feel” (19). Some thinkers like Rousseau and Bentham supported the idea of sentience in animals. Even plants such as the much sought after “Venus flytrap” and the mimosa or large flowering sensitive plant (of which Thornton’s folio has a plate) fascinated for their human-like response to touch.

67 Historian Mary Ann Cutter in *Reframing Disease Contextually* (Boston: Kulwer Academic Publishers, 2003) notes that Linnaeus isolated three criteria by which diseases can be distinguished: “cause, effect, and sign.” However, since the interactions within the body (the cause and effect) were difficult to know for certain, Linnaeus said diseases should be classified by “symptoms or external signs” (34).

68 As observed and recorded in 1788 private letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) and cited in Thomas Moore’s *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honorable Richard Brinsley Sheridan*, Chapter 3 (London: Longman, 1825) at [http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/8rbs210.txt](http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/8rbs210.txt). As John Barrell has noted, these aspects of George III’s affliction led to comparisons at the end of the eighteenth century with the Old Testament King Nebuchadnezzar who God turned into an animal for his materialism. Nebuchadnezzar who ruled Babylon for
confused war threats with “disease among horned cattle.”69 There seemed to be little reason or sensibility here, traits that philosophers had argued separated Man from animal.70 George III was quickly removed to Kew where the quiet and reclusive precincts of the Royal Gardens were to provide a regenerative space for nursing the King back to health.71

Dr. William Pargeter (1760-1810), a physician who worked in the field of mental disorders, observed that “a fellow creature destitute of the governing principle, reason” was indiscernible from “inferior animals around us.”72 As such, Pargeter’s argument that reason was the key in returning to homo rationalis was a taxonomic approach of sorts that turned to the management of the symptoms through observation and classification of the patient’s behaviour.73 Similarly, Alexander Crichton’s An inquiry into the nature and origin of mental derangement (1798) urged that practitioners “be acquainted with the human mind in its sane

over forty years (c. 605-562 BC) was known to have suffered from mental illness for seven years, which was also thought to be porphyria, a rare blood disorder that had afflicted George III. For further discussion of the animalized George III who by the 1790s would be likened to the bestial Old Testament King see John Barrell, Imagining the King’s Death: figurative treason, fantasies of regicide, 1793-1796 (Oxford Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 2000). Peter Otto in “Nebuchadnezzars Sublime Torments: William Blake, Arthur Boyd and the East,” The Reception of Blake in the Orient, eds. Steven H. Clark et. al., (London: Continuum, 2006) notes that the Biblical and modern Kings shared “despotism and idleness” and points to interpretations of Biblical prophecy that enabled a parallel to be drawn between the decay of Babylon and London (260).


71 Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, George III and the Mad-Business (London: Pimlico, 1991), 50-51 and 173-175. Through a contemporary analysis of authentic medical records and eyewitness accounts of George III’s symptoms and medical records, Doctors Macalpine and Hunter in their 1968 study concluded George III’s madness was a rare inherited metabolic disorder known as porphyria. The automatic nervous system is impacted, some symptoms of which are manifest through “pain, racing pulse, sweating, giddiness, visual and auditory disturbances, rambling, sleeplessness, delirium rapid eye movement, and blood urine and faeces” (172-173).


state” through “the impartiality of the natural historian.”74 The same methods of observation, order and management that Linnaean formulations used to define natural and ‘mad’ worlds were seen as potential strategies to dispel chaos in the psychological world.75 In other words, looking into invisible worlds and seeing inward worlds mobilized new ways of understanding social variation.

George III’s curious loss of reason called up other anxieties exacerbated by Linnaean observations, namely that “Nature blended the Genera whence [came] as many species…and Chance blended the Species.”76 In other words, chance fluctuations or mutabilities impacted traits of a species to produce random variation. Inheritable social characteristics such as rightful authority of the aristocracy, were seen to pass down or “come through the blood.”77 How could purity of family birthright be secured if an element of Chance, for example the seepage of madness, could be established “through blood,” that is, through ancestry, its health, its sex, and progeny?78 A fractured King whose sound judgment and body was subject to insidious attack and variation, at various levels, called into question the nation’s fortitude.

In the well-circulated knowledge of George III’s madness, Britons risked seeing their own vulnerability, an uneasy consideration in light of contemporaneous threats that ranged

74 Sir Alexander Crichton, An inquiry into the nature and origin of mental derangement. Comprehending a concise system of the physiology and pathology of the human mind (London: T. Cadell, 1798), x.

75 See Footnote 72.


from smallpox to French wars.\textsuperscript{79} At a crisis point on November 13, 1788 in response to “his Majesty’s Indisposition,” all churches and chapels in England and Scotland were ordered to deliver a “Prayer for the King’s” recovery and restoration to his former health.\textsuperscript{80} While some Britons may have been reassured by prayers, others sought solace in the knowledge that the King could “exercise authority only through ministerial structures”—ironically a policy that was said to have triggered His Majesty’s poor health.\textsuperscript{81} The effectiveness of ministerial authority was similarly tenuous given that there were no less than five governments between 1782 and 1784, and that included a paralytic six weeks in 1783 when Britain had no government at all—political chaos that left the King and country in a troubled psychological state.\textsuperscript{82} Reinagle’s \textit{Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love} may have attempted to depict idyllic nationhood and productive colonial empire in keeping with \textit{The Temple of Flora’s} references to both King and country, but such representation was set against concurrent anxieties over both the nation’s and the Monarch’s vulnerability.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{79}Roy Porter in \textit{English Society in the Eighteenth Century} (London: Penguin Books, 1990) notes that throughout the 1700s smallpox, typhus, dysentery, measles and influenza repeatedly attacked populations, and despite this, the issue of ‘vaccination’ and Edward Jenner’s efforts to inoculate against smallpox remained a controversial issue. Also see Rod Broglio, “The Romantic Cow: Animals as Technology,” \textit{The Wordsworth Circle} 36, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 48-52. For a cogent discussion of the French threat during these years see Linda Colley, \textit{Britons} (London: Pimlico, 2003), passim.

\textsuperscript{80} The Annual Register, or view of the history, politics, and literature for the year 1788 (London, 1790), 251.

\textsuperscript{81} Black, \textit{George III: American’s Last King}, 338.


\textsuperscript{83} The Regency Bill of 1789 that would have given authority to George III’s son the Prince of Wales to act as Regent, was averted by George III’s recovery. There was a recurrence of the King’s mental instabilities, however, in May 1804 but seemly not to the extent of those agitations in 1788 and 1789. According to Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter in \textit{George III and the Mad-Business} (1991) this time George III suffered from “severe headaches” and “irritability” but did manage to carry out some duties (137-138). By early 1805 the King had again recovered but now suffered from “an uncommon deficiency of sight,” a result of cataracts (139). Macalpine notes that the King’s loyal friend, Sir Joseph Banks, had reported to the Speaker of the House of Commons that the King’s right eye was completely blind and his left so weak that he could read for only a short
The Nation Uncovered—Rendering Gender in *The Temple of Flora*

Just as the King had been relegated to the peripheries of governance through the late 1780s, new relations of proximity also began to shift and emerge especially around the issue of gendered roles. Botanical knowledge and practices gave momentum to changing perceptions of gender and femininity and opened up the exchange of new ideas and activities that countermanded the ostensibly fixed sphere associated with women.

Thornton described his folio, *The Temple of Flora*, as unveiling the “advantages” of botanical study and as “an elegant pursuit for ladies.” Tacit endorsement to the work being appropriate for ‘ladies’ came by way of Erasmus Darwin’s popular *The Loves of the Plants*. The two publications posited botany, as science historian Janet Browne has observed, as a key site of exchange around femininity and gender. *The Temple of Flora* also capitalized upon a female interest in botany that had already been established through earlier publications. William Withering’s renowned *Botanical Arrangement of All the Vegetables Growing Naturally in Great Britain* (1774) acknowledged that it was directed towards “the ladies, many of whom are very considerable proficient.”

Martyn’s 1785 translation of Rousseau’s very popular *Lettres élémentaires sur la botanique*

---


86 William Withering, *A Botanical Arrangement of All the Vegetables naturally Growing in Great Britain* (London: M. Swinney, 1776), v. Withering (1741-1799) experimented with herbal remedies, namely foxglove, a plant from which digoxin was extracted. He is credited with the founding of digitalis which is used in treatment of heart conditions.
(1771-1773) was addressed to “THE LADIES of GREAT BRITAIN.” And of course
Priscilla Wakefield’s *Introduction to Botany, in a Series of Familiar Letters* of 1796,
comprised an epistolary exchange between sisters along with illustrations that were designed
to give women “a clear and simple exposition of Linnaean classes, orders, and genera.”
Where Thornton’s folio seemed to differ was in a strategy that did not dictate what “ladies”
*should* see and know, but invited its female viewer to *participate* in botanical discovery
alongside her male counterparts. Sexual difference underpinning Linnaeus’s system was not
erased, but gender divides had begun to blur.

Attentiveness to women seemed evident in Thornton’s conception of *The Temple of
Flora*. The temple was, after all, the shrine for Flora, Goddess of flowers. Importantly, the
first image within the folio was that of *Flora Dispensing her Favours on the Earth* (1807) by
Royal Academy member, Maria Cosway (1759-1838) (Figure 3.3). Here, Cosway depicted a
conventional imaging of Flora dressed in white and flying over England’s green fields upon
which she scatters blooms and their inherent fecundity. Just as botany’s fruition enabled
Flora’s movement throughout terrains, Cosway’s representation here at the folio’s outset
perhaps hints at a similar mobility made possible to women by way of botanical exploration.
Thornton’s engagement of several women writers to provide accompanying text for plates

---

87 Thomas Martyn, *Letters on the Elements of Botany: Addressed to a Lady* by the celebrated J. J. Rousseau; translated into English, with notes fully explaining the system of Linnaeus (London: B and J. White, 1796), v. Rousseau, through a series of letters, taught the elements of botany and social sphere to a young lady.


within *The Temple of Flora* seems also designed to appeal to a female viewership. Indeed, by commissioning what Thornton’s calls “the finest Artists of this Country,” and including Maria Cosway in that mix, perhaps the interest of ‘ladies’ was also tapped, given that many not unlike the Queen, occupied their minds with botanical knowing and painting.

That *The Temple of Flora* could appeal to female interests was not unproblematic, however. Scottish botanist, Charles Alston, warned that botany could corrupt by way of the “gross prurience of Linnaeus’s mind.” William Smellie, editor of the first *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, advised that Linnaean tenets were “far beyond all decent limits” and thus dangerous for female sensibilities. In spite of, or maybe because of, such damnation *The Temple of Flora* was published although not with much financial success. The folio’s value, however, may have lain elsewhere, that is, in what Foucault observes as a “new way of connecting things both to the eye and to discourse.” That new way I argue emerged through

---

90 Social historian, Roy Porter in *Enlightenment* (London: Penguin, 2000) notes the extraordinary surge of women’s participation in writing and the arts. For example he notes that “at least 339 women poets published under their own names between 1760 and 1830 and a further eighty-two anonymous ones have been identified” (327). In Thornton’s folio some well-known writers were Anna Seward, educator Frances Arabella Rowden, and published poet and novelist Charlotte Lennox. Anna Seward, the ‘Swan of Lichfield’ (1747-1804), who was celebrated for her *Elegy on Captain Cook* (London: J. Dodsley, 1780) and critique of George Washington in *Monody on Major André* (Lichfield: J. Jackson, 1781). In *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin* (London: Johnson, 1804), Anna Seward states that Darwin used her botanic verses and “made them the exordium to the first part of his poem, *The Botanic Garden*” (132).

91 Thornton, *March 1, 1799*, ii.


94 Smellie, *The philosophy of natural history*, 393.

95 Desmond, *Great Natural History Books and their Creators*, 118-119. In May of 1811, Parliament passed an Act approving a lottery meant to buoy the sinking costs of Thornton’s folio. Through the issue of 20,000 tickets or less, money raised could not exceed £42,000. The lottery failed. Thornton blamed onerous wartime taxes as causing the folio’s financial demise.

96 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 2002), 143.
the conjunction of images and texts in the folio in ways that mobilized three overlapping themes underpinning nationhood and patrimonial lineage: fecundity and generation, fidelity and continuity, and the threat of the foreign.

**Fecundity and Generation**

Fecundity can translate as productive ability. Tied to that potential is the notion of the dynamic and of industry, that is, the possibility of creating and generating that which is new. The potential for anxiety emerges, however, when such generation threatens to digress or mutate from conventional cultural norms. Such considerations, I have argued, played a role in relation to Reinagle’s *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* and the many references to the monarchy and George III. Anxieties surface as well in Peter Henderson’s depiction of a single specimen of *The Queen Flower* (1804) (Figure 3.4) in *The Temple of Flora*, an image that is especially telling in light of Thornton’s claim that “every flower, however mean in the vulgar eye, is a sermon for the learned.”

The *Strelizia Reginæ* or *The Queen Flower* (Figure 3.4) was not only named after Queen Charlotte as noted earlier in this chapter but was given to her as a gift by Joseph Banks. Significantly, court whisperings held that the plant’s ungainly neck, odd birdlike head, and shocking asymmetry were in keeping with the Queen’s unusual looks and foreign, 

---

97 In other versions of Thornton’s folio, this plate is titled *The Queen Plant*. The images I use in this thesis are, as already noted, are from the digital format from one of Thornton’s numerous renderings and in this digitalized publication the title is *The Queen Flower*.


99 Historian Richard Drayton in *Nature’s Government* (2000) politicizes Joseph Banks’s gift of the South African exotic to the Queen in observing it as “a way of securing assistance from the King who, in any event, was attracted to the sciences” (47).
even Moorish heritage.\textsuperscript{100} The link between Consort who produced some fifteen children and the Queen plant was further evoked in what botanophiles would know as the Strelitzia’s most salient feature, its tenacious fertility. The plant’s pollen was not cloudlike but matted together, a unique trait that ensured hardy reproductive potential.\textsuperscript{101} For Queen Charlotte, associations to both this plant and its fecundity aligned her comfortably with the procreative expectations of her Royal role as a guarantor of royal lineage.\textsuperscript{102} As historian Nancy Gelbart has argued, in the eighteenth century “women’s bodies came to be thought of as a kind of national property…[with] married women morally obligated and patriotically bound to perform the public function of producing citizens.”\textsuperscript{103} But fecundity itself could also raise anxieties. Linnaean formulations ostensibly touted female agency by positing that the medulla, the pistil’s “motherly marrow provided for the continuity of the particular species from generation to generation” by being “the bearer of the primary or essential character.”\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{100} Olwen Hedley, \textit{Queen Charlotte} (London: John Murray, 1995), 292. Queen Charlotte’s descent was traced through Margarita de Castro y Sousa, a Moorish branch of the Portuguese Royal House. Also see J. A. Rogers, “Britain’s Black Background,” \textit{The Crisis} 47, no. 2 (February 1940): 40.

\textsuperscript{101} See Michael Simpson, \textit{Plant Systematics} (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), 260. The Strelitzia is one such plant that has “viscin threads,” that is, entangled thread-like structures whose function is “to stick pollen grains in masses” and thus better enable animal pollinators to contact and transfer pollen. The matting of the pollen prevents cloudlike bursts where pollen floats aimlessly. The Strelitzia’s hard beak-like spathe that holds its brilliant orange and purple flower serves as a perch for birds who are the chief pollinators for this plant. Pollen on the bird’s feet is transported when the bird alights on another plant.


\textsuperscript{103} Nancy Gelbart, \textit{The King’s Midwife} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 91 and 262.

\textsuperscript{104} This theory was first proposed by Linnaeus in 1749 but occurs in one of the eleven aphorisms in the sixth edition of \textit{General Plantarum} of 1764 as cited in Roger Williams, \textit{Botanophilia in Eighteenth-Century France} (London: Kluwer Academic, 2001), 27.
Importantly, Linnaeus also proclaimed to his student ‘apostles’ that in the pith or marrow “resided will, that is to say, the ability to expand and contract.”\textsuperscript{105}

Primacy of the female to determine and ensure generational continuity posed challenges to conventional views of patrimony in both the familial and national senses of the word. Indeed the nation’s maternal model, Queen Charlotte, was a flashpoint for such concern.\textsuperscript{106} Some politicians and advisors were troubled by the Consort’s visibility and mobility within Court governance and proceedings. The Earl of Egremont voiced this concern in his 1789 letter to Edmund Burke during the period when George III’s madness was at issue: “The Queen…in fact conducts herself as a Candidate for every thing, and…her Majesty fills the Eye of all the world.”\textsuperscript{107} He went on to complain about her “coming more forward” with the result of “the King disappear[ing] in proportion,”\textsuperscript{108} a factor that unsettled given that the Queen had legal power through the Minority of Heir to the Crown Act of 1765 to serve as Regent should the King be debilitated. Of further note is that according to historian Percy Fitzgerald, the year before her marriage to George III, Princess Charlotte at age sixteen wrote a letter to the King of Prussia “lament[ing] the horrors of war” and making a plea to “return to peace,” and help “husbandman and shepherds” now forced “to ravage the

\textsuperscript{105} Seth Lindroth in “The Two Faces of Linnaeus” from editor Tore Frängsmyr’s \textit{Linnaeus: The Man and His Work} (1983) explains that this theory initially came by way of Italian botanist Caesalpinus (1519-1603) who spoke of plant “marrow” (or medulla) and that Linnaeus’s formulation was a sweeping simplification. The interjection of the notion of \textit{will} was justified by Linnaeus through the example of the amoeba.

\textsuperscript{106} Robert Thornton at the beginning of \textit{The Temple of Flora} dedicates the folio to the Royal couple and of the Queen he says, “bright example of conjugal fidelity and maternal tenderness” in the dedication (n.p.).

\textsuperscript{107} Earl of Egremont, May 26, 1789. \textit{The Correspondence of Edmund Burke,} Vol. 5., ed. T. Copeland, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 476. Known as the Regency Crisis, George’s madness spanned from November 1788 to February 26, 1789 when a bulletin was issued to the effect that “There appears this morning to be an entire cessation of His Majesty’s illness.” On March 9\textsuperscript{th} the Privy Council session was held in the King’s Palace at Kew’s and on March 14\textsuperscript{th} the King returned to Windsor. See Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, \textit{George III and the Mad-Business} (London: Pimlico, 1991).

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Ibid.}
soil they formerly cultivated.” Such concern could be viewed ambivalently, that is, her empathy for rural labourers was at one level laudable but such political interference at the same time countered her gender and Royal role.

Fecundity and generation in relation to patrimony in the period are addressed very differently within *The Temple of Flora* through the image and text accompanying another botanical by Philip Reinagle: *Tulips* (1798) (Figure 3.5). Noting that ‘variety’ marked the variegated tulips that are pictured—specimens which were in the eighteenth century both expensive and the result of careful breeding—Thornton claimed that the names given tulips by florists could be studied to discover “*distinctions in the habits, attitudes and lineament*” among them. Elaborating, Thornton added that the tallest variegated tulip dominating the centre of the composition had been named in honour of Louis XVI—who, as readers would know, was the monarch executed in the French Revolution in 1792 in the interests of French republicanism. Not insignificantly, the threats to monarchical rule posed by republicanism were a major reason that Britain and allied powers waged war against France beginning in the early 1790s. Thornton’s description of the variegated tulip insists that though the petal edges are “stained with black, the true emblem of sorrow,” the flower still “rises above the rest with princely majesty.” While other tulips designated as “La Majestieuse” and “La Triomphe Royale” assert monarchical glory, the initial evocation of revolution and its threat to monarchical lineage is further circumscribed by two tulips that Thornton notes have been

---


110 Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, text accompanying the plate entitled *Tulips*, n.p. Thornton emphasized the cost of variegated tulips noting that the King Louis XVI tulip pictured in the plate sold for some forty guineas.

bred by plantmen Davey and Mason and named by Thornton himself. These honour the
patrons of his publication, the Earl of Spencer, Lord Admiral of the Royal Navy during
Britain’s conflicts with France in the latter years of the French Revolution and the
Napoleonic Wars, and his sister Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. While the Duchess of
Devonshire was in fact a colourful and controversial hostess and social activist known for her
campaigning for the Whig Charles Fox, a notorious rake, gambler, macaroni, and outspoken
critic of the monarchy, such ‘variation’ in terms of gendered norms is contained by a
framing through floral references to both monarchy and the Lord Admiral of the Navy. The
latter’s achievement, Thornton notes, rests on “his memorable conduct of our navy, which
has eclipsed under his administration, even the glory of our ancestors.”

---

112 From 1794-1801 as First Lord of the Admiralty, Earl Spencer would exercise overall command of the Royal Navy whose role was crucial in the continued conflicts with France.

113 The Duchess’s activities on the political front were unusual. As historian Linda Colley has noted in *Britons* (2003) women were only allowed to politically campaign for relatives, which Fox was not. In addition, that her support for Fox was regarding his advocacy of “suffrage,” would also similarly suggest her departure from social norms, a move that ultimately earned her the sobriquet, “aristocratic supertramp” (241-246).

