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THREE MEMOIRS OF THE FORSTERS – THE POLISH-BORN PARTICIPANTS OF COOK’S SECOND VOYAGE

The rationale behind this work is to present research on the humanistic heritage of Johann Forster and his son George.¹ The Forsters were born near Gdańsk in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (First Commonwealth – “Rzeczpospolita”). They were of Scottish ancestry. The Forsters took part in the Second Circumnavigation commanded by James Cook.² They wrote numerous works, the most important of them in English, based on their experiences on Cook’s Second Expedition. The Forsters made their own particular contributions to the genres of the travelogue and the scholarly treatise. The Forsters did not adhere to any prevailing philosophical or literary tradition. In fact, they invented their own method of literary and scientific expression.

¹ Note 1. This study presents edited fragments of: K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters – the Polish-Born Participants of Cook’s Expedition: The Same Voyage, Worlds Apart*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznań) 2008.

Note 2. The edited fragments of the above mentioned PhD dissertation have been published among other as follows: K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters – the Polish-Born Participants of Cook’s Expedition: The Same Voyage, Worlds Apart. Excerpts: Biography; Journals..., Observations..., and Voyage...; Essays Reply... and Letter...; Non-narrative Legacy*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Contact, Poznań 2009; K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters – the Polish-Born Participants of Cook’s Expedition: The Same Voyage, Worlds Apart. Excerpts: Volume Two, History of European Oceanic Exploration Discussed in the Forsters’ Narrative Writings – Selected Issues*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Contact, Poznań 2010.

² Note 1. Cook’s father was almost certainly Scottish; his mother was English, however (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, pp. 19, 154). An exhaustive secondary source on James Cook is: J. C. Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*, A. and C. Black Ltd, London 1974.

Note 2. Cook’s Second Voyage is considered by some as the most scientific of Cook’s Voyages.

Note 3. For the sake of clarity, I will hereafter capitalise the words Cook’s First, Second, and Third Voyage (Circumnavigation, Expedition), and Cook’s Voyages.

Both academics and critics of English literature the world over, for various reasons, have to date almost completely neglected the Forsters' works. For example, the awareness of the Forsters' heritage in England has always been peripheral. In all likelihood only a few fragments of only one of the Forsters' many works have been translated into Polish.

The lack of awareness of the Forsters in Poland and Lithuania has been even less understandable bearing in mind that they were the only citizens of the First Commonwealth ever to leave a lasting mark on worldwide maritime culture, as a result of their Polish origins and their following of the English seafaring tradition.

In addition, the Forsters were the first ever to compile a critical summary of the achievements of all Cook's Voyages. It has remained remarkably fresh and objective. In contrast, the works of English-language writers on Cook are now outdated and some of them are opinionated in their idealisation of Cook's accomplishments.

The fact is that publications on the Forsters present a vivid example of the existence of neglected areas in the history of Polish-British relations and later relations between Poland and the United Kingdom, especially in the field of maritime culture.

The geopolitical situation of Europe has changed favourably for linguistic research on the Forsters. Since the accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union, cultural relations between England, Scotland, and generally the UK, and Poland and the other countries, which formed part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, have required a fresh approach to many hitherto secret, politicised cultural matters. Besides, since devolution, the Scottish government has become more interested in the country's cultural heritage. It is therefore high time to attempt to rehabilitate the Forsters in England. It is also worthwhile re-introducing them to readers in Scotland, Poland, Lithuania, as well as in New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, and other English-speaking countries and territories.

Research carried out for this work provided evidence to the effect that, contrary to assertions of certain critics, the Forsters' publications were innovative and outstanding in every respect. They also provided a notable example of the interaction between the Polish, Lithuanian, Scottish, Anglo-Saxon, German, and French cultures.

This study attempts to prove that, contrary to popular belief, the written heritage left by the Forsters is enormous. Most of it concerns Cook's Expeditions, especially the Second Voyage. Therefore, any research dealing with the Forsters, which aims at a presentation of its results in a single article, has to be rather selective. From the point of view of an exposition written by a linguist in the field of the history of English literature and the history of the relations between the First Commonwealth and Britain, it is worthwhile concentrating on the Forsters' three memoirs based on Cooks' Second Voyage. These works

include copious accounts founded on their personal experience and knowledge.³

Critics often refer to these memoirs under the shortened titles as of *Journals*, *Observations*, and *Voyage*. In my review, I will continue to refer to them as such. They do not in any way diminish the importance of the Forsters' other writings that were stimulated by James Cook's three Voyages.⁴

However, of all the Forsters' works, the disquisitions *Journals*, *Observations*, and *Voyage*, are unique. They draw together all the Forsters' ideas and mark the turning point in their lives. They are the key sources for understanding the Forsters' experiences during Cooks' Second Voyage and their reflections on them. That is why they are of fundamental importance to all studies of the Forsters founded on the circumnavigation period of their lives. An intricate web of facts and concepts connects these three memoirs. Consequently, we should look upon them as a trilogy, and as such, we should introduce them to a modern reader. Therefore, this work presents a brief description of the three memoirs and draws a preliminary comparison between them.

A BIOGRAPHY OF THE FORSTERS

Johann Reinhold Forster, James Cook's future fellow voyager, was born on 22 October 1729 in Tczew near Gdańsk in Poland in Royal Prussia.⁵ His mother Eva was probably of mixed Polish and English origin, while his father, Georg Reinhold Forster, the then mayor of Tczew, was possibly of Scottish Protestant stock. Johann Reinhold married Justyna Elżbieta Nikalai, a first cousin. On 26 or 27 November 1754 at Mokry Dwór on the River Motława near Gdańsk