114 Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, text accompanying the plate entitled *Tulips*, n. p. From 1794-1801 as First Lord of the Admiralty, Earl Spencer commanded the Royal Navy. At a time when Britain was locked in major naval warfare with France over the French Revolutionary Wars between 1792 and 1802 (in foreign sites such as island in the Caribbean, Minorca in the Mediterranean, Wolfe Tone’s alliance with French troops to effect a French invasion of Ireland, the Egyptian campaign from 1798-1799, particularly the battle at Aboukir), Earl Spencer’s naval administration was lauded. The glory of Britain and its naval prowess during the Napoleonic Wars is particularly referenced in another botanical plate, Peter Henderson’s *The Blue Egyptian Water-Lily* (1804). As Thornton explains in the accompanying text, the exquisite blue lotus-like flower floats upon tranquil waters while in the backdrop there is “a distant view of Aboukir … the waters of the Nile” and palm trees, all made sacred by the mosque on the water’s edge. In terms of botanical enterprise, the Egyptian water-lily and its backdrop call up British Admiral Nelson’s defeat of Napoleon at Aboukir—a victory that secured the protection Britain’s lucrative trade in Egyptian cotton and Egypt’s strategic geography as gateway to India, Britain’s central resource for plant acclimatization and for silks, spices, teas, and dyes. In his footnotes, Thornton includes an excerpt from Admiral Nelson’s journal account of the Battle at the Bay of Shoals and subsequently his engagement at Aboukir from August 1-3, 1798. The entry relates those involved and those killed in the battle. This botanical plate would seem to applaud Britain military and imperial prowess as demonstrated in Thornton’s comments in the accompanying text that: “the thunder of the British Arms, which Providence had destined to annihilate his [Napoleon’s] proud army, and take from it its famed standard, *Impiously* called ‘Invincible’.” According to historian Maya Jasanoff in *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), Nelson’s victory contributed to “building morale and public confidence in the British army, long considered inferior to the French” (202).
Thornton’s own illustration to *The Temple of Flora*, his *Group of Roses* (1798) (Figure 3.6) offers a less elite and more domestic image of the nation’s interests. The plate depicts a pair of nightingales nestled within the bloom of a collection of garden roses. Different editions of the plate set the scene within a manicured landscape featuring either a middle-eastern garden folly or a Palladian country house in the distance.\textsuperscript{115} In each, Thornton’s text references the seasonal migration of the nightingale from Egypt to Britain, and includes verses on themes of revitalized fecundity that emerges “as Spring advances.”\textsuperscript{116}

While the text makes allusion to the ongoing presence of British forces in Egypt, the domesticated roses that harbour nesting nightingales emerge as a metaphor for the nation itself, that is, a place for reuniting with family and renewing Britain through the birth of a new generation of patriot sons.

The themes of fecundity and generation addressed in *The Temple of Flora*’s plates were not surprising given the current demographic crisis. As Linda Colley has noted, the landed establishment of England “were not reproducing themselves”\textsuperscript{117} and the country’s elite were threatened by shifts that saw land ownership slipping from the usual patrician lines. Approximately “one-third of all landed estates” changed into the hands of distant relatives, even females.\textsuperscript{118} Authority of patriarchs was the bedrock of the nation’s political system, yet their diminishing numbers or the exchange of their landed power into the hands of female inheritors posed threats to the very core of governance.

\textsuperscript{115} For the image of the *Group of Roses* with a palladian country house elevated on a hill see *The Temple of Flora*, 'with plates faithfully reproduced from original engravings and the work described by Geoffrey Grigson with bibliographic notes by Handasyde Buchanan*, ed. G. Grigson (London: Collins, 1951), n.p. and Klonk, *The Perception of Nature*, 51.


\textsuperscript{117} Colley, *Britons*, 156. While reasons are ‘still unclear,’ men were not marrying or producing male heirs.

The theme would also resonate in a different way with literate women who saw the power afforded to other women through botanical knowledge. Writers such as Priscilla Wakefield in her *Introduction to Botany* (1796), demonstrated for female readers a mastery of knowledge, financial independence, and articulate botanical pedagogy. In her later *Reflections on the Present Condition of the Female Sex* (1798), Wakefield argued that women could employ their talents to benefit “themselves and their community,” and use botanical study as an “antidote to the aristocratic maladies of levity and idleness.” These observations conflated with the challenge put before women in botanical plates of Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora*, namely, that Linnaean methodology had wider application, that is, botanical inquiry demonstrated a different kind of female fecundity—women logically observing and accessing new structures, identifying imbalances while maintaining integrity to principles and processes, and mastering new intellectual or geographic domains that were usually reserved for a male status quo. These abilities, in Thornton’s words, would “add no less to the glory of a nation.”

In response to the power of female authorship and botanical knowing, circulating in fashionable print shops were unflattering satirical lithographs such as *A Lady of Scientific*...

---


120 Thornton, *Prospectus*, 2. National interests were demonstrated through ‘scientific’ women such as Anna Blackburn (1726-93), Margaret Stovin (1756-1846) and Charlotte Murray (1754-1808). They opened up new networks of material (plants, seeds) and intellectual exchange. Blackburn corresponded with Linnaeus and sent him seeds. Murray wrote *The British Garden* in 1799 which organized British plants into a Linnaean system. Pleasance Smith (1773-1877 worked in the field collecting and documenting with her husband Sir James Smith who had brought Linnaeus’ collection to England and established the Linnaean Society in 1788. Upon his death, she professionally edited all nineteen volumes of his scientific research which would seem a monumental task for any scholar. See Ann B. Shteir, *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science* (1996).

121 Maria Jacson’s *Botanical Dialogues* (1797) and Charlotte Smith’s *The Young Philosopher* (1798) similarly decoded the Linnaean system. Maria Jacson’s other two texts are entitled *Botanical Lectures* (1804) about taxonomy and *Sketches of the Physiology of Vegetable Life* (1811) about plant structure and function. Charlotte
Habits (c.1805) (Figure 3.7)\textsuperscript{122} that attacked the female botanophile as piecemeal yet pedestrian. In the drawing, a small inkwell sits atop the Craniology text that is her head. Her geometric body is composed of the French Encyclopédie and her arms, under which are stuffed quills and scrolls, were imprinted with contemporaneous treatistes—Handle’s Army Notes on one arm and Armstrong’s On Slavery on the other. Her dress is stamped with the title “Pantologia,” perhaps a reference to John Good’s Pantologia of 1803, a ‘encyclopedia’ of natural history knowledge, or as historian James Second has noted an alternative reference to “pantologia” as “the visionary schemes of a utopian pantisocracy” where all ruled equally.\textsuperscript{123} Such satire could be mocking her scattered interests, critiquing how a little learning dangerously un-sexed females, or positing how women who produced books instead of sons posed possible social chaos in her ostensible move beyond a domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{124} That confusion had already begun to surface according to cultural historian Thomas Laqueur, who argues that during the late eighteenth century a shift occurred from former understandings of

\begin{itemize}
\item Smith’s Conversations Introducing Poetry (1804) was a version of Darwin’s The Botanic Garden. Albeit not in botany, other women writers at the turn of the century were involved in expanding female knowledge, namely, Margaret Bryan’s Compendious System of Astronomy (1797) and Jane Marcet’s Conversations on Chemistry (1806). Caroline Herschel (1750-1848), astronomer, helped construct forty-foot telescopes, discovered several comets, and documented over 2500 nebulae for which her brother received recognition. See Ann B. Shteir, Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science (1996) and Patricia Fara, Pandora’s Breeches (2004).
\item James A. Secord, Victorian Sensation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 44-45. Pantologia is an encyclopedia of natural history knowledge. This lithograph is in the private collection of James A. Secord. The name ‘Kora’ is near the subject’s right foot. No other authorship is known. Dr. Secord notes that the “tradition of constructing scholars from their books dates to Giuseppe Arimboldo, painter to the court of Rudolf II at Prague in the sixteenth-century” (44). Historian of science, Patricia Fara uses this image for the front cover of Pandora’s Breeches (2004), a study on the contributions women made to science through partnerships with men of science.
\item Ibid., 44. James Secord identifies Pantologia (1808-1813) as referencing “the visionary schemes of utopian pantisocracy” (pantisocracy means “government by all”) and perhaps alludes to the woman’s effort to achieve some kind of equanimity with men. However, Secord goes on to explain that this ‘lady’s’ garb here in this image “renders her deeply unfashionable” as knowledge here is associated with the “masculine and the foreign” (45-46).
\item Ibid., 186.
\end{itemize}
the body that now saw “a two-sex model” where females were distinctly “different” and no longer merely a variant of a single model of the ideal male.\textsuperscript{125}

By way of botanical knowledge, then, debates about women and fecundity had begun to emerge in new public domains.\textsuperscript{126} Not unlike the variability Linnaeus had noted in classes of species, slippages in social boundaries and bloodlines and blurring in relation to defined gender roles emerged to concern publics in want of stability.

**Fidelity and Continuity**

Various images from Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora* also appear to address a cultural ideal of fidelity—steadfast faithfulness—as a virtue that ensured the nation’s

\textsuperscript{125} Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender From The Greeks to Freud* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 8 and Chapter 5. Aristotelian models—one sex models—were based upon levels or degrees of perfection, upon categories such as “active/passive, hot/cold, formed/unformed and females” as Laqueur notes, and upon a system where the male or patriarchal is privileged in that the male body is seem as the most perfect form and the female a mere ‘homologue’, a less perfect derivation.

\textsuperscript{126} Veering from a conventional maternal path was seen as threatening to the stability of gender and class roles. For example, as pointed out by Dror Wahrman in Chapter Two of *Making of the Modern Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004) Britain’s bourgeois “fashionable mammmas” who chose French fashion and soirées over their “natural” duty of breastfeeding were openly criticized. James Gillray’s satirical print, *The Fashionable Mamma, or The Convenience of Modern Dress* of 1796 aptly depicts a fashionably-dressed lady whose concept of nurturing is suckling a child through openings in her dress while the babe is gingerly held at arm’s length by a nursemaid. A carriage awaits outside to sweep away the lady to the next ‘soiree’. With Linnaeus having sanctioned breastfeeding as a key to “higher-order” entities, critics such as Dr. William Buchan (1729-1805) condemned these women by noting that not even animals or savages were so “monstrous” as to withhold “nutritive fluid” as quoted in Sally Shuttleworth’s “Ideologies of Bourgeois Motherhood,” *Rewriting the Victorians*, ed. L. Shires, (London: Routledge, 1992), 31-51. Linda Colley in *Britons* (2003) quotes university divine James Fordye who joined the fray by aligning these women to the radical upheaval in France where “the women are supreme: [and] govern all from the court down to the cottage” (240-241). Such apparent defiance to one’s motherly duty to produce and nurture patriotic sons of Britain called up notions of free will (as alluded to in Linnaeus’s medulla theory and in Fordye’s warnings). Further discomfort around ‘willful’ women was manifest in the flush of infanticide trials in the last decades of the century and noted at an earlier point in this thesis. (See Allyson N. May, “Infanticide Trials at the Old Bailey,” *Women and History*, ed. Valerie Frith (Toronto: Coach House, 1995). Compounding fears was the troubling problem of the old maid. Her lack of fecundity threatened a stalwart Britain where producing sons was synonymous to patriotic duty. In the *London Magazine* of 1777, gender roles were already reported as encoded through censures that saw “old maids” at the age of 28 years taxed “6d in the pound” for their non-productivity, while after age 35, “no old maid” was allowed to marry since they were “deemed incapable of performing any necessary functions.” Biology both enabled and contained female mobility. For further discussion of ‘old maids’ see Cindy McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze* (Oxford, Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 2004).
continuity. Here both fecundity and gender are mobilized as a space of transformation. In the nation’s gardenscape, which already fascinated by way of botany’s sexual overtures, fidelity could translate as steadfast, sexual loyalty. The King and Queen referenced in the opening pages of the folio set the tone. I return briefly to Reinagle’s *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* (Figure 3.2) to note that in this nationscape Cupid carried a golden arrow. For Shakespeare, who drew upon classical tradition, the arrow’s golden head did “knitteth souls and prosper love,” in other words, ensured solid fidelity between this Royal couple. In contrast to the moral slippage of former Monarchs, George III’s conjugal fidelity translated as national stability. In Thornton’s dedication to *The Temple of Flora*, the Queen too was praised as a “bright example of conjugal fidelity and Maternal tenderness.” To a degree the Royal union embodied a change as noted by historian Lawrence Stone who has observed that in the eighteenth century marriage took a new direction by shifting from the terrain of mutual utility to that of romance and affection.

George III’s Royal Marriages Act of 1772 politicized fidelity as a national goal. Where Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753 had attempted to curtail unsanctioned or clandestine marriages for most Britons, George III targeted other Royals such as his own

---

127 William Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1600), I, i, 169-172. According to Sarah Carr-Gomm in *Dictionary of Symbols of Art* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 1995), the golden arrow is associated with the transformative power of love by way of the alchemist’s attempt to convert base metals into gold through the ‘philosopher’s stone,’ which held the secret of immortality. The leaden arrow is associated with sensual passion (72).


130 The Royal Marriages Act of 1772 ruled that any member of the Royal family under the age of 25 could not marry without the consent of the King, and barring that, the Privy Council—an effort to control moral detritus. According to Tanya Evans in “Women, Marriage and the Family” from *Women’s History: Britain 1700-1850*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London: Routledge, 2005), marriages formerly involved boys aged fourteen and girls aged twelve. Marriage banns, license, an Anglican Church ceremony, and parental consent were now required for marriages of those under the age of twenty-one (61).
siblings to cease their flagrant moral indiscretions. Sexual intercourse with another man’s wife was known as Criminal Conversation, or Crim Con, an offence that arose out of the civil law of “‘trespass[ing] upon another man’s property’.”

An explosive example of Crim Con was the King’s brother, the Duke of Cumberland, and his salacious antics with Lady Grosvenor who was married at the time. Public opinion began to demand accountability for its publicly funded Royals and held that the affair was a “bad example to the subordinate classes of society.” Further moral reform and regulation such as George III’s proclamation against profanity and vice in 1787 exemplified a sustained effort to categorize and encode virtues seen as faithful to stalwart nationhood.

As much as images from Thornton’s folio might seem to trumpet the conventional within the nation, the undercurrent of resistance to encoded norms and even a lack of adherence to these norms were evident in the texts accompanying various plates. For example, in the text to Philip Reinagle’s The Superb Lily (Figure 3.8), the ‘floral’ complains that her “dazzling bloom” is being kept hidden away in “the shade,” while in Peter Henderson’s Stapelias (Figure 3.9), female terror rises out of “her Gorgon shape” with a poisonous corolla and eggs that convert to “maggots writhing among the purple hairs.” All personified as females, the subjects of these plates perhaps allude to the emergence of

---


132 According to *The London Magazine. Or, Gentleman’s monthly intelligencer*, Vol. 40 (London: July, 1770), 343. The cuckolded Lord Grosvenor demanded an unprecedented £100,000 as damages for his wife’s defiance. Along with details of the trial, for public appetite *The London Magazine* published the fatuous love letters of the Duke to his “little Angel,” rife with abysmal spelling and “dearest” redundancies. This ‘bad example’ would be borne out by George III’s son, the Prince Regent (another George) whose marriage was short-lived but his lascivious and gluttonous lifestyle was legendary.

133 See Alan Hunt, *Governing morals: A social history of moral regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 66-68. The Royal Proclamation was called “For the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for Preventing and Punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality.”

resistant voices outside traditional contexts who seem to mutate from a passive prescription to conventional codes.

Women in fact were crossing conventional lines to demonstrate fidelity to their own choices and abilities. For example, the Duchess of Portland’s vast natural history collection was acknowledged for its intellectual acumen. Naturalist Anna Blackburne (1726-1793) corresponded with Linnaeus and bartered with Russian naturalists in amassing specimens. In recognition of her expertise she was honored through the naming of the *Blackburnian* warbler, beetle, and *Blackburnia pinnata* plant.\(^\text{135}\) And, in the late eighteenth century, Mary Delany’s seminal paper ‘mosaicks’ that are now at the British Museum, demonstrated skill and fidelity to botanical veracity. Sir Joseph Banks praised Delany’s “mosaicks” as “the only imitations of nature he had ever seen” that were so accurate he could use them as references with no “fear of committing an error.”\(^\text{136}\) And, in the eighteenth century’s later decades, the celebrated and picturesque garden of the Ladies of Llangollen, Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, served as a very popular “natural” salon for botanical exchange and for conversation amongst a wide circle of botanophiles despite rumours about the ladies’s alleged lesbianism.\(^\text{137}\)

Botany allowed gender new mobility, but not without inciting uncertainties. Fears with respect to aspects of Linnaean knowledge and sexuality surfaced in popular accounts, namely Richard Polwhele’s *The Unsex’d Females* (1798). Polwhele fired up debates around


\(^{\text{137}}\) The Ladies, 39-year-old Eleanor Butler and 23-year-old Sarah Ponsonby, were known to have shared a “romantic friendship,” one that was confirmed by their “elopement” in 1778 to Wales where they lived for fifty years according to Alison Oram and Annmarie Turnbull, *The Lesbian History Sourcebook: love and sex between women in Britain from 1780-1970* (London: Routledge, 2001), 55-60. Also see Elizabeth Mavor’s *The Ladies of Llangollen* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1976), 79-82.
shifting views of gender by questioning “how the study of the sexual system [could] accord with female modesty.”\textsuperscript{138} He condemned males and females botanizing together because of their exposure to “illicit knowledge,” and their probing of the plants’ “organs of unhallow’d lust.”\textsuperscript{139} Such activity, he warned, promoted moral mutability by way of sexual promiscuity. Polwhele pointed out that botanizing embodied “savage excesses,” not unlike those daring and “atrocious acts” of French female revolutionaries, who in “their abhorrence of Royalty…threw away the character of their sex and bit the amputated limbs of their murdered countrymen.”\textsuperscript{140} To justify his vitriolic attacks, Polwhele targeted women who had moved beyond the domestic sphere to write and secure a trusted readership, namely Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) whom he dubbed the “Arch-priestess of female Libertinism” and her contemporary, the abolitionist writer Anna Letitia Barbauld.\textsuperscript{141} In contrast to Polwhele and through botanical metaphor both women encouraged their male and female readerships to seek wider knowledge across domains; both women voiced that ignorance was a “frail base for virtue!”\textsuperscript{142}

Reason and order underpinning Linnaean taxonomy enfranchised women in new

\textsuperscript{138} Richard Polwhele, \textit{The Unsex’d Females: a poem, addressed to the author of The pursuits of literature. By the Rev. Richard Polewhele (sic). To which is added, a sketch of the private and public character of P. Pindar} (New York: Re-printed by Wm. Cobbett, 1800), 8. Richard Polwhele (1760-1838), a British writer, spent much of his writing sermons, treatises and poems or a ‘moral’ nature. \textit{The Unsex’d Females} is perhaps his best known work.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}, 10-11.

\textsuperscript{140} \textit{Ibid.}, 10-12. This quote found in Polwhele’s footnotes, page 11.

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, 25. Anna Letitia Barbauld in her \textit{Epistle to William Wilberforce} (London: J. Johnson, 1791) exposed Britain’s complicity in the slave trade: “Afric bleeds, Uncheck’d, the human traffic still proceeds,” and disgracefully, “by foreign wealth are British morals chang’d” (6-13). These charges against Britain were seen as dangerously unpatriotic.

\textsuperscript{142} Mary Wollstonecraft, \textit{Vindication of the Rights of Woman} (London: J. Johnson, 1792), 134.
ways, but primarily as tools for “the simple power of improvement…of discerning truth.”\textsuperscript{143}

This tenet within Mary Wollstonecroft’s \textit{A Vindication of Rights of Woman} of 1792 posited that women were not fragile “flowers… [whose] usefulness is sacrificed… when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over.”\textsuperscript{144} Instead, through botanical analogy she encouraged knowledge as the power to improvement for women by “affording them subjects to think of” and to help them “exercise their understanding.”\textsuperscript{145} In other words, gender activism here was about fidelity to self—about having the will to move into wider worlds by way of informed knowing. It would seem that Polwhele and his fellow naysayers were ill-prepared to negotiate Wollstonecraft’s key lesson: “I do not wish them [women] to have power over men; but over themselves.”\textsuperscript{146}

And not just elite women exercised fidelity to independent thought and choice.\textsuperscript{147} Historian Ruth Wiesner notes a cultural shift in the late eighteenth century that saw a growth in paid female labour, a shift that distanced women somewhat from reliance upon a husband or “father’s occupation or wealth to determine [her] value.”\textsuperscript{148} In London, women owned and

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 111.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 2-6.

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 125. It is worth noting that reading and popularity of novels opened up new worlds to diverse publics. As noted by Jeremy Black in \textit{Eighteenth Century Britain 1688-1783} (2008), by the end of the century there were about 1000 circulating libraries throughout Britain and about “150 novels, 90 of them new, were being published annually” (174). Novels, non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers and dictionaries many of which were “comprehensible to the expanding literate populations” helped circulate new ideas (174).

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 134.

\textsuperscript{147} Interestingly, women of different classes could unite and support one another. For example, as recounted by Linda Colley in \textit{Britons} (2003), in 1820 when Queen Caroline (consort of George IV) wanted to claim her rightful place as Queen, George IV insisted she be put on trial for adultery. This never occurred. One element that played a role was the nationwide campaign against this hypocrisy. What was extraordinary was that middle-class and working women came to the fore: 75,000 women in England, 3700 ‘ladies’ from Halifax, and “tens of thousands more signed addresses” that supported the queen (265).

\textsuperscript{148} Mary Wiesner, \textit{Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 92.
ran businesses ranging from fashion to making and marketing technologies such as barometers, sextants, and hydrometers. These businesses “constituted some ten percent of all business” in London. Also in the 1780s and 1790s Quaker women “ran shops and schools, roamed the countryside as lay ministers” or herbal healers, and pushed for abolitionist action. When the aforementioned Enclosure Acts of 1780 saw men lose their land and jobs, wives joined the job market to support their families. Despite this, women working in factories and mines were still criticized for a seeming infidelity to family and gender responsibilities: “women’s free agency in the economic realm...contradicted and threatened the deeply entrenched view that women belonged in the ‘natural’ realm of the family.” Women continued to be marginalized through the assumption that if unregulated and outside the confines of family order, whether botanizing, working, or lobbying for social reforms, they would be tainted by the “promiscuous mingling of the sexes...a metaphor for social disorder.” To viewers, images from Thornton’s folio could call up women’s dynamic actions and shifting attitudes that came through the vernacular of botany, as a vanguard of women were penetrating hegemonic social codes and as conventional gender boundaries were beginning to erode. In the backdrop, Linnaean science echoed the ability of

149 A.D. Morrison-Low notes in “Women in the Nineteenth-Century Scientific Instrument Trade” Science and Sensibility, ed. Marina Benjamin (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991) that Penelope Steel ran a navigation and chart selling business from 1803-1805; Mary Wellington manufactured mathematical instruments; and Mary Dicas was a hydrometer mater from 1797-1806. Women were dynamic and productive entrepreneurs (95-99).


151 Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 313. According to Davidoff, Quakers were seen as especially egalitarian, and so, involved in issues of social reformation.

152 Colley, Britons, 240.

153 Ibid., 200.
all individuals *including women* to transform and adapt to new ‘habitats’, and with that the presumptions in relation to difference took a new turn.

**The Foreign**

The idea of sexual difference and its relationship to mutation or variability in the social order also emerged through aspects of the foreign or unfamiliar. In *The Temple of Flora* several images of exotic florals register a range of concerns around sexuality and difference in terms of ‘otherness’ and race. Keeping in mind Thornton’s view noted earlier that every flower was a ‘sermon for the learned’, I address Reinagle’s *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love* and Henderson’s *The Queen Flower* then move to others images.

In Reinagle’s *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love*, the exotic and distant are juxtaposed with domestic British botanicals, that is, the banana and breadfruit trees coexist amongst hardy English ivy. This vision might provoke pride in Britain’s imperial mandates but also securely positions the uncertainties of cultural mixing and indigenous resistances within Britain’s imperial framework. What were, for example, the threats of mixing or the impacts of hidden mutabilities?

In *Genera Plantarum* (1764) Linnaeus seemingly normalized variations or fluctuations within a species by stating: “Nature blended the *Species* whence [came] as many *Varieties* as occur here and there.”¹⁵⁴ In other words ‘variations’ were permissible and it would seem inevitable in nature. This tenet, however, posed an unsettling paradox, that is to say, Linnaeus claimed that the natural world was a fixed vision of an “Omniscient Being,

namely God.” Concurrently, he endorsed that the natural world randomly embodied variations. If variation was God-Given, then how could the concepts of ‘foreign’ or ‘different’ be resolved and from whose perspective might new visions be seen?

Uncertainties around the foreign and gender in Britain’s nationscape are called up through the representation of the Bird of Paradise plant—that is, the *Strelizia reginae* or *The Queen Flower* (Figure 3.4), an image as I have indicated that was central to Thornton’s folio. The plant, native to South Africa was cast by Thornton’s text as “Nature aimed at deception” because of the plant’s ability to mimic the appearance of a tropical bird. As a trope for Queen Charlotte, however, the African *strelizia*, could also have called up British discomfort with regard to the consort’s foreignness—that is, her German descent but also the clandestine rumours around the Consort’s African roots and “mulatto” features.

Biographer Dr. Olwen Hedley in addressing Queen Charlotte’s ‘negroid’ features quotes Baron Stockmar, the Queen’s personal physician, as the most salient observer of what he called the Consort’s “true mulatto face.” Of further interest, however, was that poet

155 Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae* (1735), 18. Linnaeus’s clever negotiation of ‘science’ and ‘religion’ typifies the ‘holy alliance’ between the two disciplines that was said to characterize the nature of its exchange within the eighteenth century.


157 Olwen Hedley, *Queen Charlotte* (London: J. Murray, 1975), 293. The Consort’s ethnicity was alleged through her descent from Margarita de Castro y Sousa and a Moorish branch of the Portuguese Royal House. Through this, British-ness seemed susceptible to variation or mutability by way of ‘racial’ mixity. The Queen’s alleged ‘negroid’ connection was just the surface of other ‘black’ connections in society. Sir Allan Ramsay mentor to Philip Reinagle and painter of Queen Charlotte’s portraits that were deemed as ‘decidedly African’, was an abolitionist and by marriage uncle to Dido Elizabeth Lindsay, the black grand-niece of Lord Mansfield, the very same judge who ruled in slave James Somerset’s famous case of 1770s. On a more contemporary note, from [www.pbx.org/wgbh/pates/frontline/shows/royalfamily](http://www.pbx.org/wgbh/pates/frontline/shows/royalfamily), the Royal Household’s ‘apologia’ given upon Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation as Commonwealth head notably made reference to her Asian and African bloodlines.

158 Ibid., 293.
laureate James Henry Pye in his poem that accompanied the image of *The Queen Flower*
used metaphor to mask his comments on Queen Charlotte’s alleged ‘Afric’ origins:

…this *imperial flower*

Wafted from burning Afric’s rugged scene,
‘Neath Britain’s better skies, in happier hour,
Enjoys the patronage of Britain’s QUEEN!\(^{159}\)

Whether or not the Queen’s alleged African roots represented her actual lineage, of value
here was that Charlotte as foreigner and devotee of botany brought into view questions
around variation from the British norm and attendant dangers to the nation’s encoded
hierarchy based upon biological patrimony. Indeed, as representative of foreign integration
into everyday British life, Queen Charlotte could be seen to depict a wider cultural shift
wherein those marginalized on the peripheries—whether other races, different classes, or
gender activists—began to bring variation to traditional understandings of British
nationhood.

Linnaean notions of variation in relation to the foreign surface in other illustrations
from *The Temple of Flora*. Artist Peter Henderson’s *The Dragon Arum* (1801) (Figure 3.10)
in the folio is a case in point. The plant is a foreign specimen indigenous to Mediterranean
and Middle Eastern areas. Visually the floral plate is dramatically configured to underscore
the plant’s difference as it presses up against the picture plane startling the viewer with what
historian Clive Bush has evoked in terms of overtly sexualized forms—that is, the “labia-like
folds” of a purple hood enveloping a protruding “black phallus.”\(^{160}\) Thornton himself in his
characteristically dramatic language had commented upon the ominous sexuality that both
the illustration and the plant suggested. Here however “a horrid spear of darkest jet, which

---


she brandishes aloft” centralizes both a feminine protagonist and a poisonous and aberrant mingling of male and female sexuality.  

"This extremely foetid poisonous plant will not admit of sober description. Let us therefore personify it. SHE comes peeping from her purple crest with mischief fraught: from her green covert projects a horrid spear of darkest jet, which she brandishes aloft: issuing from her nostrils flies a noisome vapour, infecting the ambient air: her hundred arms are interspersed with white, as in the garments of the inquisition; and on her swollen trunk are observed the speckles of a mighty dragon; her sex is strangely intermingled with the opposite! Confusion dire! All framed for horror; or kind to warn the traveler that her fruits are poison-berries, grateful to the sight but fatal to the taste; such is the plan of PROVIDENCE, and such HER wise resolves."  

While the Dragon Arum is identifiable by way of her mutable sexuality, that is, a hermaphrodite or in Linnaean terms ‘mixed,’ the plant is also like The Queen Flower, foreign and deceptive. Significantly, the accompanying poem warned: “Trust not this specious veil; beneath its guise /In honey’d streams a fatal poison lies.”  

Certainly exposure to considerations of widespread cultural variability would resonate on the social front through Britain’s march into foreign lands by way of global trade and botanical resource extraction. On one hand, an exotic floral like the dragon arum presented foreign resource as accessible and its extraction as uncontested. On the other hand, such plants referenced an ‘otherness’ that was increasingly unpredictable, resistant, and transformative.  

161 Thornton, The Temple of Flora, text accompanying the plate entitled The Queen Flower, n. p.  

162 Ibid.  

It is worth noting that to compound public anxiety in relation to *The Dragon Arum*, in the image’s backdrop a different aspect of the mutable is pictured, namely, an erupting volcano.\(^{164}\) Indeed, with Mt. Etna in Sicily having just erupted in 1796 and within memory of the earthquake that decimated Lisbon in 1755, massive eruptions were topical.\(^{165}\)

Volcanoes were on the public mind in relation to geologist James Hutton’s *Theory of the Earth with Proofs and Illustrations* of 1795, a treatise that also ruptured conventional notions of time. Hutton claimed that “unconformities,” that is, erosion surfaces (often embedded with fossils) that had been buried by subsequent layers of rock, were “‘direct evidence that the history of our earth include several cycles of deposition and uplift’” accumulated over years.\(^{166}\) This evidence of a continuous cycle of time seemed evident in mountains and their eruptions. Hutton’s theories pointed to time as a vast cycle, not a fixed, narrow, and linear line. For viewers of Henderson’s image *The Dragon Arum* and especially botanophiles, these geographic features could call to mind Linnaeus’s observation that “rocks and mountains …are created in underlying places through broken down vegetal and animal

\(^{164}\) An image of an exploding volcano is in only one other of Thornton’s botanical plates, that of Peter Henderson’s *Stapelias* (1801) (Figure 3.9).

\(^{165}\) See Peter Gould, “Lisbon 1755: Enlightenment, Catastrophe, and Communication,” *Geography and Enlightenment*, eds. David Livingstone and Charles Withers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 339-404. These eruptions were documented in numerous contemporaneous accounts in newspapers such as *The Weekly Entertainer*, Vol. 35 and 59 (Sherborne, England: R. Goadby and Co., 1783-1819) had various articles in its archives, examples of which follow. In January, 1801 for example, see “Description of Volcanic Island recently formed in Iceland,” or November, 1819 Stephano Moricand’s “An Account of a Recent Eruption of Mount Etna.” Diana Donald in *The Age of Caricature* (London: Yale University Press, 1996) reminds us that bishops of the Church of England commonly explained away earthquakes as “God’s judgment on the wicked” (78). For poetry and political tracts that likened volcanic eruptions to political upheaval, see Noah Heringham’s *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) and his *Romantic Science: The Literary Forms of Natural History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), as well as Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee, and Peter Kitson’s *Literature, Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era* (2004). Noteworthy as well is that Darwin’s *The Loves of the Plants* in the late eighteenth century also makes reference to volcanoes. See Canto 4 where “sulphurous flame steams in spiral columns/…bubbling lavas blow” (lines 178-179). This acknowledgement is understandable given that in Edinburgh part of a rigorous landscape in the center of the city is that of an extinct volcano known “Arthur’s Seat.” This site was the area where geologist James Hutton made many of his formative observations on rock stratifications and ‘unconformities’.

matter over the long ages.” Indeed, for many Linnaeus’s reference to “over long ages” conflated with Hutton’s famous adage of time now having “no vestige of a beginning—no prospect of an end.”

To British viewers then, the volcanic eruptions had the potential to evoke this changed vision of time, that is, not a fixed and certain Biblical timeline but time’s vast cycle, its movement over eons perhaps. Such possibilities were troubling for those who saw and perhaps feared the potential for ongoing variability as formulated by Erasmus Darwin and Buffon. In terms of its social impact, this knowledge about time and variation, once foreign but now being naturalized, shook confidence in the fixity thought inherent to cultural and political institutions as ecclesiastical beliefs, political governance, distinct class and gender divisions, and the family became sites of uncertainty. Boundaries and traditions once thought immutable were subject to uncertainty and change.

167 Linnaeus, Systema Naturae (1735) as cited in Stafleu, Linnaeus and the Linnaeans, 56. Such considerations could be borne out further in Linnaeus’s Plantae Hybridae (1751) wherein he listed plants that he thought developed through a process of new forms developing from old forms that had been subject to cross-breeding or cross-pollination with one another—a concept that had unsettling human application.


169 Ibid. These ideas were to be developed further by Charles Lyell’s Principles of Geology of 1830.

170 Here I am referring to discussions earlier in this chapter, namely, in Zoonomia (1794-96), where Erasmus Darwin posited that a species could adapt and “improve by its own inherent activity...down generations to its posterity,” and in The Temple of Nature (1803) he noted “successive generations bloom, /New powers acquire, and larger limbs assume.” In Chapter Two (see Footnote 130) I refer to Buffon’s formulations in Histoire Naturelle (1753) that spoke of ‘single-family’ model whose variations could only have been possible over time and of a species ability to “improve” or degenerate. There were many early evolutionists who grappled with the idea of transformation within a species: John Ray (1627-1705), Johan Goethe (1748-1832), and Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829). See Thomas Crump, A Brief History of Science, (London: Robinson, 2001) and Adam Hart-Davis, Chain Reactions (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2000).

171 Volcanoes were also popular metaphors for political upheaval. For example, publics were anxious yet again over Anglo-French relations that had been inflamed in 1796 by way of 14,000 French troops reaching Bantry Bay, Ireland to support the Irish rebellion against Britain as noted by Frank O’Gorman and Diana Donald in Ordering the World in the Eighteenth Century (2006). While the rebellion may have failed, what became clear was that Britain’s political machinery was myopic in their underestimation of ’peasant’ power and disjointed in their naval preparation.
The Large Flowering Sensitive Plant (or Mimosa grandiflora) painted by Philip Reinagle in 1799 (Figure 3.1), also had the potential to raise contemporary concerns. The plate depicts the exotic red specimen with its threadlike fronds against a mountainous terrain. In the middle ground is a lone brown-skinned native man with walking-stick in hand and clothed only in a sarong-type garment. Thornton describes the Large Flowering Sensitive Plant as a tall shrub indigenous to the East Indies—a region that was the focus of ongoing British and French naval conflicts from the 1780s through the Napoleonic wars. And while noted for providing nectar to hummingbirds, Thornton’s text emphasized the motion of the flower’s red tendril-like filaments that are set in play at the “rude approach of an invader.”

Drawing on a long eighteenth-century tradition that linked the plant to sexual activity, the Mimosa is anthropomorphized and indeed highly sexualized and especially so in Erasmus Darwin’s poem that is included as part of the text to The Temple of Flora’s image of the Large Flowering Sensitive Plant. Darwin’s verse not only casts the plant as “chaste” and “tender” and desirable to suitors, but both sexuality and race are brought together as the verses link the resulting seduction and denouement to Desdemona wooed by the black Othello:

---


173 A history of poems and novels in the eighteenth century featured exotic plants as metaphors for sexuality. Julie Peakman in Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England (London: Palgrave, 2003) notes that botanical metaphors in erotica saw the male and the female “loosely termed as trees and shrubs,” respectively (74). In John Cleland’s Fanny Hill, or Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure (London: Thomas Parker, 1749) the protagonist Fanny likens the penis to a “sensitive plant,” (187) a factor also noted in Londa Schiebinger’s Nature’s Body (2004), 33. The Mimosa or large flowering sensitive plant was the subject of contemporaneous poems such as James Perry’s Mimosa: Or, the Sensitive Plant. A Poem. Dedicated to Mr. Banks of 1779 that likened the plant to the sexual activity of the man who would “raise it to a very vigorous extent; feed it with the most vegetative juices; and promote its articulations” (v).
At last, she melts, and sighs, in verdant bow’rs,
And yields to Cupid’s all-triumphant pow’rs
So hapless Desdemona, fair and young,
Won by Othello’s captivating tongue,
Hung o’er each strange and piteous table, distrest,
Then sunk enamour’d on his sooty breast.  

In short, the flush of botanic desire simulates sexual climax and concurrently releases cultural taboo. However, in referencing Othello’s “sooty breast” and likening the ‘blushing’ mimosa to a “hapless Desdemona, fair and young, /Won by Othello’s captivating tongue,” the not-so-subtle pun upon sexual activity raises both interracial contact and miscegenation as well as eighteenth-century apprehensions and myths of black hypersexuality and the threat of invasive ‘otherness’. Developments in Britain’s overseas holdings made these subjects topical. Increasing non-white populations in Britain’s terrains resulted in new generations of mixed race progeny and, as in Jamaica, a calibrated terminology to indicate the degree of mixed blood or racial purity. Concurrently, uprisings of enslaved agricultural and

174 Darwin, The Loves of the Plants, 9 (lines 80-84) as used in the text accompanying the Large Flowering Sensitive Plant plate from Robert Thornton, The Temple of Flora, n.p. Here, the mimosa paired with the ‘sensitive plant’ called up established sexual parallels, and perhaps in particular to what historian James Walvin has noted in Black Ivory: A History of Black Slavery (London: HarperCollins, 1992) as the stereotyping of “African’s member” being known for its “extraordinary greatness” as a “large Propagator” (216), an allusion perhaps that subtly threatens encoded British patriarchy. Sexual speculation aside, what resonates tangibly, is the fear around the coloured man’s productivity—miscegenation (mixed unions) and the resulting hybrid progeny.

175 Ibid. Darwin’s pun upon ‘captivating tongue’ is graphically sexual, and its reference to Shakespeare’s Othello heightens the anxiety around sex and miscegenation—of “an old black ram tupping your white ewe” (Othello, I, I, 89-90)—called up by reference to Desdemona and Othello’s sexual pairing. Othello holds a prestigious position as a General in the Venetian army, and despite his humble self-dismissal that he is “Little bless’d with the soft phrase” and “rude in speech” (Othello, I, iii, 81-2 and 98), he is an accomplished war strategist and eloquent speaker. His words not only inspire his troops but his soliloquies of captivating adventures win Desdemona as well as speak of a black man’s capability to transgress stereotyping—a realization that can be seen to have threatening overtones to established status quos. Iago does not hesitate to voice his own disgust with this or any such union, and perhaps echoes contemporaneous views upon social codes in reminding us that how we see is driven by how we know: “tis ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to which our wills are gardeners; so that if we will plant…why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills” (Othello, I, iii, 320-326). For Othello, references are to act, scene, and lines.

plantation labourers\textsuperscript{177} and public debate on both the slave trade and the abolition movement kept issues around racial difference within the Empire at the fore.\textsuperscript{178} The case of Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797), also called Gustavus Vassa, is useful here. Equiano was a former slave from Africa and the Americas and prominent abolitionist in Britain who became a successful trader, abolitionist, and published writer of \textit{The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African}. The work, a two-volume, 530-page tome which graphically chronicled the horrors of slavery, was published in 1789.\textsuperscript{179} That Equiano, along

\textsuperscript{177} Rebellions in British colonial sites such as Tacky’s Revolt of 1760 in Jamaica against the British or the rebellion against the French in St. Domingue (Haiti) in 1791 signaled that the presumed passivity of the foreign could shift and that labour’s distemper could not be easily quelled. According to Kenneth Morgan in \textit{Slavery and the British Empire} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) in 1775 the annual number of slaves shipped by British vessels was approximately 44,000, many of whom stayed in ports such as Bristol (67-68). James Walvin in \textit{Slaves and Slavery} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) states that by 1780 in Virginia in the Americas the slave population numbered 220,000, that is, 41\% of the total population (29). The issue of slavery and dissensions are also referenced in Linda Colley’s \textit{Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850} (London: Pimlico, 2002) where she recounts, for example, that as many as “25,000 slaves in South Carolina” fled their owners to seek refuge with British armies during the revolutionary war as well as at least “30,000 in Virginia”, and that was just the American colonies (232). On debates around Jamaica and slavery, see Kay Dian Kriz, \textit{Sugar, Slavery, and the Culture of Refinement} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

\textsuperscript{178} Most immediate to viewers might be the evidence of shifting attitudes towards slavery as initially mobilized by the James Somerset ruling of 1772 that limited ownership rights over slaves and made way for visible transformation of former slaves to ‘free’ Britons as documented in Adam Hochschild, \textit{Bury the Chains} (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006). To some Britons what was worrisome was the increased visibility of black populations throughout Britain (See Footnote 174) yet two hundred abolitionist societies were mobilized and over 100 petitions were delivered to Parliament during the 1780s alone as noted by Ashton Nichols in “The Anxiety of Species: Toward a Romantic Natural History,” \textit{The Wordsworth Circle} 28, no. 3 (1997): 130-136. Also of note is that indigenous populations and imported African slaves were often viewed as ‘similar’ as noted by Roxann Wheeler in “Colonial Exchanges: visualizing racial ideology and labour in Britain and the West Indies,” \textit{An Economy of Colour}, eds. G. Quilley and D. Kriz (New York: Manchester U Press, 2003) who points out that eighteenth-century beliefs about human variety “did not always sharply distinguish Indians from black Africans…an exchangeability evident in performances…texts, and illustrations” (36).

\textsuperscript{179} Hochschild, \textit{Bury the Chains}, Chapter 12 and Chapter 20, passim. Equiano’s first edition sold out 700 copies immediately. He issued a further eight editions in his lifetime and in three languages. In an eight-month tour of England, he sold almost 2000 books (170-174). Olaudah Equiano in \textit{The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African}. Vol. 1 and 2 (London: printed for and sold by the author, 1789) speaks throughout of his “fear I should be put to death…in a savage manner” and of the “brutal cruelty” that he witnessed such as a man “flogged so unmercifully with a large rope…that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute” (Vol. 1, 75-6). Equiano’s \textit{Interesting Narrative} was widely circulated and read as indicated in various historical studies, and his speeches and writings not only documented slave atrocities but tacitly supported the abolition movement. By the 1790s there were growing concerns about such interactions. See James Walvin, \textit{An African's Life: The Life And Times Of Olaudah Equiano}, 1745-1797 (London: Cassell, 1998), passim, and Miles Ogborn, \textit{Global Lives} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 276-280.
with his abolitionist activities would also marry and have children with a white British wife, was a measure of social transformation in Britain in the last decades of the century.\textsuperscript{180} Darwin’s and Thornton’s play upon Shakespeare’s Desdemona and Othello and the plate of \textit{The Large Flowering Sensitive Plant} was thus set in circulation within a context of new territories and ongoing anxieties around race and overseas labour that were transforming the British Empire.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Visual representations within \textit{The Temple of Flora} (1799-1807) both raise and are situated within complex discourses around ruptures and transformations in Britain’s cultural terrains. Thornton’s publication with its over-determined illustrations and prose and poem commentaries merged references of Britain’s engagements with France in the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars with the erotic poems of Erasmus Darwin. As such the text and lavish images might initially seem distanced from the order of Linnaean taxonomies. Notably however, the folio becomes what cultural historian Lawrence Klein calls in another context, a kind of “associative public sphere…of social, discursive and cultural production,” a site that allowed for the circulation of diverse and interconnected variations to surface.\textsuperscript{181} Linnaeus’s classificatory system, then, precisely because of its permissible ‘variations’ provided a framework by which to grid and order changing social terrains. Thornton would ultimately blame the financial failure of his publication on heavy taxes to support “armed men to diffuse


rapine, fire, and murder over civilized Europe.” 182 Ironically it was the very changes wrought by such foreign conflicts and ongoing global outreach that The Temple of Flora both opened up and attempted to contain.

CHAPTER FOUR
Power Plants—Transforming Terrains

Introduction

Botanist Richard Pulteney in his *Historical and Biographical Sketches of Botany in England* of 1790 noted plant power and Britain’s sustained interest in its outreach:

the Linnaean system in Britain [and its] dominion over the vegetable kingdom had not, in the rapidity of its extension, the strength of its influence…been paralleled in the annals of science.¹

In the above quote, Pulteney’s reference to the “strength” and “influence” of the vegetable kingdom can extend to its other trajectory, namely, oeconomia or the utility of plants and their integration into Britain’s imperial geo-botanizing. In the introduction of Linnaeus’s *Oeconomia Naturae (Oconomy of Nature)* of 1749 and translated into English by Benjamin Stillingfleet in 1775, the economy of nature is arranged by the “all-wise disposition of the Creator” such that “natural things” are “fitted to produce general ends, and reciprocal uses.”² Linnaeus had already formulated parts of his view by qualifying that efficient and benevolent management of “especially useful” resources meant that “the task of economics [was] to collect from other places [countries] and cultivate such things at home.”³ Contemporary


² Carl Linné, *praeses*, “The Oeconomy of Nature” *Miscellaneous tracts relating to natural history, husbandry and physick*, trans. from Latin by Benjamin Stillingfleet (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), 31. In addition, this cycle of utility, in Linnaeus’s words “the course of nature in a continued series,” was manifest in “producing individuals,” “preserving every species” through a “helping hand,” and “death of one thing” that led to “restitution of another” (32). Thus, the cycle of propagation, preservation, death, and restitution was at oeconomia’s core.

historians have truncated Linnaean formulations of *oeconomia* to mean the worldwide “science of natural resources and their use for human life.” Such reason and order that seemed to underpin the “utility of plants” conflated with other aspects of eighteenth-century thought. Adam Smith, for example claimed that resource utility could unite “distant parts of the world” in order “to relieve one another's wants, to increase one another's enjoyments, and to encourage one another's industry.” Resource acquisition, transfers, and acclimatization then were to enhance Britain’s productivity. But embedded within the momentum of plant utility were new problematics, particularly in relation to issues and shifts in governance and nationhood.

“only by adapting ourselves to our environment, he believed, could humankind make use of nature, since in it everything is so complexly interdependent” (83). As a cameralist, Linnaeus advocated an economically self-sufficient Sweden through obtaining and cultivating desirable resources such as tea, bananas, and cocoa in domestic greenhouses.


6 Under the moniker of economic botany, there has been a great deal of comment on the history of breadfruit, Joseph Banks, and William Bligh. Richard Drayton in *Nature's Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) speaks of the project in terms of “improvement of the world” and in particular through colonial gardens in Jamaica and St.Vincent that were sites where supplemental crops such as plantain and cassava were cultivated for the replacement of flour that American independence had curtailed, and in terms of outdistancing French dominance in colonial spaces. David Mackay’s historical chronology in “Banks, Bligh, and Breadfruit” from *Science, Empire and the European Exploration of the Pacific*, ed. Tony Ballantyne (London: Ashgate, 2004) also notes the “idyllic” nature of botanical gardens in the West Indies as sites for culturing resource and mediating the impact of the American revolution upon British trade as well as the competitive threat of the French. His discussion focuses largely upon the role Joseph Banks played in establishing breadfruit in the British West Indies. John Gascoigne investigation of “Joseph Banks and the Expansion of Empire,” in *Science and Exploration in the Pacific*, ed. Margarrete Lincoln (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1998) addresses Banks’s key role in the African Association and the impetus he gave to exploration and conquest along the African coast from Auguin to Sierra Leone. While acknowledging the economic constraints that provoked Britain’s plant pursuit in distant locales, my argument differs. I focus upon how the momentum of the ‘botany cult’ and particularly Linnaeus’s notion of *oeconomia*, or utility of ‘botanical’ resources not only validated pursuit of such resources, but importantly had similar flux and flow that I have discussed in other aspects of his systematics. I plan to show how those fluctuations gave rise to anxieties inherent to social change and particularly in relation new knowledge and practices underpinning the pursuit of botanical resource or “green gold” and how those shifts were manifest in shifts in the nation’s cultural landscape.
My inquiry in this chapter examines the visual in relation to tensions concerning *oeconomia* to argue that acquisition, exchange, and acclimatization of resources to new locales\(^7\) raised anxieties concerning social change. I begin by turning to the Royal Gardens at Kew as an “Imperial” showcase of plant power, a space under the Directorship of Sir Joseph Banks that helped naturalize into national consciousness the global pursuit and lucrative trade in useful plants. From there, I focus upon two resources crucial to shaping policies of botanical enterprise, namely, cinchona and breadfruit. Cinchona is depicted in Fellow of the Royal Society Aylmer Lambert’s drawing of *Cinchona officinalis* (Figure 4.1), a drawing from his publication entitled *A Description of the Genus Cinchona* of 1797. *Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees from Otaheite* (Figure 4.2), a mezzotint by artist Thomas Gosse was published on September 1, 1796, and while the context of its original display is ambiguous the image was undertaken to celebrate Britain’s successful transfer of breadfruit by Captain William Bligh’s *Providence*.\(^8\) These two images are set within concurrent discourses around what historian of science Londa Schiebinger has called “green gold”\(^9\) in addition to the entanglement of plant resources with concerns related to governance, disease, hunger, and human exploitation. I conclude with an examination of critical responses to resource

---

\(^7\) In Carl Linné’s *Philosophia Botanica* (1751), trans. Stephen Freer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 284. Linnaean notions of acclimatization involved how to familiarize plants to new habitats or “locations” so they could adjust and be successfully cultivated.

\(^8\) Thomas Gosse (1765-1844), a British artist, engraved and painted this work. He was also known for similar processes in his mezzotint of *Founding of the settlement of Port-Jackson at Botany Bay* of 1799. Depicting the successful transfer of breadfruit would have seem to have opportunely legitimized global enterprise, trumped the efforts of Britain’s competitor, France, and promoted settlement in Australia by way of the completion of Botany Bay’s penal colony—an institution that answered the crime problem in England, provided jobs for Britons, and whose “criminal” population was used to build housing and transportation routes in New South Wales.

\(^9\) The term “green gold” is used by Londa Schiebinger in *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bio-prospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) and refers to the natural resources most desired by various European powers.
exploitation—vegetal and human—through two satirical prints by James Gillray, *Barbarities in the West Indies* of 1791 and *Anti-Saccharrites,-or-John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar* of 1792.

**Oeconomia or the Utility of Plants**

Following the Aristotelian tenet of *oeconomia* as a type of “household management” that saw the “nature provide food for whatever is bought to birth,” Linnaeus’s *Oeconomia Naturae* of 1749 and *Politia naturae* published in 1760 pointed to the interconnectedness and “self-regulating” management within the natural world. Linnaeus stated that “in a well-appointed household, nothing [was] superfluous [with] all food and everything else to be turned to some purpose” for the nation. For Linnaeus then, simply put, *oeconomia* was the gainful use of plants from one’s own country, and the collection and cultivation of useful botanicals from other nations. This Linnaean concept can be further conflated with ‘economy’ from the Greek *oikonomos* meaning “steward of the household,” to suggest that astute management of the nation’s “household” might include careful oversight of resource extraction, exchange, and productivity and potential for consumption. These understandings along with Linnaeus’s concept of the “adaptability of life forms to new regions” unite in

---


12 As quoted in Koerner, *Linnaeus: Nature and Nation*, 82. Koerner further explains that Linnaeus’s notion of “economics” highlighted “how people can cooperate with, not battle nature” and how “adapting” to one’s environment could facilitate “mankind’s use of nature, since in it everything is so completely interdependent.”


Britain’s practices of economic botany that co-opted the idea of managed extraction and acclimatization of useful resources. Linnaeus’s oeconomia offered a cure for Britain’s national ills, that is to say, his basic tenets allowed for Britain’s economic stewards to address commodity desire, stimulate commerce, and encode imperial prowess in distant locales.

This advent was timely. In the late eighteenth century, a wide spectrum of Britons sought relief from destabilizing fractures within the nation: relentless war and taxation, land enclosure conflicts, emparking and failed harvests, and migrating populations. In particular, food shortages and inflationary pricing caused basic products such as bread to double in price from seven to fifteen pennies for a single loaf. This increase was burdensome for the majority of Britons whose mean annual wage amounted to £30. For many, food shortages and exorbitant costs magnified hunger, disease, and separated families. And, what registered soundly with social and financial elites was a formidable national debt that had risen to £257 million by 1783, a direct result it was argued of trade restrictions upon and subsequent loss of the American colonies. Threats from within the nation, that is, scarce food of mean quality

---

16 I discuss these issues in Chapter 2. See also Drayton Nature’s Government, 51-52 and Tom Williamson, Polite Landscapes (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), passim.

17 Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century (London: Penguin, 1982), 317. At this time, the pound sterling was worth 20 shillings, and there were 240 pennies in a pound.

18 Joel Mokyr, ed., The Economics of the Industrial Revolution (New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1989), 178. According to Mokyr, the average annual wage ranged from £25 for a male farm labourer to £51 for a male working in the ship-building trade. The countryside seemed to be the locale for riots as opposed to London, although in 1795 King George III was mobbed by rioters whose cries were for “bread.”

19 Ibid., 100-1. Of note is that Robert Thornton, subject of Chapter Three, alluded to the cause of his folio’s less than spectacular reception as being the result of his clientele being burdened with economic issues. Thornton says in his Apologia to the folio as quoted in William Blunt and William Stearn’s The Art of Botanical Illustration (London: Antique Collectors, 1994) that “the once moderately rich very justly now complain they are exhausted through taxes laid on them to pay armed men to diffuse rapine, fire, and murder over civilized Europe” (241).
and frequent food riots, \(^{20}\) transients in search of work, or chronic diseases were intensified by threats from outside, namely, revolutionary upheaval in France, dissident slave labour in overseas colonies, and tropical ague (malaria) affecting military personnel and colonists. As historian Linda Otis has noted, these kinds of challenges made British publics increasingly “anxious about penetration and about any connection with outside people, the same anxieties inspired by imperialism.” \(^{21}\)

It is important to note that the notion of plant utility that mobilized botanical interests was not just about acquiring resource, but mastering the cultural currency associated with the product. Loosely translated here as a form of what today we might call ‘intellectual property’, dried plant specimens and seeds embodied prestige and power for the owners. An example of this formative agency materialized through British naturalist Sir James Edward Smith who managed to purchase Linnaeus’s vast collection of “specimens, cabinets, books, letters, and manuscripts” for Britain. \(^{22}\) It was rumoured that King Gustav III of Sweden was so upset with the sale that he dispatched a warship “to intercept the brig” \(^{23}\) carrying the Linnaean legacy. Whether fact or fiction, underpinning the episode was the fissured relationship between George III and King Gustav III over the rebellious American


\(^{22}\) Drayton, *Nature’s Government*, 141. The collection was sold in 1783 to the highest bidder for just over £1000, a price considered abysmally low.

\(^{23}\) Stephen Jay Gould, *Dinosaur in a Haystack* (New York: Harmony Books, 1995), 425. While Linnaean scholar Brent Elliot refutes this incident, he does acknowledge that James Smith circulated the story and his widow recorded it in her husband’s memoir that was published in 1832. In Robert John Thornton’s *Botanical Extracts* (1800) the story is told in the text that accompanies a plate-portrait of James Smith (which also shows the chase of the ships).
Colonies. At the time of Smith’s purchase, Gustav III and Benjamin Franklin, the American Colonies’s Ambassador to Sweden, were signing the April 3, 1783 Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Britain was livid that this agreement should have occurred a clear five months before the American colonies officially received their stamp of independence through the Treaty of Paris’s official end to hostilities with Britain in September of 1783. The Amity Treaty not only cemented a Swedish/American ideological partnership, but was also pragmatic in that it lay the ground for huge financial gain for Sweden’s exports of tar, timber, and iron to the American colonies to the detriment of Britain.

The finessing of Linnaeus’s legacy and with it symbolic mastery of botanical knowledge was said to dull the sting of the Amity Treaty and resurrect some national confidence for Britain “by cultivating a connection to science, progress, and ‘improvement’.” In taking ownership of natural history’s ‘originating’ knowledge—botany’s intellectual property—Britain lay claim to both the cultural capital of Linnaeus and to an economic vision that saw the acquisition of useful plants as foundational to national stabilities. In the meantime, the British government had learned a valuable lesson for future global exchanges, namely, that an intransigent and autocratic approach to colonial politics as George III had taken in North America was unproductive. Instead, armed with the pragmatics of oeconomia, Britain gained ground by turning away from America to resources in the

24 Ibid., 425-30. King Gustav’s alignment with the American colonies added speculation as to George III’s political competence, to destabilized British/Swedish relations, and to mounting anxiety within Britain because of His Majesty’s clash with the newly formed Coalition ministry of Lord North.

25 Sweden (like France and the Netherlands) supported the America’s war of independence against England. King Gustav provided “several hundred Swedish officers” to the colonies; their “efforts were decorated by George Washington” at http://www.swedishbulletin.se/sb/articles/0307.shtml.

Pacific and the East whose less formal entrepôts could readily supply product for British markets.27

**Imperial Kew and Acclimatizing The Public**

So sits enthron’d in vegetable pride  
Imperial Kew by Thames’s glittering side;  
Obedient sails from realms unfurrow’d bring  
For her the unnam’d progeny of spring.

—Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden* (1791)28

The Royal Botanic Garden or “Imperial Kew,” calls up the notion of Linnaean *oeconomia* through Britain’s claim of useful resource in distant geographies—or to use Darwin’s terms in the verse quoted above, a system that relied on ‘obedient’ ships returning home from ‘realms unfurrow’d’ with vegetable riches.29 Distant geographies promised an abundance of resources ranging from West Indies sugar to African slaves, and these products were seen as potential curatives for social and economic ills. Kew’s botanic space then, which foregrounded plant utility and productivity, was central to strong nationhood and imperial claim. Uncertainties belying botanizing persisted however. There is no mention in Darwin’s poem that celebrates “Imperial Kew” of rumours about plundered foreign ships, exposure to feared colonial primitivism, or importantly to what constituted a ‘resource’.

---


29 Erasmus Darwin translated Linnaeus’s classification system into English in two works, *A System of Vegetables* of 1783 and *The Family of Plants* of 1787. As quoted by Jim Endersby in “Linnaeus at the service of England,” in *The Times Literary of August 12, 2009*, Darwin’s preface to *A System of Vegetables* proclaimed botany as primarily of “economic importance,” that is, “the future improvements in Agriculture, in Medicine, and…many more important Manufactures, as paper, linen, cordage; must principally arise from the knowledge of BOTANY.” The islands of St. Vincent, Dominica, and Grenada were ceded to Britain in The Peace of Paris Treaty of 1763.
Orderly administration and deft management of relations between botany and governance were strategies fundamental to the success of economic botany and to the diffusion of apprehensions concerning its practices. Joseph Banks appointed to manage Kew in 1773 was central to that success. Pursuing useful plants, shaping colonial capitalism, building botany’s global information network, and promoting Britain’s international profile came under Banks’s management—what he called “a kind of superintendence.” Importantly, his leadership transformed Kew into a site for global plant transfer and acclimatization. Acquisitions increased from 3,000 to 11,000 species during his tenure, a factor that contributed to Kew’s reputation by the early 1800s as being “the most important centre for comparative biological thinking” and knowledge of the geographic distribution of plants. These plant acquisitions evoked Britain’s global gardens and colonial plantations whose roles historian Donald McCracken identifies as “primarily economic depots.” Such achievements outshone those of their chief competitor in plant pursuit, France.

Success was underpinned by Banks’s insistence that “as many of the new plants as possible should make their first appearance at the Royal Gardens [Kew].”

---

30 See Chapter Two, Footnote 41.


35 Banks to Clarke Abel, February 10, 1816. As quoted in Ray Desmond, *Kew*, 91. The following botanizers indicate the breadth of Banks’s global network: Francis Masson, Kew’s first plant hunter, sailed with Cook as far as South Africa (1772); William Brass botanized in West Africa (1780); David Nelson in Tasmania and Timor (1789); Archibald Menzies in the Pacific Northwest and then Chile obtaining there the monkey puzzle tree (1791); Mungo Park in Africa (1795); Robert Brown in Australia (1801); William Kerr in China (1804);
personnel, missionaries, and merchants were reminded that their patriotic duty during travels was to pursue botanical interests on behalf of the nation. Naturalists in Banks’s employ were warned against any unauthorized dispersal of seeds or plants. As a result, these plant hunters obtained mangosteen and nutmeg from Java, hemp seeds and citrus from the South Pacific, and decorative rhododendrons from China.36

Such evidence of international connections and expanding global presence helped highlight Kew and thus Britain as imperium, a site that outdistanced those gardens of old foes and competitors such as Spain and France. In addition, Banks’s strategy of re-naming Kew’s acquisitions according to Linnaean binomial nomenclature would also seem to hold political agency. On one hand, for example, categorizing in Linnaean terms would seem to objectify the resource, its locale, and its indigenous cultivators and reduce the exotic to merely a scientific reference overwritten, in this case, by an enlightened British science. On the other hand, its reductive logic could be seen to mirror a rational and orderly nationhood that presented Britain as progressive and stable. These strategies marked out the utility of plants in Britain’s imperial march: “turning plants into medicines, food or shelter,”37 outdistancing competitors, and flexing bio-power to master populations at home and in global geographies.

---


37 As cited in Patricia Fara, Sex, Botany, and Empire (London: Icon Books, 2003), 29.
Through these strategies, Kew Gardens known as the “Mecca of Botanists,” also subtly promoted botanical knowing as well as expansion into distant geographies. Under Banks’s stewardship, Kew developed into one of those aforementioned “centers of calculation,” that helped demystify and naturalize distant plants, practices, and even cultures through its “cycle of accumulation,” cultivation, experimentation, and acclimatization. In Kew’s scientific center, species were stabilized, tested, and prepared for transfer and future productivity. Such resources as the banana and breadfruit plants clearly depicted in Reinagle’s Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love (Figure 3.2) could call up the acclimatization of exotics at Kew and their eventual transfer to colonial gardens in the West Indies, India, or Ceylon for cultivation.

Kew’s central role and Banks’s agency in the progress of botanical enterprise were not without critics. Such caricatures as Thomas Rowlandson’s Sir Joseph Banks about to Eat an Alligator of 1788 would seem to attack botany and its enterprises. Ensconced at a dining table, Banks and fellow naturalists feast upon natural history specimens that ranged from the vegetal to the reptilian. Their shared interest, a feeding frenzy of sorts upon natural history resources, for some viewers might acknowledge virtuosi tastes belying natural history while for others the satire enables mockery of this elite fraternity as undiscerning, their exploitation of new worlds as gluttonous, and natural history knowledge as food for the stomach, not the

40 This image is the frontispiece to Peter Pindar (Dr. John Wolcot’s) Peter’s Prophecy, Or...A Very Important Epistle to Sir Joseph Banks (1788), a 650-line poem mentioned in Chapter Three that satirizes Banks and his sexual and natural history conquests.
mind. Caricaturist James Gillray’s *The Great South Sea Caterpillar, transform’d into a Bath Butterfly* of 1796 (Figure 4.3) further lampooned Banks’s meteoric rise and transformation from plant collector to botanical guru. In the image, Banks, depicted as a giant caterpillar with butterfly wings, rises out of the “dung and filth” to become a resplendent specimen and recipient of the prestigious medal of the Order of the Bath. A bright sun imprinted with the Royal crown bathes Banks in light, perhaps an obvious allusion to George III’s sustaining patronage of Banks through Royal appointment to Directorships and through securing finances for Banks’s enterprises. With the Phrygian cap, a symbol of

---

41 I also find interesting that the centerpiece of the feast is a reptile—a lizard of some sort. According to Banksian scholar John Gascoigne, Joseph Banks had “adopted the figure of a lizard as part of his crest,”—in Banks words, “I have taken the Lizard, an Animal said to be Endowed with an instinctive Love of Mankind …to be Engraved as my Seal as a Perpetual Remembrance that man is never so employd (sic) as when he is Laboring for the advantage of the Public.” I suggest this has ambivalent overtones especially in light of the lizard’s centrality in this caricature, that is to say, Banks’s centrality to botanical enterprise yet his known reputation for being an “autocratic ruler” in terms of botanical enterprises in Britain as Gascoigne points out. See John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 17-20.

42 Dorothy George in *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires: Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Vol. VII (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1935-1954) (and subsequent to her, historians Bewell and Fara) has noted in her description of Gillray’s *The Great South Sea Caterpillar* (BMC 8718) that beneath the title on the plate is the inscription: “Description of the New Bath Butterfly - taken from the "Philosophical Transactions for 1795" - "This Insect first crawl'd into notice from among the Weeds & Mud on the Banks of the South Sea; & being afterwards placed in a Warm Situation by the Royal Society, was changed by the heat of the Sun into its present form— it is notic'd & Valued Solely on account of the beautiful Red which encircles its Body, & the Shining Spot on its Breast; a Distinction which never fails to render Caterpillars valuable. 4 July, 1795” (218). James Gillray also displayed his work in the windows of a print shop in the fashionable district of Strand and Old Bond Streets in London according to Jennifer Lovell in “A Bath Butterfly Botany and Eighteenth-Century Sexual Politics,” *National Library of Australia News* 15, no. 7 (2005).

43 As mentioned in Chapter One, Moses Harris in his *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 explained the transformation and shape-shifting of insects, namely butterflies, as occurring by way of “copulation [and] purg[ing] themselves from their Dung and Filth” to eventually become a beautiful butterfly. Perhaps in a round about way, this transformation pictured in Gillray’s caricature also critiques Banks’s renowned sexual escapades—his rumoured ‘copulations’ whilst in Otaheite—that both shocked yet titillated polite society.

French revolutionaries on the butterfly’s wings, the satire may have made a disquieting allusion as well to the concerns over Banks’s botanical empire-building in the wake of what historian Alan Bewell observes of science in the 1790s, namely, botany had become associated with “scientific free-thinking…in the vanguard of those seeking liberty in sexual as well as political terms.”

Banks, known for his sexual freedom practiced in Otahiete and the ‘liberties’ he enjoyed through his alliance with the King, also seems to have called up notions of political liberalism that were unsettling in Britain in the 1790s.

Other discomforting notions were embedded within “Imperial Kew.” For example, the Seven Years War alone had incurred a national debt of £133 million. And, throughout George III’s reign, publics railed against relentless wars that “intervened” and crippled the economy. Even Robert Thornton author of The Temple of Flora discussed in Chapter Three noted that Britons were “exhausted through taxes laid on them” a factor evident in a national debt that was close to £800 million by the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Several generic and harmonious images of Kew drawn by William Woollett throughout the 1760s, such as A View of the Palace from the Hill in the middle of the Lawn...the Royal

---

45 Alan Bewell in “‘On the Banks of the South Seas’: botany and sexual controversy in the late eighteenth century,” Visions of Empire, eds. David Miller and Peter Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) has noted that there appears to be the image of a Phrygian cap on the butterfly wing of the Banksian caterpillar. I suggest that Banks’s continued affable interchanges with some French naturalists and his vow not to get embroiled with politicking (for example he welcomed all to his home to use his scientific resources but “if [they are] to be in any Shape political, I shall hesitate”) may have disconcerted some who saw his rising above usual political protocol as being dangerously unconventional if not unsettlingly resistant. See Sir Joseph Banks’s letter to Samuel Purkis, March 2, 1794 in Neil Chambers, The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1765-1820 (London: Imperial College Press, 2007), 276.

46 Bewell, “‘On the Banks of the South Seas’: botany and sexual controversy in the late eighteenth century,” 190-191.


Gardens at Kew (c. 1760s) (Figure 4.4) printed by J. S. Mason after William Woollett, simply depicts the King’s residence known as the Palace at Kew or the Dutch House, overlooking tranquil waterways, grassy expanses, and various follies while a shepherd in the foreground oversees plump, grazing sheep. Trees and monuments here can register as Britain’s technological expertise and imperial reach. Images such as these masked the moral dearth or deficiency in the nation. Firstly, domestic harvests that “failed miserably in 1800 alarmed the government” and made Britons anxious. Secondly, Kew, as repository of Kew’s vast botanical acquisitions, dispelled known conflicted relations with China over tea trade and resistances from sites such as New Zealand or Ceylon where Banks states in his diaries that natives had “strenuously oppos’d” British landings. Thirdly, absent from this view of Kew’s terrains was the triangular slave trade embedded within botanical enterprise.

50 In the image’s backdrop, the palace oversees testaments to Britain technology and imperial reach—the Temples of Bellona, of Pan, of Aeolus, the House of Confucius—structures mentioned in the full title of this drawing. Evidence of global botanic acquisitions are planted around the Palace in 1762, namely ginkgo bilboa (the Maidenhair tree from Eastern China), sophora japonica (the Chinese pagoda tree), the platanus orientalis (Oriental Tree from middle eastern areas such as the former Persia) and the Corsican pine in the foreground and quite possibly the massive round shaped tree in the center left of the image could be either the Lucombe Oak or the Sweet Chestnut tree, both of which were known to have been planted near the Palace area in the eighteenth century. See Professor Angela McFarlane, Director of Content and Learning at Royal Gardens of Kew, “Kew, History, and Heritage” at http://www.kew.org/heritage/.


52 Historian D. V. Field in “In the wake of the Endeavour: Banks’s botanical legacy,” Endeavour 17:3 (1993): 141-146, recounts that Banks was instrumental in outlining a plan for the cultivation of tea in areas of India, a resource that was under a Chinese monopoly. During the first half of the eighteenth-century, the English East India Company had developed direct a trade of silk between China and London; this was gradually overtaken by the export of tea. British wool, cloth, and metals were brought to Canton to sell or trade for tea, but the cost price of the amount of tea shipped out “exceeded British imports by about 200 per cent in the 1760s,” so silver made up the balance owing according to historian Peter Marshall in “Britain and China in the Late Eighteenth Century,” A Free though Conquering People: Eighteenth-Century Britain and Its Empire (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2000). Also see Walvin, Fruits of Empire, Chapter 2 and Julie Fromer, “A Typically English Brew,” Nineteenth-Century Geographies, ed. Helena Michie (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

Here, hundreds of African slaves that were being transported to colonies in trade for resource died in transit. If these slaves happen to survive the cramped conditions, but instead fell victim to disease, while at sea, they were jettisoned from ships such as Britain’s Zong in 1781.54

“Imperial Kew” chronicled and reinforced a national policy by mediating botanical pursuits with imperial claim such that, as Banks recounts, Kew “does honour to the science of the country, promotes…its commerce, aids its population.”55 In the words of Adam Smith, botany’s economic industry was seen to have “gradually introduced order and good government, and…the liberty and security of individuals among the inhabitants of the country.”56 As a space of modernity, Kew naturalized mandates that coupled economic botany with imperial claim to give momentum to Britain’s shift from an insular ethos to global interchange.

**Domesticating “Green Gold”**

*Oeconomia* striated political terrain and shifting cultural landscape. Cinchona and breadfruit were considered valuable botanical resources because of their imagined power to cure national problems. However, both botanicals called up uneven relations at home and

---


abroad. For example, cinchona (*Cinchona officinalis*) also known as Peruvian fever tree or Jesuits’s Bark, was valued as a source of quinine that was successful in controlling deadly diseases such as malaria or ‘ague’, ‘marsh fever’, or ‘intermittent fever’, but was compromised by limited availability and misgivings about use. The breadfruit tree (*Artocarpus altilis*) offered a miracle solution to hunger in colonies and at home, but was rife with tensions concerning labour and race. Cinchona and breadfruit exemplify how trans-world plant exchange realized lucrative profits in addition to masterful control of domestic and global populations—strategies vital to negotiating imperial prowess and cultural change.

**Cinchona’s Cachet**

Cinchona’s cachet was its utility. The quinine alkaloid extracted from its bark made cinchona into ‘green gold’—a curative for agues that universally afflicted populations. Britons believed that healthy populations translated directly as healthy nationhood, both politically and socially. British botanist, Aylmer Lambert’s (1761-1842) *A Description of the*

---

57 Toby and William Musgrave, *An Empire of Plants* (London: Cassell & Co., 2000), 145. The familiar name, ‘cinchona’ is said to have originated when the Countess of Chinchon, wife of the Viceroy of Spain stationed in Peru, suffered ague. Quinquina, made from the powdered grounds of indigenous cinchona bark and mixed with wine, ‘cured’ the Countess. Musgrave states Linnaeus named the quinine genus, *Cinchona*, after Countess Chinchona, a misspelling the International Botanical Congress (1866) elected not to change.

58 *Ibid.*, 146. As explained by Musgrave in *An Empire of Plants*, the name ‘Jesuits’s powder’ arose out of its connection with the St. Augustine Order of Jesuits, in particular, Antonio de Clancha who observed that the powder of fever tree bark cured agues and produced ‘miraculous’ results. Backed by the Vatican, the Jesuits monopolized production and trade distribution of cinchona. Their huge profits worried Protestant sects who, already anxious about powers of the Jesuit popery, were not persuaded of cinchona’s medicinal power over malaria.

59 According to Bouda Etemad in *Possessing the World*, trans. Andrene Everson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007) the term malaria arose from the Italian *mal aria*, or ‘bad air’. The bite of the *Anopheles* mosquito, an active breeder in stagnant waters, however, caused malaria. *Plasmodium* (parasitic protozoa) spends part of its life cycle in the mosquito. The quinine alkaloids disrupted or blocked the reproduction of *Plasmodium* within malaria. Not until 1880 did Alphonse Laveran, a French scientist discover *Plasmodium’s* invasion of the bloodstream, and in 1897, British physician Ronald Ross and Italian scientists Giovanni Grassi and Amico Bignami discovered the *Anopheles* mosquito was the carrier.
*Genus Cinchona* of 1797 that included drawings of twelve species of cinchona and Copenhagen professor Martin Vahl’s (1744-1804) *Dissertation on the Genus Cinchona*, indirectly touted the plant’s usefulness by depicting cinchona as a solution for combating malaria. His image of the *Cinchona officinalis* of 1797 (Figure 4.1), modeled on specimens from Sir Joseph Banks’s herbarium, familiarized the viewer with the cinchona’s seeds, flowers, leaves, and a cross-section of a branch from which quinine was extracted.\(^{60}\) Popular accounts and images such as these validated cinchona’s curative powers.\(^{61}\)

Uncertainties around British vulnerability to malaria mobilized Kew’s pursuit of cinchona. Agricultural areas in Britain’s eastern Fenlands, particularly the mosquito-infested marshlands of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire (where coincidentally Kew’s Director Joseph Banks owned an estate) suffered severe malarial invasion. By the mid-eighteenth century, malaria was responsible for seventeen out of a thousand deaths per year, a rate considered “frightful.”\(^ {62}\) At the other end of the spectrum, those involved in imperial plant pursuit and exploration into tropical locales were in dire need of protection as well. For example, Banks had used “a decoction of bark—quinine; the bark…of the Cinchona tree” to ward off fevers brought on by “mosquetos” during his travels in Labrador in 1766 and in

\(^{60}\) Aylmer Lambert, *A Description of the Genus Cinchona* (London: B & J. White, 1797), viii. Notably, Lambert was the Vice-President of the Linnaean Society and his portrait was included in the first part of Robert Thornton’s *A New Illustration of the Sexual System of Classification Linnaeus* of 1799.

\(^{61}\) Other accounts that addressed knowledge of cinchona as a valuable resource are in the Royal Society’s *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 67 (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1777) to Volume 87 in 1797, or George Fordyce’s *A Third Dissertation on Fever, Part II* (London: J. Johnson, 1799) that notes that cinchona has “the power of preventing paroxysm…so the patient shall continue in perfect health” (145), or in such pedagogical narratives as educator Joachim Heinrich Campe’s *Pizarro: or, the Conquest of Peru* (Birmingham: J. Belcher, 1800) wherein cinchona’s bark is said to be “extremely valuable” such that “there has been a time when a pound of it cost twenty guineas” (128).

\(^{62}\) Peter Reiter, *Center for Disease Control* at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol6no1/reiter.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol6no1/reiter.htm).
Batavia in 1769. Key botanical illustrator upon the *Endeavour*, Sydney Parkinson, died of malaria during the 1771 voyage. The urgency for a cure would seem to be evoked in Banks’s direct appeal to Carl von Linné the Younger to “Supply me with as good a Collection of Mutis’s plants [cinchona] as you can Spare…and I shall…make returns in things which you cannot easily Obtain Elsewhere.” Despite efforts, the acquisition and cultivation of cinchona at Kew had limited success. Joseph Banks, however, still convinced of cinchona’s utility to healthy nationhood and appalled by the annual destruction of 25,000 cinchona trees in Peruvian forests, prioritized efforts to establish the cultivation of cinchona in colonial sites such as Jamaica, Ceylon, and India’s Nilgiri Hills. A shift had begun where cultivation and preservation of botanic product, especially that seen as useful to healthy nationhood, was also keynote to botany’s *oeconomia*.

---


65 Desmond, “Transformation of the Royal Gardens at Kew,” 70. David Mackay notes *In the Wake of Cook* (1985) that access to cinchona was often through unusual conduits. Under the Pitt Ministry in 1783, for example, there was a shift in governance strategy that saw increased interest in professional expertise from outside government ranks. For Joseph Banks then, many of his collectors ranged from plant hunters to military and medical personnel. Thus British physicians such as George Davidson and Donald Monro, as reported in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 74 of 1784, found Jesuit’s Bark (cinchona) on the island of St. Lucia for Britain. Bouda Etemad in *Possessing the World* (2007) points out however, that only after 1850 did Kew Gardens manage to secure ready access to cinchona which was then taken to India to naturalize and cultivate in plantations.

66 See D. V. Field in “In the wake of the *Endeavour*: Banks’s botanical legacy,” *Endeavour* 17, no. 3 (1993): 141-146. Also Toby and William Musgrove, *An Empire of Plants*, 148. Ray Desmond in *Kew* (1995) notes that Banks actively supported existing colonial gardens such as St. Vincent’s that was seen as critical to the breadfruit transfer, as well as the gardens established in Calcutta (1786) and Ceylon (1810) with the view to “increase resources” as well as the “improvement of the science of botany in Europe” (125).
Cinchona at Home—Negotiating Nationhood

The struggle to obtain cinchona seeds or plants from monopolies in South America has been well documented. But despite its promise as miracle cure for agues, the use of cinchona or fever bark was also tied to changes within the nation. In the southeast of England, for example, life expectancy was “little more than twenty to thirty years” with “one in every three or four of all babies” dying before “its first birthday.” Diseased populations threatened the nation’s industrial, military, and social stability, and regrettably, conventional methods of curing ills like malaria, such as bloodletting, did not work. If available, quinine had the potential to quell malaria’s threat, however fever bark’s use and its preservation of populations had an unusual twist.

During the eighteenth century, women’s use of quinine was controversial. Charles White in Treatise on the Management of Pregnant and Lying-in Women of 1773 outlined quinine’s curative powers against puerperal fever and against high fevers “incident to the pregnant state.” Dr. Robert Thornton (of the Temple of Flora fame) expounded upon this theme in The Philosophy of Medicine (1799-1800) where he addressed fevers, dysentery, and catarrhs. One part of his treatise speaks of the “cessation of menstruation when pregnant,”

---


69 See Roy Porter, Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine (London: Allen Lane, 2002). James Gillray’s satirical drawing of 1804, Breathing A Vein—as bloodletting was called—depicts the drawing blood from a vein in the arm of a patient. Blood gushes into a pan held by the attending doctor. This process was meant to cure the patient’s ills.

and he warned that during the period when “quickening and strength of pulse is evident in the foetus” the use of cinchona “is a pernicious medicine, and I have always found it to be so…hurtful.”

Such medical commentary, would seem to point to what cinchona was not; that is to say, it was not safe to use whilst pregnant especially since “heavy purges” of medicines were considered a “traditional method of inducing abortion.” However, as abortifacient, cinchona seemed a natural cure.

Still the fever bark’s utility as a natural abortive was problematic on practical and moral grounds. Firstly, impure production and underground economies made the bark’s quality suspect. Secondly, quinine was known to be of a limited supply and very

---


72 Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage* (London: Harper Colophon Books, 1979), 266. Notably, during the eighteenth century, expulsion of the foetus was legal but only prior to quickening, that is, movement of the foetus felt by the mother.

73 What I have found White and Thornton observing as quinquina’s (cinchona’s) facility as abortifacient in the context of eighteenth-century Britain, Londa Schiebinger has explored in a different context around the ‘peacock flower’ in *Plants and Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004). Schiebinger argues that West Indies women used the flower as abortifacient to protest against producing ‘slave sons’ to replenish plantation labour needs. According to Schiebinger’s “Exotic Abortifacients” in *Endeavour* 24:3 (2000), Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717), a German naturalist and botanical illustrator who travelled and lived in Surinam, in her publication *Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium* of 1705, had identified that the peacock flower was commonly used as an abortifacient by West Indian women. See also Caroline A Jones, ed., *Picturing science, Producing art* (New York: Routledge, 1998) for Schiebinger’s discussion of abortifacients. In addition, Dr. Schiebinger points out that when working in Surinam in 1689, Sir Hans Sloane, whose natural history collection became the foundation of the British Museum, recounted the use of a “flour fence,” which he compared to savin or *Juniperus Sabina*, as well as “penny-royal, sage, thyme, and rosemary” as abortifacients—they “provoke the Menstrua extremely, cause Abortion, etc and does whatever Savin or powerful Emmenagogues will do,” as reported in his publication *Voyage to the Island Mader, Barbadoes, Nieves, St. Christophers, and Jamaica; with the Natural History*, Vol. 2 (London: printed by B. M., 1707), 49-50. Importantly what this suggests is that women’s efforts to control their bodies was topical, especially given the aforementioned demographic crisis discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, and that the utility of curative plants could have an ironic social impact.

74 Apothecary John Chandler in *Frauds detects: or, considerations offered to the public* (London: G. Woodfall, 1748) noted that by midcentury quinine extracted from the bark was a “notorious Cheat upon the Public” for “when powdered, may deceive pretty good Judges, much more those less conversant with them” (23). He went on to explain that customarily drugs were mixed with ‘Syrups’, ‘Sal-Armoniac’, ‘Chymical Oils’, ‘Crab Claws’ or ‘Alum’. The drug trade, it would seem, is never immune to unscrupulous opportunists—producers or dealers. Sham and deceit were also not uncharacteristic in medical advisories and especially so in sexual territory. For example, Dr. James Graham (1745-1794), a sexual therapist of sorts, offered advice that ranged from vegetarianism to genital hygiene. According to Lydia Syson in “Taking the Sex Cure,” *BBC History Magazine*
expensive suggesting that its use as an abortifacient was affordable for only a wealthy clientele, a practice that brings to light the rather checkered moral tenor of the privileged classes in terms of their production of patriot sons. Adam Smith in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* pondered discrepancies in progeny among different classes: “A half-starved Highland woman frequently bears more than twenty children [while] a pampered fine lady is generally exhausted by two or three. Barrenness, so frequent among women of fashion, is very rare among those of inferior station.” Money and quinine clearly leveraged certain freedoms for the privileged. Perhaps as disturbing was the consideration that national growth was largely due to expanding populations of those considered of inferior station.

Bio-power, whether disciplining malaria or regulating population then, positioned the body as politicized terrain where, as Michel Foucault has noted, it could “turn back against the system that was bent on controlling it.” As *oeconomia* moved beyond mere vegetal utility into the territory of cultural transformation, ambivalences embedded within ‘green gold’ pointed to the necessity of attentive negotiation of the complicated relations between botany, bodies, and gender.

---

9, no.5 (May 2008) capitalizing upon the eighteenth-century allure of electricity and magnetism, Graham invented his infamous Celestial Bed. Promoted as a cure for sterility, for a considerable fee per night the bed promised fecundity to its users. The contraption, 12 x 9 feet, canopied and domed, festooned with flowers, equipped with mechanized musicians, mounted with ceiling mirrors for optimal view and magnets for “‘marrow-melting motion’,” played upon the public fascination with science, spectacle, and sex (58-59).

75 Mark Honigsbaum in *The Fever Trail: the hunt for the cure for malaria* (2001) reports that cinchona was over £1 per pound for the wood alone and even then, the quality and amount of quinine to be extracted from that was uncertain (64). Joachim Heinrich Campe in *Pizarro: or, the Conquest of Peru* (1800) states that cinchona’s bark was considered “extremely valuable” such that “there had been a time when a pound of it cost twenty guineas” (128).


Cinchona Abroad—Mediating Imperial Spaces

The cinchona’s utility similarly played out in global spaces. Cinchona’s use allowed for healthy naval and military forces to engage in worldwide trade or claim and defend Britain’s dominance in global theatres. A case in point is an incident in the early 1740s at the strategic trade gateway of Cartagena in Colombia, where British naval ranks of 18,000 were depleted by malaria before the actual Battle of Cartagena de Indias in 1741. Leadership miscalculated the impact of a wet climate that had led to an infestation of *Anopheles* (malaria carrying) and *Aedes aegypti* (yellow fever carrying) mosquitoes. British contingents suffering from “general sickness” were reduced to 3500 fighting men, and according to Naval Surgeon Smollett the “groans and lamentations” of 6500 men “invoking death to deliver [them] from their miseries” was marginally outdone by a bay strewn with diseased corpses.78 Public anxiety back home over such losses forced British governance to recognize that controlling disease through quinine was the first line of defense for naval personnel in imperial spaces. The second line of defense was ensuring that leadership would take a vested interest in the health of their troops.79

But, government’s complacency and internal deceptions made this incident a short-lived lesson as demonstrated in the 1809 disaster at Walcheren, an island on the Dutch coast. Anxious to stop Napoleon’s continental grip, for example his recent victory at Antwerp, the British fleet, under the bungling Lord Chatham and equally inept Rear-Admiral Richard Strachan, readied themselves to overtake Walcheren Island. The British fleet anchored in the Scheldt Estuary. By mid-August floods from breached dykes and aggressive drainage left


British ships and their 40,000 personnel sitting on a plain surrounded by stagnant pools and mosquitoes. With that, the ‘Walcheren fever’ set in. Monies squandered on various useless stores resulted in an inadequate supply of quinine to counteract the fever’s infestation and by February of 1810, when the expedition ended, 16,000 British casualties resulted, 4000 of which were fatal and only 100 of those from actual combat.

Thomas Rowlandson’s caricature, *The Winding up of the Medical Report of the Walcheren Expedition* of 1810 (Figure 4.5), condemned the catastrophic human waste at Walcheren by blaming a corrupt British Army Medical Board and inept naval leadership. In this image, naval physician Lucas Pepys and Surgeon-General Thomas Keate, central figures in the fiasco, are confined in a double pillory as they stand on a beam entitled ‘Medical Board’. Their colleague, ‘A Jack-son’ (Robert Jackson, M. D.) is fittingly tethered to a ‘braying ass’. Strewn amongst dead troops are unopened and labeled casks of tinctures and luxuries inappropriate to the situation—‘powder of rotten post’, oak bark, arsenic, bottles of gin and port, and a dish of opium. In other words, the funds meant to secure supplies of cinchona bark (quinine) and other curatives were found misappropriated by Keate and wasted on personal luxuries. Allegedly Peruvian bark, the only curative with “real efficacy, had to be commandeered from a passing American vessel.” Interestingly, Rowlandson’s satire exposed the paradox of military service in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: in war theatres between 1793 and 1815, the total British losses were approximately “240,000

---

82 The term ‘braying ass’ is by M. Dorothy George in *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires*, Vol. VIII, 917-918. Martin R. Howard in “Walcheren 1809: a medical catastrophe,” (BMJ, 1999) states that these individuals were considered obtuse for pleading that all the death at Walcheren were not “entirely a medical matter” (1633-4).
men with less than 30,000 deaths being caused by wounds.”

Britain’s war machine, supposedly a fine example of tactical precision and orderly execution, was crippled through an underestimation of ‘natural’ hazards and an inattention to the valuable utility of botany’s cinchona tree. Public outrage in Britain forced the House of Commons to conduct an unprecedented investigation into the event, the result of which were reforms to military procedures, sweeping dismissals of the medical board, and the appointment of a new director-general. It would seem one lesson for governance was that small changes in conditions within what today we might term ‘an ecosystem,’ could have wide-ranging impact.

Efforts to obtain and acclimatize cinchona had significance in relation to non-military ventures as well. For example, in the 1760s when 30,000 African slaves had been transported to British rice plantations in Southern Carolina, quinine was indispensable to minimizing alarms over the incidence of malaria. A weakened labour force would undoubtedly impact the cultivation and marketing of rice. Further afield in Africa, pursuit of resources from gold

---


85 John Acton, *The Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 356-359. Perhaps what resonated in memory were the mutinies of 1797 at Spithead (Portsmouth) and Nore (Thames estuary) that exposed myopic leadership and abysmal working and living conditions aboard ships that resulted in blockades of London’s ports and threats by workers of sailing to France. For fuller discussion, see Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave, 2008). In 1797 there was also the mutiny aboard the *Hermione* in the West Indies, a massacre of sorts that saw Captain Hugh Pigot and approximately twelve of his officers killed by the mutineers disgruntled by inadequate supplies and conditions for the crew. See Richard Woodman, *A Brief History of Mutiny* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2005), 124-137.


87 Randall Packard, *The Making of a Tropical Disease: A short history of malaria* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 59. An outcome of the malarial threat was also seen in rice production where new cultivating technologies on plantations were undertaken, that is, a switch from marsh to tidal irrigation gave greater control of the wet land and was seen to minimize conditions for mosquito breeding.
to palm oil was also challenged by malaria. Mungo Park, Banks’s botanical attaché, saw his last exploration of the Gambia River in 1805 end through malarial related afflictions. In this expedition twenty-nine out of forty of Park’s group died from ‘the fever’, not surprising perhaps considering that in the early 1800s the death rate per annum for Europeans in Gambia was 150. According to historian R. S. Bray, malarial related disease was the key threat to the penetration of West Africa by European interests, that is to say, upwards of fifty-six percent of all Britons traveling to the West Coast of Africa died from “the fever and dysentery” within their first few years there. Clearly, leadership was increasingly aware that failure to manage this disease through adequate resource would leave Britain vulnerable to lost economic opportunity and imperial claim in distant geographies. This lesson was remembered in pursuing in breadfruit.

**The Breadfruit Solution**

The group, having alighted from the ship, ventured into the vegetation for 4 or 5 miles under groves of Cocoa nut and bread fruit trees loaded with a profusion of fruit and giving the most grateful shade…the truest picture of an arcadia of which we were going to be kings that the imagination can form.

―Joseph Banks, April 13, 1769

The above excerpt from Joseph Banks’s diary seduced readers of his journals and followers of his exploits with a description of Otaheite’s (Tahiti’s) idyllic landscape and its imagined abundance. Thomas Gosse’s mezzotint, *Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees*

---


89 Ibid.


91 According to Banksian biographer Harold Carter in *Sir Joseph Banks, 1743-1820* (London: British Museum Publications, 1988), while writer Thomas Becket published a small anonymous edition of Banks’s diaries in
from Otaheite of 1796 (Figure 4.2), depicted the breadfruit’s extraction and transfer from Otaheite by way of Captain William Bligh’s second and more successful voyage of the Providence in 1791. This was a voyage that was key according to Bligh “to derive benefit from those distant discoveries.”

The painting shows Bligh’s crew and Otaheitians together loading plants onto a launch—a smooth transition unfettered by memories of breadfruit cargo and mutineers on Bligh’s previous sailing of the Bounty. The Providence awaits offshore to eventually transport the trees to Kew and the West Indies plantations for acclimatization and cultivation. Here I suggest, oeconomia’s fruition and mobility were seen as the solution to disquieting concerns about hunger in British domains and the hinge through which to sustain imperial claim. And, Otaheite seemed a compliant partner. Literary historian Alan Bewell has discussed Gosse’s mezzotint as a “translation of an insular plant” that “memorializes that moment when …Tahitian nature picked up its roots…crossed the beach, embarking on a new

September 1771, shortly after the Endeavour’s return, Dr. John Hawkesworth (1715-1773) was engaged in 1771 by the British Admiralty to officially transform the first volume of Banks and Cook’s journals into a coherent narrative in late 1772 (120-121). Robert Foulke in The Sea Voyage Narrative (London: Prentice Hall, 1997) notes that while Hawkesworth’s transcription was seen as ‘liberal’ in its interpretation, the publication offered wide public exposure to the adventures and accomplishments of the voyages of discovery (99-100). J. C. Beaglehole restored the authentic style of Banks’s journals in his ‘scholarly’ editions published in 1962. These Beaglehole volumes are referred to in my thesis work. Reports of Banks’s exploits and of Otaheite’s rituals were topical in publications such as The Annual Register of 1773 or The Whimsical Repository of 1774.

92 Captain William Bligh in A Voyage to the South Sea (London: George Nicol, 1792), writes “The object of all the former voyages to the South Seas, undertaken by the command of his present majesty, has been the advancement of science, and the increase of knowledge. This voyage may be reckoned the first, the intention of which has been to derive benefit from those distant discoveries” (5).

93 The narrative of the mutiny on Bligh’s Bounty in 1789-90 is renowned and doesn’t bear recapitulation here. However, the evidence of breadfruit as part of that ship’s mandate can be seen in the print made by Robert Dodd entitled The Mutineers turning Lieut. Bligh adrift from HMS Bounty of 1790 (British Museum # AN338525001). Here Bligh and eighteen of his crew and officers were cast from the ship. Notably, the breadfruit trees visible on the ship’s deck were thrown overboard. For further exploration of Bligh, see Caroline Alexander, The Bounty: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Bounty (New York: Viking, 2003) and Greg Denning, Mr. Bligh’s Bad Language (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

journey to new parts of the globe.” Here, the beach configures centrally as a “site of cultural contact,” that is, where “local natures” become “travelling natures.” My trajectory in contrast seeks to emphasize breadfruit’s relation to failed acclimatization, resistant populations, human exploitation, and miscegenation.

Plant Power and the Breadfruit Solution

The oeconomia of breadfruit generated interest primarily as a solution to Britain’s food shortages at home and abroad. Unlike the complicated and clandestine exchanges with foreign monopolies over cinchona, in comparison the pursuit of breadfruit was viewed as less problematic. An image of breadfruit such as Sydney Parkinson’s Artocarpus altilis of 1769 (Figure 4.6), published in tandem with the first volume of Joseph Banks’s Endeavour journal of 1771, was an attempt at a botanically accurate illustration of a fruit-laden branch from the tree. Parkinson’s drawing would seem to be a visual synecdoche, however. In other words, only part of the tree, its fruit-laden branch, represents a much larger whole, that is, the passive and fertile Otaheite that Banks had described as an “arcadia” whose riches held the promise to make all Britons into “kings.”

On the socio-economic front, breadfruit was proposed as a miracle solution, readily available and peacefully harvested or so Banks implied in his account of the Tahitian plant:

---

95 Alan Bewell, “Traveling Natures,” Nineteenth-Century Contexts 29, no. 2 and 3 (June 2007): 91-93. Bewell’s article goes on to discuss the organization and challenges of Bligh’s various voyages.

96 Ibid.

“scarcely can it be said that they [Otaheitians] earn their bread with the sweat of their brow when their chiefest (sic) sustenance Bread fruit is procurd (sic) with no more trouble than climbing a tree and pulling it down.”  

This vision of effortless abundance contrasted with a British reality that saw its citizens at home “Plow, Sow, Harrow, reap, Thrash, Grind, Knead and bake our daily bread.” How fitting then that Thomas Gosse’s *Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees from Otaheite* would romanticize Otaheite as utopian. In the image, Tahitian King Tu (or Otoo) in pointing to the breadfruit would seem to amicably endorse the commerce with Captain Bligh and his men. No furtive monopoly here that withheld product as with control of cinchona by Spanish interests. In Gosse’s image the availability of breadfruit, which incidentally would seem to be conveniently growing right on the island’s shoreline, heightens the apparent co-operative exchange between the Otaheitiands and Bligh’s crew. In the backdrop’s tranquil bay, Captain Bligh’s *Providence* awaited its cargo. Such compliances would seem to endorse and reinforce political motivations behind the pursuit of breadfruit: the ease of harvest, the passivity of Otaheitiands, the mastery of South Seas locales. But the socio-economic stability sought by Britain was contingent upon complicated mobilities—global exchange, cultural interchange, and commodity transfers—

---


100 Dr. Sophie Forgan, Chairman of the Captain Cook Memorial Museum, Whitby, UK. E-mail of July 29, 2009. In a email to me dated July 29, 2009, Dr. Forgan also indicated that King Tu’s composition “appears to be loosely based on Joshua Reynolds’s portrait of Omai, known as ‘Noble Savage’ and first Polynesian to visit London in 1774” (Email: from Dr. Sophie Forgan, July 20, 2009). Omai became an immediate celebrity. His adaptable ease with London’s elite was seen as a sign of the potential for civilizing Tahiti.

101 The voyage of the *Providence* was from 1791-1793.

102 Perhaps Gosse’s representation here holds other political overtones in depicting the apparent reformed and transformed leadership approach of Bligh who seemingly has a more co-operative and harmonious relationship with his crew on the *Providence* than on the *Bounty* in 1789.
relations that could shift and change unexpectedly. For example, called up is historian Mary Pratt’s observation that what emerges in idyllic colonial sites is a “representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony.”

This fundamental paradox is embedded within the oeconomia of breadfruit.

Solutions for hunger at home and in colonies collided with the impetus to secure imperial claim. Importantly, breadfruit was deemed a timely panacea for social problems, namely, hungry populations especially in Britain’s plantations in the West Indies where starvation alone caused the death of 15,000 slaves in the early 1780s. Hunger weakened productivity and that translated as a threat to Britain’s progressive march. John Ellis of Jamaica, botanist, Linnaean correspondent and West India merchant had already established in his Description of Mangostan and Breadfruit of 1775 that remarkably breadfruit was “in season eight months of the year,” and when baked was “soft and white, like the inside of new baked bread.” The breadfruit solution seemed to surpass Britain’s grain industry where productivity, quality, and availability were subject to pestilence and weather. Experienced British planters, such as Hinton East of Jamaica endorsed the breadfruit solution: “the acquisition of Breadfruit wou’d be of infinite Importance to the West India islands in affording…wholesome and pleasant Food to our Negroes.” Inexpensive food for sugar-

103 Mary Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing And Transculturation (London: Routledge, 1992), 7.


105 John Ellis, A description of the mangostan and the bread-fruit: The first, esteemed one of the most delicious; the other, the most useful of all the fruits (London: Charles Dilly, 1775), 11. Britain’s break with the American Colonies resulted in navigation laws blocking supplies of fish and wheat that America once supplied for slave populations.

106 Hinton East to Joseph Banks, July 12, 1784. As cited in Mackay, In The Wake of Cook, 126. Hinton East was the Receiver-General of Jamaica and a planter. He preferred breadfruit over plantains, and let Banks know that.
slave workers could stabilize productivity and give British sugar plantations a competitive
dge. Of note too was the perceived moral fiber underpinning the breadfruit enterprise. If
Britain and its colonies were considered paradises as Banks had suggested then any evidence
of hunger would soon sully that claim. Conveniently, the breadfruit solution seemed to evoke
for Britain the social virtues of compassion for the hungry and progressive vegetal industry
while allowing for imperial claim.

Breadfruit enterprise as depicted in Gosse’s image held political currency as well and
particularly in three areas: naval expertise, land claim, and in rivalry with France. Firstly, key
botanical networker Sir Joseph Banks was instrumental in ensuring that Bligh would
command this breadfruit transfer.107 Following Banks, George III intervened directly and
“order’d a ship to be prepar’d to visit the South Seas Islands a second time” and “bring the
breadfruit to the West Indies.”108 Better equipped than the troubled *Bounty* of 1789, the larger
*Providence* in the backdrop of Thomas Gosse’s mezzotint had more officers and crew,
improved food provisions, and gardeners to assist in plant care. On the *Providence*, a “great
cabin” had been constructed and equipped with 800 plant pots, skylights, warming stove, and
irrigation system.109 Preservation of plants was ensured by boxes with grates and wells that
allowed light and airflow along with larger reservoirs of water to feed and clean plants of
salt. Other technologies such as “plant cabins” or terrariums simulated humid climates and

107 David Mackay, “Banks, Bligh and Breadfruit,” *Science, Empire and the European Exploration of the Pacific*,
108 Banks to Lord Auckland, December 17, 1790 as cited in Mackay, *In The Wake of Cook*, 137.
protected root-balls\textsuperscript{110} while barometers, microscopes, and telescopes—what historian Dan Headrick calls ‘tools of empire’—ensured successful plant pursuit.\textsuperscript{111}

There is little evidence of these technologies in Gosse’s mezzotint nor of the resentment amongst the crew over attention given to plants. Matthew Flinders, a \textit{Providence} midshipman, echoed crew dissatisfaction in noting that he and others “would lie on the steps and lick the drops from buckets as they were conveyed by the gardener to the plants.”\textsuperscript{112} And while there were supplies of lemons and oranges aboard to stave off scurvy, the crew suffered from attacks of malaria because of no quinine. Erased too from Grosse’s depiction were other significant resources with which Bligh was entrusted: £500, iron, beads, British clothing, and tools by which to secure plants and ensure future trade.\textsuperscript{113}

Secondly, political currency emerged through the conflation of the breadfruit enterprise with another national ill—crime and Britain’s felons. Ships that were used to transplant British convicts to Botany Bay in the Australian area of New South Wales proceeded to New Zealand for flax resources and then onto Otaheite for breadfruit plants. Importantly then, Thomas Gosse’s \textit{Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees from Otaheite} not only reminded viewers of successful delivery of the 1283 breadfruit to Kew for

\textsuperscript{110} John Ellis’s \textit{Directions for Bringing over Seeds and Plants from the East-Indies and Other Distant Countries} of 1770 had illustrations of these preservation technologies.


\textsuperscript{112} As quoted in George Mackaness, \textit{The Life of Vice-Admiral William Bligh} (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1936), 316. Matthew Flinders, under Joseph Banks’s support, was later to lead a circumnavigation of Australia to chart coastlines and scout the potential of new resources. According to D. V. Field “In the wake of the \textit{Endeavour}: Banks’s botanical legacy,” \textit{Endeavour} 17:3 (1993) Flinders was accompanied by Robert Brown, later Banks’s librarian and Ferdinand Bauer, the renowned botanical artist.

\textsuperscript{113} Mackay, \textit{In the Wake of Cook}, 138.
redistribution but was produced at a time when Botany Bay was being promoted for the settlement of British felons in the South Pacific. Joseph Banks’s endorsement of this plan saw Captain Arthur Phillip as first Governor of the Botany Bay settlement, given authority to implement the plan. With the American colonies no longer a site to send British convicts, the penal colony at Botany Bay secured British rights to land claims, transplanted criminality to elsewhere, and provided a compliant, cheap labour force to develop settlements and transport systems in Australia. Botanical enterprise in new sites such as the South Pacific allowed for what social historian Mary Louise Pratt observes as “a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence.” Clearly, resource pursuit in distant locales could allow for land claim through less politically volatile strategies.

Thirdly, Britain’s breadfruit harvest called up popular accounts that likened the transfers of botanical resources to military victories: that is, in the words of Robert Thornton of *The Temple of Flora*, “in triumphs, the trees of the conquered countries produc[ed] a remembrance of their victories more useful and durable than columns of brass or marble.” Breadfruit trees could dull political embarrassment suffered with the loss of the resources from the American Colonies along with markets and trade networks. But more

---


115 Field, “In the wake of the *Endeavour*: Banks’s botanical legacy,” 143.

116 According to A. Roger Ekirch in “Bound for America: A Profile of British Convicts Transported to the Colonies, 1718-1775,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (January 1985) during the period of 1718 to 1775, 800 Scots, as many as 16,000 Irish, and approximately 35,000 convicts from England and Wales were sent to the American colonies (184-200).

117 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 57. Thomas Gosse’s *Founding the Settlement at Port Jackson at Botany Bay* of 1799 represents British claim in this area.

118 Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, n.p. In the footnotes of the accompanying James Henry Pye poem to the botanical plate entitled *The Queen Flower*, that is, the *Strelitzia reginae*.

119 Ferguson in “Sir Joseph Banks and the Transfer of Crop Plants” notes that the split with the American colonies and ongoing tension resulting in fractured trade exchanges. Former supplies of rice, corn, tobacco and
importantly, breadfruit was valuable in Britain’s nationalistic rivalry with France. A West Indian planter, Matthew Wallen recounted an incident in 1784 where French ships in the Caribbean, when threatened with capture by the British, destroyed all breadfruit trees that were aboard thus ending Britain’s plan to reap resource benefit.\(^{120}\) Through the nation’s pre-eminent botanist Joseph Banks, Britain countered such actions with a denunciation of French botanical knowledge, dismissing their breadfruit trees as an inferior type from a climatic zone “‘where the good sort is not found’.\(^ {121}\) Nonetheless, fearing French ingenuity, Britain’s planters urged quick action in securing breadfruit. Compounding this pressure was what historian of science Emma Spary has noted, namely, that as both Britain and France aspired to secure and naturalize breadfruit, the idyllic “Tahiti and all things Tahitian” became “a potent symbol for the French elite” who in viewing breadfruit as “the perfect food for mankind,” saw that the “fruit itself must contribute to that utopian social state.”\(^ {122}\) Britain’s oeconomia, that is, possession, monopoly, acclimatization, and naturalization of breadfruit, would seem to be a powerful tool by which to subsume French botanical power. Fueling British confidence was knowledge that in the early 1790s when Kew was amassing and acclimatizing breadfruit, in an effort to dispel a growing crisis over subsistence during the revolutionary years, the luxuriant gardens of Luxembourg and Les Tuileries were slated for digging up to be replaced with potato crops.\(^ {123}\) Here, Anglo-French political relations would

---

\(^ {120}\) As cited in Mackay, “Banks, Bligh and Breadfruit,” 143.

\(^ {121}\) As quoted by Banks in Tim Fulford, Debbie Lee and Peter Kitson, Literature Science and Exploration in the Romantic Era, 116.


\(^ {123}\) Ibid., 131.
seem to have had another dimension—flexing power through a race to naturalize botanic resource, a move that juxtaposed Britain’s orderly imperial management with France’s revolutionary chaos in the 1790s.

**Breadfruit and Arcadia’s Underbelly**

Breadfruit may have been touted as a stable resource, easily extracted, acclimatized, and cultivated, but response from various public sectors was not united on the benefit of botanical enterprise in foreign locales. Britons were skeptical about geographies beyond their borders, having been barraged with taxes or huge military losses in foreign lands. Horace Walpole, long-time Member of Parliament, had taken exception to “that wild man Banks [for] poaching in every ocean for the fry of little islands.”124 Caricaturist, James Gillray’s aforementioned *The Great South Sea Caterpillar, transform’d into a Bath Butterfly* (Figure 4.3) joined the fray in lampooning Sir Joseph Banks’s botanical premiership that allegedly had been achieved through muddled monarchical patronage and global pillage of plants. Attacks like these pointed towards cautionary concerns in relation to botanical enterprise, distant locales, and unwarranted political patronages.

For eighteenth-century viewers, the lush vegetality within Thomas Gosse’s *Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees from Otaheite* could call to mind Edenic gardens and their association with potential moral violation. As noted in Chapter Two, already exposed in popular accounts were the libertine exploits of Banks, that is, the sexual freedom of Otaheite’s arreoy practices and the notion of Otaheitian females as “artless nymphs” whose

---

ripe sexuality was flaunted shamelessly. That Otaheite bore the blight of European “debauchery,” that is, ‘Verneral distemper,’ seemed proof enough of temptation’s victory. Bligh had observed that these “powerful inducements” along with “the allurements of dissipation, where they need not labour,” presented other unforeseen challenges to his commission. Moral equivocation and idleness did not align with British virtues. In this other Eden, struggles emerged between labour and idleness, commander and crew, virtue and unbridled sexuality.

But this hint at a decadent underbelly was secondary to the ruptures rising out of breadfruit’s central utility: food supply for slaves. Although this food was seen to be suitable for “all ranks of individuals,” the plant was aimed at slave populations, and that was problematic. British citizenry anxious to distance themselves from any affinity with black populations were uninterested in breadfruit as a food source. In addition, superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden in St. Vincent in the 1790s, Alexander Anderson, also reported native disinterest in breadfruit: “they prefer a plantain or yam: but however, these are only some self-conceited & prejudiced Creoles.” Anderson’s comment was telling on a number of levels. Apparently, finely tuned British sensibilities did not anticipate a similar hierarchy

125 George Forster, A Voyage round the world, in His Britannic Majesty’s sloop, Resolution, commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the years 1772-1775, Vol. 1 (London: B. White, 1777), 290.

126 Ibid., 213. Andrea Wulf in The Brother Gardeners (2008) notes naval vessels from Europe (French explorer Bougainville and Captain James Cook’s circumnavigations) brought syphilis and other diseases to Otaheite resulting in a population drop “from 40,000 in 1769 to 9,000 by 1829” (185).

127 William Bligh, A Narrative of the Mutiny On Board Her Majesty’s Ship Bounty and the Subsequent Voyage of Part of the Crew (London: George Nicol, 1790), 10.

128 Ellis, A description of the mangostan and the bread-fruit, 11.

of taste in ‘native’ cultures. Anderson after all had dismissed Creole workers as “prejudiced” because they refused to eat breadfruit meant for those whom they considered inferiors, that is, slave labour. The irony is palpable. Entrepreneurs showed limited understanding of local culture, a lack that Banks seemingly attempted to mitigate by having his collectors make anthropological in addition to botanical observations.130 Insight into a culture’s beliefs could possibly facilitate more harmonious management and thus greater productivity in colonial sites.131 Yet, violent resistances by Jamaican slaves in Tacky’s Revolt of 1760, the Second Maroon War of 1795-96, and Fedor’s Rebellion in Grenada in 1795-97 served as warnings that fissures between British and indigenous interchanges needed bridging in order to secure economic stability.132 The uneven terrains of the breadfruit-food solution hinted that relations underpinning the practices of Linnaean utility were neither stable nor certain.

Food’s utility did indeed fuel breadfruit enterprise, but the real driving force was another resource industry: sugar. In Thomas Gosse’s representation, idyllic space masked tensions, injustices, and conflicts set within the consumption of sugar and its slave producers. In addition, sugar harvested by black slaves on British plantations in Jamaica, for example, was shipped to the foremost British factory sites in London, Bristol, and Liverpool for refinement and sale to British consumers. Of concern was that “sugar” was now not just for gilded appetites but had shifted to widespread public use as an indispensable additive to tea.133 Mid-century moralist John Wesley noted “the very chambermaids have lost their

130 Gascoigne, Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment, 159-154.


132 Called up as well were ruptures around sugar production in Saint Dominique—a site of British and French tensions in the 1790s and slave rebellion that established Haitian independence by 1804.

bloom by drinking tea” laced with sugar,\(^{134}\) while in a similar vein Charles Deering had noted in his history of Nottingham in the 1750s that he “could not forbear looking earnestly and with some Degree of Indignation at a ragged and greasy Creature, who came into the Shop with two Children…asking for a Pennyworth of Tea and a Half pennyworth of Sugar.”\(^{135}\) By the late 1780s sugar consumption amongst all levels of English society surpassed an astounding twenty pounds annually per person.\(^{136}\) Sir Frederick Morton Eden charted the earnings and expenses of English “poor” families in his survey of the 1790s—a decade of the visibly impoverished—and found that amongst those of even the lowest of yearly incomes (£30), tea and sugar was a priority that claimed fifteen percent of their annual expenses.\(^{137}\) For many, sugared tea dulled the travails of everyday life, while to others it was a chimeric potion that threatened the mutation of class boundaries and the corrosion of cultural distinctions.

James Gillray’s caricature, *Anti-Saccharrites,-or-John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar* of 1792 (Figure 4.7) exposed Britain’s dangerous addiction to botanic commodities such as tea and sugar and the exploitation of enslaved black labour that underpinned the latter in particular. Gillray’s image would seem to vilify the nation’s moral indifference through its Royal models, George III and his family. In the drawing, George III, Queen Charlotte, and their daughters were seated at a table drinking sugarless tea, an apparent allusion to the nation’s fixation with tea and its effort in the early 1790s to boycott


\(^{135}\) Charles Deering, *Nottinghamia vetus et nova: or An historical account of the ancient and present state of the town of Nottingham* (Nottingham: printed by George Ayscough, 1751), 72.

\(^{136}\) Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 119.

slave-grown sugar. The Queen’s toothless grin and the grimacing, bloated faces of the princesses—perhaps outward markers of gluttony yet a subtle reference to inward, moral degeneracy—juxtapose the known starvation and brutality suffered by sugar slaves in colonial plantations. Such eminent writers as Anna Letitia Barbauld, for example, in her *Epistle to William Wilberforce* of 1791 exposed Britain’s complicity in the slave trade: “Africa bleeds, Uncheck’d, the human traffic still proceeds,” and disgracefully, “by foreign wealth are British morals chang’d.” Further tension and alternate meaning could be seen to emerge through the words Gillray has Queen Charlotte speak, that is, her words on the print that say “taking leave of sugar” was really about “how much expense it will save your poor Papa.” Perhaps this comment is not so much about George III’s notorious parsimony or his reticence to abolition, but points more so to the tensions slavery and the abolition movement had inflamed in the nation’s landscape. Here too Linnaean *oeconomia* would seem to take a blow, that is to say, natural resource was not just about plant use and greed for commodity, but about profitable economic and political connections within plant utility.

The utility of botanic resources was too lucrative to entertain reform. The taxes on tea “provided fifty percent of the costs of the Royal Navy at a time when Britannia” ruled the waves according to historian A. R. Ferguson. And sugar needed for that tea was provided

---

138 Anna Letitia Barbauld, *Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. on the rejection of the bill for Abolishing the slave trade* (London: J. Johnson, 1791), 6-13. Barbauld was friend of another abolitionist, Mary Wollstonecraft, renown author of *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

139 Text appearing in James Gillray’s caricature, *Anti-Saccharrites,-or-John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar of 1792*. Tim Clayton in *The English Print 1688-1802* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) notes that the use of ‘speech bubbles’, like those in this image, was unique to satirical prints and that the allusions therein were “used to create multiple layers of meaning” or “expand, qualify” the most obvious reading of the design (248).

140 Ferguson, “Sir Joseph Banks and the Transfer of Crop Plants,” 13. Underpinning the tea trade was Britain’s East India Company’s monopoly of product that saw their cultivation of opium in India for trade with China. By 1830, according to Ferguson, approximately two million pounds of opium were exported from India to China. *Oeconomia* had multiple interconnections.
by sugar plantations such as those in Jamaica that were the wealthiest in the empire with the annual per capita of free white settlers at £1,042. Adam Smith confirmed the economic vibrancy of sugar plantations in recognizing that their profits were “generally much greater than those of any other cultivation known either in Europe or America.” This profitable industry was contingent upon a plantation system that controlled local land and product, and managed slave labour. In Jamaica, where the sugar industry produced twenty-two percent of the world’s supply, managing labour needs meant importing black slaves from Africa, a population of which had climbed in excess of 200,000 by 1790. Part of that management also consisted of ‘drivers’ overseeing gang slave labour. Under the driver’s watchful eye, each slave would dig cane holes that amounted to moving about 1500 cubic feet of earth a day, as well as cut, clear, and load cane for at least six twelve-hours days a week. But, more bodies had certainly not guaranteed more efficient productivity, especially when starvation alone had caused annual death rates of 15,000 slaves in Jamaica. Subhuman living conditions and little food contributed to slave problems such as resistance, escapes, disease, starvation, and death.

---

143 According to James Walvin in *Fruits of Empire* the British had developed a similar system of plantations to manage colonization in Ireland. Critical to the strategy was a form of discipline couched in scientific language—that is, “to provide laboratory conditions for the chemistry of the civilizing process” (121-124).
144 Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 123.
These appalling conditions are conveniently absent from such images as Thomas Hearne’s colored drawing, *A Scene in the West Indies* of 1779 (Figure 4.8), commissioned by Governor-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands Sir Richard Payne to mark British presence in the former Dutch colony. The sunny, pastoral Antiguan landscape seems absent of any conflict—enslaved workers placidly engage in sugar harvest while in the backdrop clouds of steam rise effortlessly from the boiler house, the site of transformation of cane juice to sugar. Near the cane fields a driver on horseback, stick in hand and arm raised, ensures productivity. In the foreground, a black couple and a naked child walk a path that is distanced from the field. The adults may look content within the containment of their British labourer’s attire, but the child could be the telling signifier. Here his black nakedness plays on eighteenth-century stereotypes of ‘less civilized’ cultures. But even more, that he seems to be urinating on Britain’s colonial presence here might remind viewers of cultural and racial divides in the region, and perhaps specifically of the ever-present fear of black resistance.

---

148 British Museum, [www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database). In the British Museum Collection this image is identified as “Parham House Hill and Plantation.” The image shows a windmill in the distance, perhaps a sign of former Dutch rule but now under the imperial rule of Britain, as well as the use of wind to power the sugar mills as noted in David Morris’s Catalogue of *Thomas Hearne 1744-1817: Watercolours and Drawings Catalogue* (Bolton, UK: Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, 1985). See also Geoff Quilley and Kay Dian Kriz, *An Economy of Colour* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) for a further discussion of Thomas Hearne’s *A Scene in the West Indies* of 1779.

149 David Morris, *Thomas Hearne 1744-1817: Watercolours and Drawings Catalogue* (Bolton, UK: Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, 1985), 40. This transformation of botanical resource into useful product calls to mind Andrew O’Shaughnessy study, *An Empire Divided* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), where he notes that rum consumption in Britain had risen to “an annual average of two millions gallons from 1771 to 1775” with rum imports largely from the Caribbean areas as well as rum that was distilled in England by way of British West Indian molasses (72-3). Rum derivatives were also used in sugar for tea, medicines, and food items. Perhaps Hearne’s painting would also call up this lucrative industry in the production of alcohol, a product with which British appetites would not be unfamiliar.

150 Roxann Wheeler in *The Compleexion of Race* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000) observes in a different context that “African savagery” was encoded through “a lack of clothing” (117). Geoff Quilley’s “Pastoral Plantations” in *The Economy of Colour* of 2003 has also pointed out what seems evident in the painting, that is, that the child urinates.
as that witnessed more recently in the Tacky’s Revolt in Jamaica in 1760 or indeed in America in 1776.\footnote{According to Richard D. E. Burton in \textit{Afro-Creole: power, opposition and play in the Caribbean} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), in 1736 there was a Coromantee uprising that planned to overthrow white rule on the island. It failed, but the leader, an African born man named “Court” and 88 of his fellow rebels were executed—five on the breaking wheel, six hanged and seventy seven “burned to death” (231). Benjamin Quarles in \textit{The Negro in the American Revolution} (1996) reports that “5000 Negro soldiers served in the American patriot forces” (xxix). Also see Richard B. Sheridan, \textit{Sugar and Slavery} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).}

To return to \textit{Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees from Otaheite} then, the image could be seen to mask the ‘other’ resource and practices that drove the hunt for breadfruit—slave labour. Britain’s effort to obtain cheap food for slaves was indeed steeped with a darker side. In the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the British were responsible for the annual transfer of 45,000 black African slaves to North American and the West Indian tobacco, rice, and sugar plantations.\footnote{As cited in Black, \textit{Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783}, 79.} What this meant was that by 1780 “British ships had transported 2,141,900 slaves from African ports, and colonial ships took another 124,000.”\footnote{As cited in Black, \textit{Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783}, 79.} Known as triangular trade, British ships sailed for Africa filled with goods such as cotton, salt, firearms, and iron to be exchanged for slaves. Mostly African men, but some women and children too, were carried to British West Indies or North America to sell or trade for sugar, tobacco, and rice wanted by Britain.\footnote{James Walvin in his essay “Abolishing the Slave Trade” \textit{History in Focus} 12 (Spring 2007) notes that before the 1820s, “about two and a half million Europeans crossed the Atlantic to settle in the Americas; in the same period almost eight and half Africans had been transported from Africa on the slave ships” (2). Interestingly pointed out by Diana Paton in her essay entitled “Enslaved Women and Slavery before and after 1807,” \textit{History in Focus} 12 (Spring 2007) indicates that the ratio of African men to women in the Atlantic slave trade was 2:1, largely because men could be sold for more in the Americas (1). Enslaved women in the Caribbean Paton reports had an “unusually small number of children,” a vast number of whom died young (2). The strenuous work regime and inadequate nutrition was blamed for the high rates of miscarriage and infant death.} Other than labour for plantations, the slave trade realized substantial profits for Britain with slaves often surpassing the £30 value at which
they were insured.155 This was a new twist on *oeconomia*. William Pitt, Britain’s Prime Minister (1759-1806), acknowledged that in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the triangular trade “produced a quarter of the profits of all overseas English trade.”156

Triangular trade went far in staving off fears of further financial crashes that had occurred in the mid-1770s and “spread terror to every commercial city on the continent.”157 So successful was this Atlantic enterprise that it surpassed East Indian trade with depot centers such as Bristol and Liverpool realizing ten to twenty percent return on their investments.158 Bristol, for example, was a pivotal transfer point with over 1.5 million slaves filtering through it in the late eighteenth century.159 The city also had developed into a major sugar-refining site that turned the crude brown muscavado (sugar) into a product for consumption and distribution. No wonder then that cities such as these, earned the dubious reputation that “‘every brick in the city had been cemented with a slave’s blood’.”160 The breadfruit solution was clearly marked by similar ambivalence—the euphoria of economic recovery through global prowess was tied to human exploitation.

155 Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 79.

156 As quoted in Michael Craton, *Sinews of Empire* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1974), 145. “Six million Africans transported to the Americas,” almost half of them in British or British North American ships and of which approximately twenty to twenty-five percent hailed from Liverpool as noted by historian James Walvin in “Abolishing the Slave Trade” *History in Focus* 12 (Spring 2007) registers slavery’s utility to Britain’s economy.

157 As cited by Emma Rothschild, “The politics of globalisation circa 1773,” *OECD Observer* 228 (September 2001): 13. This credit crisis began with failure of London banks which led to Dutch banks, whose connections to the East India Company resulted in declaration of bankruptcy by its chairman.

158 Musgrave, *An Empire of Plants*, 55. Kenneth Morgan in *Slavery and the British Empire* of 2007 notes that the annual sum invested in Liverpool’s slave trade alone reached more than £1 million by 1800, and that was on the understanding that merchants could still “make a substantial profit from slave trading” (79).

159 Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, 137.

My point here is to demonstrate the overlapping utilities seen within economic botany, and to show how masking the unsettling ruptures within resource extraction made “domination at a distance feasible.”\(^{161}\) Thomas Gosse’s *Transplanting of the Bread-Fruit-Trees from Otaheite* takes up the late eighteenth-century focus on the botanic resource and its economic value, here mobilized by the promise of breadfruit’s apparent abundance, utility, and acclimatization potential. That mobility would seem to have given rise to new understandings of imperial botanizing to suggest that the distant could be made familiar by “bringing home” those un-familiarities.\(^{162}\) Transporting breadfruit through the stability of British naval expertise and cultivating its growth at scientific Kew, the “great botanical exchange house for the empire,”\(^{163}\) validated for viewers the utility of breadfruit pursuit and imperial claims.

Somewhat prophetically the Gosse mezzotint can be seen to allude to the ‘social hieroglyphic’ that underpinned strains of an encroaching modern capitalism later evoked in Marx’s *Das Capital* (1867): “the inequities in the relations of owner and worker producing the product could be disguised.”\(^{164}\) Uneven power relations and inequalities embedded within resource extraction were beginning to visibly scar arcadian landscapes at home and abroad. Worker discontent in the cotton and timber industries in Britain joined with mobilized efforts to enact abolition of slavery. Calls were made by contemporaneous voices such as Robert Thornton to “break the bonds of so many victims…discard a commerce which


\(^{162}\) Ibid., 223-224.


is founded only on injustice, and whose object is luxury” and recognize that “slavery is the enemy of the whole human race.”  

The ambivalent terrains of imperial botanizing depicted rumblings of change.

### The Other Side of Paradise

Change within Britain’s cultural landscape surfaces within diverse images of botanic spaces, a theme I have argued throughout my chapters. In the latter decades of the eighteenth century, those shifts in British cultural terrains were also unearthed through increased visibility and mobility of black populations. Movement of slaves brought sizable profits to Britain, as already noted, but also gave momentum to re-envisioning botany’s human resource, the slave. Britain’s push for abolition saw more widespread social support through the 1790s.

### Slave Trade’s Death Knell

Captain Collingwood of the Liverpool trader the *Zong*, to avoid losing profit for ill slaves, cast overboard 133 of the ship’s 470 human cargo. In court, he claimed that the slaves had succumbed to “perils of the sea,” a criteria covered by marine insurance.

---


166 James Walvin in “Abolishing the Slave Trade” has shown that print culture’s exposure of atrocities upon the enslaved, the “vernacular of equality” underpinning a break with the American colonies, the founding of the influential Abolition Committee of 1787, and Britain’s efforts to undermine Napoleon’s attempt to reinstitute slavery in the Caribbean all demonstrated that for Britain abolition was both “moral and strategic” (4-8).


168 As quoted in *Ibid.*, 79-80. Olaudah Equiano, freed slave and writer of 500-page autobiography, and Granville Sharp, an influential abolitionist, protested being ruled an insurance dispute rather than a homicide. The ship’s
Collingwood won his case, but in 1788 George III, not wholeheartedly a supporter of abolition, did endorse Sir William Dolben’s Bill to ease crowding on slavers—a notable change.\textsuperscript{169} The efforts of high profile abolitionists Granville Sharp, William Wilberforce, and Thomas Clarkson also met with measured reward when The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 made it “illegal for British ships to trade in slaves,” although slavery itself continued.\textsuperscript{170} The rumblings of social change mobilized by the \textit{Zong} massacre attest to the cultural turmoil around issues of enslavement and also call to mind the kind of injustices and fears interwoven within practices of botanical \textit{oeconomia}. Indeed, the empire’s progressive mandates were complicated by shifts that had begun to expose botanical enterprises as tainted with practices of human exploitation.

By the 1790s, a wide sector of Britons, ranging from labourers to bourgeois industrialists, had begun to “value the idea of liberty” and with that found the fundamental concept of enslavement and its atrocities as repugnant.\textsuperscript{171} Public response to these atrocities ranged from freed black slave and eminent writer Olaudah Equiano’s biography \textit{The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African} of 1789 becoming an international bestseller to Granville Sharp’s (1735-1813) amassing bishops

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{170} James Walvin, \textit{Black Ivory: Slavery in the British Empire} (London: HarperCollins, 1992), 262. This act however did not totally eradicate slavery or even slave trade. Ships were fined if caught transp orting slaves. Not until the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was slavery made illegal. Of course this was a complicated process that saw conditions imposed upon former slaves (for example ‘apprentice’ designations) and monetary compensations awarded to former owners.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 261-263. Also see Olaudah Equiano, \textit{The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African}, Vol. 1 and 2 (London: printed for and sold by the author, 1789).
\end{flushleft}
nationwide for the support of the abolitionist cause. The 1789 resolutions submitted to the House of Commons by William Wilberforce, an Evangelical and a Member of Parliament, argued that the inhumanity of slavery was incompatible with a reasonable society. Joining the movement was also the working class, specifically the 769 Sheffield metalworkers who in 1789 petitioned Parliament against a pro-slavery lobby because their “cutlery wares” were being traded in Africa for “the price of Slaves” and as a result they felt “the greatest aversion to foreign Slavery,” claiming to see “the case of the nations of Africa as their own.” Leading voices in last quarter of the eighteenth century, such as economist Adam Smith had already criticized slavery’s moral and economic rationale: “work…can be squeezed out of him [slave] by violence only, [and] it appears that from the experience of all ages and nations, work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves.”

What had been opened up by the century’s end was a cultural moment when opposition to the oeconomia of slavery gained serious traction. Debates were fueled by testimonials to Parliament such as that of Sir Philip Francis in 1791 who claimed to have witnessed during his travels a plantation overseer throwing a ‘Negro slave’ into a tank of boiling cane-juice. James Gillray’s satirical print, Barbarities in the West Indies of 1791 (Figure 4.9) foregrounds this incident and in doing so questions the nature of humanity and the viability of enslavement. Numerous scholars have discussed Gillray’s 1791 print and

172 Hochschild, Bury the Chains, 172-174.


most recently Kay Dian Kriz in her analysis of sugar, the slave trade, and the West Indies at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Gillray’s print challenged viewers to reconsider who indeed was the barbarian—the African slave held under in a vat of boiling sugar cane or the ‘English driver’ holding him there with a stick? Four flailing limbs were the only visible fragments of the slave—those limbs the only register of plantation productivity and his eviscerated humanity. On the back wall, trophies of black body pieces, an arm and severed ears are nailed side by side with carcasses of rats aligning the slave with vermin. This link with animals is furthered by the words Gillray has coming from the driver’s mouth that promise that after “the bath” would come “a curry-combing” as one might do for a workhorse.

The title of the print, Barbarities in the West Indias, not only questions who was the “uncivilized” in this image but indeed challenges how the viewer might be culpable in the atrocities known to be inflicted upon the enslaved. In 1789, Oladuah Equiano had attested in his biography that these horrors ranged from dismemberment and “sexual licence of the most grotesque kind” to “slaves staked to the ground and mutilated, slaves hanged, burned,” and tortured. Art historian Linda Nochlin in The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of Modernity of 1995 argues that detached human body parts are metaphors of modernity, that is, they often have a fractured, fluctuating, and uncertain resonance that characterize shifts in a changing world. Gillray’s image here was no doubt responding to concerns around the threats Britain feared at home and in colonies, especially in response to


emancipation of slaves in France in 1794. It also can be argued that the visual violence and destruction of the African slave was an attempt to resolve growing concerns about interracial marriage and miscegenation that for many were tainting the purity of the British race.\footnote{On these fears see Edward Long, \textit{Candid reflections by a planter} (London: T. Lowdnes, 1772), 55-57 and \textit{The History of Jamaica}, Vol. 2 (London: T. Lowdnes, 1774), 327-30. Also see Kriz, \textit{Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement}, 108-110 as well as Walvin, \textit{Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery}, 225-227. In Britain, black male populations looking to marry turned to white females who were more plentiful than black females and often agreeable to such a union. As pointed out by Felicity Nussbaum in \textit{Limits of the Human} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), interracial marriage, while not illegal in Britain as in America, was deemed “gnawingly unnatural” with its threat to established parameters that contained gender, class, and race (187). In late eighteenth-century Britain, a woman’s choice of a black husband hinted of the same kind of radical female action that was witnessed in working women and their “bitterly” defiant political actions as evident, for example, in their involvement in food riots such as those in Manchester and Nottingham in 1795. See John Bohstedt, “Gender, Household, and Community Politics: Women in English Riots, 1790-1810,” \textit{Past and Present} 120:1 (1988). Such “strange partialities” for black men, moralist James Tobin warned in his 1785 \textit{Cursory remarks upon the Reverend Mr. Ramsay’s Essay}, were by the “misguided, often lower orders of women” (118). Ironically, women from diverse classes shared a common struggle to balance social duty and personal desire. This observation provoked further anxiety in relation to the already burgeoning lower classes, women’s opposition to the social norms, and what seemed an increasing affinity to black populations and their plight. Miscegenation not only incited angst for its association with defiance in relation to class and gender, but also for social erosions penetrating the very foundation of nationhood, the family. For further discussion of black sexuality and anxieties raised see Sander Gilman \textit{Difference and pathology: stereotypes of sexuality, race, and madness} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 83-101 and Chapter 4.} While for Linnaeus distinctions between the human races had manifested primarily in physical difference,\footnote{Linnaeus saw hair and sometimes temperament, for example, as a qualifiers that denoted difference between Europeans, Asians and Africans. And while the colour of skin may have been different, Linnaeus’s taxonomy saw all mankind, regardless of colour or variety, classify into one family, that is, \textit{homo sapiens}. As Winthrop Jordan has shown in \textit{White over Black} (New York: Norton, 1977) in all editions of \textit{Systema Naturae} Linnaeus “duly catalogued the various kinds of men, yet never in a hierarchic manner” (222-3). In addition, Linnaeus had logically advanced that all “species are natural entities that God placed on earth at the Creation. They are His, not ours—they exist…independent of our whims.” Perhaps such distinction as that based upon colour, was also shaped by subjective judgment—by mere ‘whims’. For a discussion of debates around black physiognomy see Kay Dian Kriz, \textit{Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement}, Chapter Three.} in Gillray’s print the racialized brutalities attendant on Linnaean \textit{oeconomia} are brought to the fore. The cost of West Indian sugar is pictured as an atrocity while giving tangible form to abolitionist accusations that consumption of sugar was tainted by human flesh.\footnote{See Deirdre Coleman, “Conspicuous Consumption: White Abolitionism and English Women’s Protest Writing in the 1790s,” \textit{English Literary History} 61, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 341-362 and Kay Dian Kriz, \textit{Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement}, 112-113.}
Conclusion

For Britain, botanical enterprise was seen as a conduit to economic fruition and global imperium. But, “strength” and “influence” of plants mentioned at this chapter’s outset, called up tensions embedded within Britain’s imperial impulse. While plant power promised to satiate consumer cravings, cure disease, and stabilize if not fortify the nation’s economy, the idea of resource utility became troubled with unanticipated human and financial costs—relentless wars, failed acclimatizations, new industrial demands, ambivalences around enslavement issues, and shifted dynamics in populations back home. Oeconomia’s promise became complicated by these fluctuations within modernity’s thrust. From Imperial Kew to trade in slaves, visual culture registered the paradox of imperial botanizing. Put another way, the promise of plant power or “utility” was held in tension by the promised freedoms of worldwide commercial enterprise on one hand and the acknowledgment of fundamental and universal rights of the individual on the other—an issue that historian Emma Rothchild notes is today still central to “global market democracy.” 183 The diverse images presented here tease out those challenges by tapping into oeconomia’s role in mobilizing transformation in Britain’s cultural terrain.

CONCLUSION

During the last half of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century in Britain, the imprint of Linnaeus’s system of classification, its agency, and implications clearly surfaced in visual culture. Yet, as the diverse visual imagery examined in the preceding chapters reveals, caricatures, portraiture in the academic tradition, luxuriant folios of botanical illustrations, and prints that referenced Britain’s imperial geo-botanizing were also registers of contemporaneous social concerns ranging from monarchy and governance to issues around gender, sexuality, and race. As a result, botanical space in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries emerges as troubled terrain.

In focusing upon a key period during George III’s reign, specifically from 1760 to 1812, my study has argued that the fascination with new taxonomies and their ability to order natural worlds was extended into social and political realms. Importantly then, tensions during the 1770s which were marked by Britain’s loss of the American colonies and the 1790s when the French Revolution challenged Britain’s social and political order both internally and abroad, figure noticeably in this study. Within these contexts, the four chapters of the thesis explore how interest in botany, its taxonomies, outreach, and attendant anxieties, interconnected in a period of fluctuating political allegiances and shifting constructions of femininity and masculinity. Each chapter has taken up a specific aspect of Linnaeus’s new knowledge and its complex interrelationship in social terrains: namely, affinities and shifting notions of masculinity in Chapter One, hybridity and the flux within social hierarchies in Chapter Two, aspects of variation seen to trouble paradigms of governance and gender in Chapter Three, and in Chapter Four, oeconomia’s ambivalent promise and uneven
manifestation in relation to practices in imperial botanizing. In these chapters I have argued that ambivalences around botany and botanical space call up as well as mediate anxieties in relation to notions of similarity or difference and fluctuation or change—elements at the very heart of Linnaeus’s system.

Notably, the Linnaean system’s fundamental focus upon pistils and stamens and their sexual difference allowed for discourse amongst diverse publics and mobilized the integration of new understandings of the natural world into everyday life. As I have argued, concepts of affinity, hybridity, variability, and resource adaptability found traction in political terrains, giving momentum to re-evaluating effective strategies and relations with overseas colonies and their peoples while also opening up fears around new penetrations that ranged from disease to interracial mixity. And while such new ways of knowing were seen to both challenge and threaten the core of British nationhood, the momentum that underscored categorization systems would play forward into the nineteenth century.

By midcentury Charles Darwin’s had leveraged tenets around organic mutability that had been posited already by his grandfather Erasmus Darwin in Zoonomia of 1794 and by Jean Baptiste Lamarck in his Floréal lecture in 1800. ¹ In Origin of the Species of 1859, Charles Darwin explained ‘natural selection’ and the ongoing ‘struggle for existence’—how the strong and weak of a species struggled in environments, the survivors of which passed on their traits to a new generation. The term “survival of the fittest” was not explicitly used until

¹ In Zoonomia, or the laws of organic life. Vol. 1 (London, 1794-96) Erasmus Darwin posited that a species could adapt and “improve by its own inherent activity...down generations to its posterity” (505). For comments on Lamarck’s Floréal lecture see Alpheus Packard, Lamarck, the Founder of Evolution (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 232. As quoted in Stella Pelengaris and Mike Khan, “Cancer is More Than a Genetic Condition,” The Molecular Biology of Cancer, ed. Jonathan Waxman (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific, 1989), Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829), an eminent French evolutionist, was acknowledged by both Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin as being the first to advance (in Darwin’s words) “the probability of all changes in the organic [and] inorganic world, being the result of law, and not of miraculous interposition” (328). Also see Grant Allen, Charles Darwin, Vol. 6 (New York: Humbolt, 1886), 576. Charles Darwin’s The Origin of the Species (1859) and Descent of Man (1871) expand upon these ideas.
his later 1872 edition of *The Origin of the Species.*² Importantly, Darwin who based his thesis upon the kind of observation and experimentation customary to natural history methodology, made clear that man, similar to other organic entities, was not exempt from the “perpetual process of change which affected all animate nature.”³ In *The Origin of the Species* Darwin posited his most provocative taxonomic notion that revolutionized how humanity would be understood, that is, while over vast time the earth has “gone cycling on…from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved.”⁴ Drawings such as the renowned *A Venerable Orang-outang* from *The Hornet* magazine of March 22, 1871 that depicted the balding and bearded Darwin with the body of an orang-outang, mocked evolutionary theories while exposing anxieties around humankind’s origins and potential change in the future. Man was posited as merely a highly developed form of animal life, constantly adapting and evolving over time—a concept alluded to a hundred and fifteen years earlier by Linnaeus. And although Darwin’s evolutionary postulations were not entirely new or original, his discussion of origins and descents—of evolutionary trace—would frame cultural thinking and preoccupations with progress in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and indeed find similar resonance in today’s contemporary contexts. Cultural transformation, then and now, would seem to share ambivalences and anxieties associated with shifts from familiar territory to unknown terrains. In turn, visual culture and new knowledge continue to register those developments and slippages.


Figure 1.1 Moses Harris, Plate XIII, *The Silk-Worm and Large Tyger*, 1766 from *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 by Moses Harris. Hand-coloured etching, approximately 29 cm x 23 cm. (Courtesy of the Royal Entomological Society, St. Albans.)

© Royal Entomological Society, UK.
Figure 1.2 Georg Ehret, *Methodus plantarum sexualis*, 1736. (Courtesy of the Natural History Museum, London.)

© Natural History Museum
**Figure 1.3** Vegetal Kingdom—*Clavis Systematis Sexualis*, or Key of the Sexual System from Carolus Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, Tenth Edition, 1758. (Courtesy of the Missouri Botanical Garden.)

© 1998-2009 Missouri Botanical Garden
www.botanicus.org.
Figure 1.4 Matthew Darly, *The Macaroni Print Shop*, 1773. Hand-coloured etching, 17.7 cm x 24.9 cm. (BMC 4701) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 1.5 Matthew Darly, *The Aurelian Macaroni*, 1773. Etching, 17.6 cm x 12.5 cm. (BMC 5156) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 1.6 Moses Harris, Frontispiece to Moses Harris’s *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 by Moses Harris.

Etching, approximately 29 cm x 23 cm.

(Courtesy of the Royal Entomological Society, St. Albans.)

© Royal Entomological Society, UK.
Figure 1.7 Moses Harris, Plate XXVII, *The Ruby Tyger, The Sweet-Scented Pea*, 1766 from *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects* of 1766 by Moses Harris.
Hand-coloured engraving, approximately 29 cm x 23 cm.
(Courtesy of the Royal Entomological Society, St. Albans.)

© Royal Entomological Society, UK.
Figure 2.1 Matthew Darly, The Fly Catching Macaroni, 1772. Etching, 17.7 cm x 12.2 cm. (BMC 4695) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 2.2 Benjamin West, *Mr. Joseph Banks*, 1773.
Oil on canvas, 234 x 160 cm
(Courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art at http://www.wga.hu/)

© The Web Gallery of Art
Figure 2.3 Matthew Darly, *A Mungo Macaroni*, 1772. Etching, 17.6 cm x 12.5 cm. (BMC 5030) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 2.4 Thomas Gainsborough, *Ignatius Sancho*, 1768. Oil on canvas, 73.7 cm x 62.2 cm. (Courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada)

© 2009 National Gallery of Canada.

[http://gallery.ca/](http://gallery.ca/)
Figure 2.5 Frontispiece from Thomas Burnet’s *The Sacred Theory of the Earth* of 1773. (Courtesy of the British Library.)

© 2009 Gale.
Figure 3.1 Abraham Pether, *The Snowdrops*, 1804 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Mezzotint by W. Ward, plate mark 48.5 cm x 34.7 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.2 Philip Reinagle, *Cupid Inspiring Plants with Love*, 1805 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Coloured stipple engraving by T. Burke, plate mark 43.4 cm x 34.8 cm. (Courtesy the Wellcome Library.)

© Wellcome Library, UK.
Figure 3.3 Maria Cosway, *Flora Dispensing her Favours on the Earth*, 1807 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Aquatint and stipple engraving by T. Woolnoth, plate mark 48.3 cm x 38.2 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.4 Peter Henderson, *The Queen Flower*, 1804 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Stipple and line engraving, R. Cooper engraver, plate mark 55.6 cm x 43.5 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.5 Philip Reinagle, *Tulips*, 1798 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Mezzotint by R. Earlam, printed in colour, plate mark 47.6 cm x 35.3 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.6 Robert John Thornton, *Group of Roses*, 1798 in Robert John Thornton’s *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Mezzotint, line engraving by R. Earlom, hand-coloured, plate mark 48.3 cm x 37.2 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.7 *A Lady of Scientific Habits* c. 1805. Lithograph signed as Kora. (Courtesy of James Secord.)

© James Secord Private Collection.
Figure 3.8 Philip Reinagle, *The Superb Lily*, 1799 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Mezzotint, W. Ward sculptor, plate mark 47.5 cm x 35.2 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.9 Peter Henderson, *Stapelia*, 1801 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Stipple and line engraving, J. C. Stadler sculptor, plate mark 52.3 cm x 40.2 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.10 Peter Henderson, *The Dragon Arum*, 1801 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Mezzotint by W. Ward, printed in colour, plate mark 47.6 cm x 35.2 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 3.11 Philip Reinagle, *Large Flowering Sensitive Plant*, 1799 in Robert John Thornton, *The Temple of Flora*, 1799-1807. Aquatint, stipple and line engraving by J. C. Stadler, printed in colour, plate mark 47.3 cm x 35.7 cm. (Courtesy of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center.)

© 2006 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.
Figure 4.1 Aylmer Lambert, *Cinchona officinalis*, 1797 from Aylmer Lambert, *A Description of the Genus Cinchona*, 1797. (Courtesy of the Linnean Society of London.)

© Linnean Society of London.
Figure 4.2. Thomas Gosse, *Transplanting of the Bread-fruit-trees from Otaheite*, 1796. Hand-coloured mezzotint, 52.4 cm x 60.6 cm. (Courtesy of the Captain Cook Memorial Museum, Whitby.)

© Captain Cook Memorial Museum, Whitby.
Figure 4.3 James Gillray, *The great South Sea Caterpillar, transform'd into a Bath Butterfly*, 1796. Hand-coloured etching, 35 cm x 24.7 cm. (BMC 8718)
(Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 4. J. S. Mason after William Woollett, *A View of the Palace from the Hill in the middle of the Lawn...in the Royal Gardens at Kew*, c. 1760s. Etching. (AN 596046001) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 4.5 Thomas Rowlandson, *The Winding up of the Medical Report of the Walcheren Expedition*, 1810. Hand-coloured etching, 25 cm x 34.8 cm. (BMC 11536) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 4.6 Sydney Parkinson, *Breadfruit (Artocarpus altilis)*, c. 1769.

Figure 4.7 James Gillray, *Anti-Saccharrites, -or- John Bull and his Family leaving off the use of Sugar*, 1792. Hand-coloured etching, 31.3 cm x 39.7 cm. (BMC 8074) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 4.8 Thomas Hearne, *A Scene in the West Indies*, 1779. Water-coloured drawing, 37.2 cm x 58.8 cm. (AN212891001) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
Figure 4.9 James Gillray, *Barbarities in the West Indies*, 1791. Hand-coloured etching, 24.7 cm x 34.8 cm. (BMC 7848) (Courtesy of the British Museum.)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Baretti, Giuseppe Marco Antonio. Easy phraseology, for the use of young ladies, who intend to learn the colloquial part of the Italian language. London: G. Robinson, PaterRow, 1775.


----- . A Voyage to the South Sea, undertaken by command of His Majesty, for the purpose of conveying the bread-fruit tree to the West Indies. London: George Nicol, 1792.


Campe, Joachim Heinrich. Pizarro: or, the Conquest of Peru; being a continuation of the discovery of America. Birmingham: J. Belcher, 1800.


-----.


Clitorides, Philogynes. *The Natural History of the Frutex Vulvaria, or Flowering Shrub: as itis collected from the best botanists both ancient and modern*. London: W. James, 1732.


Cooke, John. *The macaroni jester, and pantheon of wit; containing all that has lately transpired in the regions of politeness, whim, and novelty*. London: printed for J. Cooke, 1773.


-----. *Phytologia; or the philosophy of agriculture and gardening*. London: J. Johnson, 1800.


Dudley, Henry Bate. *The Vauxhall affray; or, the Macaronis defeated: being a compilation of all the letters, squibs, &c. on both sides of that dispute*. 3rd ed. London: J. Williams, 1773.


-----.*A description of the magnostan and the bread-fruit: The first, esteemed one of the most delicious; the other, the most useful of all the fruits*. London: Charles Dilly, 1775.


Field, D. V. “In the wake of the *Endeavour*: Banks’s botanical legacy.” *Endeavour* 17, no. 3 (1993): 141-146.


Forgan, Sophie. Chairman of the Trustees at Captain Cook Museum, Whitby, UK. Email July 29, 2009 on Thomas Hearne’s *Thomas Gosse and Transplanting the Bread-Fruit-Trees in Otaheite* of 1796.


-----, *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.


Guthrie, William. *A Reply to the Counter-address; being a vindication of a pamphlet entitled, An address to the public on the late dismissal of a general officer*. London: W. Nicoll, 1764.


Harris, Moses. *The Aurelian: or, natural history of English Insects; namely, moths and butterflies. Together with the plants on which they feed; and their standard names, as given and established by the Society of Aurelians*. Drawn, engraved and coloured, from the natural subjects themselves. London: printed for the author, 1766.


-----. An abridgment of Captain Cook’s first and second voyages. The first performed in the years 1768...1771; the second in 1772...1775. 7th ed. London: G. Kearsley, 1798.


259


-----. The families of plants, with their natural characters, according to the number, figure, situation, and proportion of all the parts of fructification. Translated from the last edition of the Genera Plantarum; and from the Supplementum plantarum of the younger Linnaeus. Volume 1. Lichfield: J. Johnson, 1787.


Long, Edward. *Candid reflections upon the judgment lately awarded by the Court of King’s Bench, in Westminster-Hall, on what is commonly called the negroe-cause, by a planter*. London: T. Lowdnes, 1772.


Misson, Francois Maximilien. *A New Voyage to Italy. With curious observations on several others countries: as Germany, Switzerland; Savoy; Geneva; Flanders, and Holland*. Volume 1. London, 1739.


http://www.archive.org/details/reflectionsonris00mont.

http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/8rbs210.txt.


National Archives of Britain, “Black Presence: Asian and Black History in Britain, 1500-1850.”
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/index.htm

http://www.nhm.ac.uk/jdsml/nature-online/endeavour-botanical/about2.dsmI


Paton, Diana. “Enslaved women and slavery before and after 1807.” History in Focus 12 (Spring 2007). Also at https://rsvpn.ubc.ca/http/www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/.


picturelibrary@royalacademy.org.uk.


Rieter, Peter. Center for Disease Control. [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol6no1/reiter.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol6no1/reiter.htm)


Rogers, J. A. “Britain’s Black Background.” *The Crisis* 47, no. 2 (February 1940): 40


Sibly, Ebenezer. Magazine of natural history. Comprehending the whole science of animals, plants, and minerals; divided into distinct parts, the characters separately described, and systematically arranged. Vol. 2. London: Champante & Whitrow, 1794-1808.


-----. *A Section of the Correspondence of Linnaeus and other naturalists, from the original manuscripts.* London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1821.


-----.


-----.


Swedish Bulletin [http://www.swedishbulletin.se/sb/articles/0307.shtml](http://www.swedishbulletin.se/sb/articles/0307.shtml)


Teute, Fredrika J. “The Loves of the Plants; or, the Cross-Fertilization of Science and Desire at the End of the Eighteenth Century.” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 63:3 (2000): 319-345.

*The Annual Register, or a view of the history, politics, and literature for the years 1772.* 2nd ed. London: J. Dodsley, 1775.

*The Annual Register, or a view of the history, politics, and literature for the year 1775.* 2nd ed. London: J. Dodsley 1777.

*The Annual Register, or view of the history, politics, and literature for the year 1788.* London: J. Dodsley, 1790.


*The Edinburgh Magazine or Literary Miscellany.* January: Walter Ruddiman, 1796.


March 1, 1799 will be published The New Illustration of the Sexual System of Linnaeus. London: March 1, 1799.


The politician’s creed; or, political extracts. Vol. 2. London: Robinsons, 1799.


The Temple of Flora, or, Garden of the botanist, poet, painter, and philosopher. London, 1807.


-----.* “Abolishing the Slave Trade.” History in Focus* 12 (Spring, 2007). Also at [https://rsvpn.ubc.ca/http/www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/](https://rsvpn.ubc.ca/http/www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/).


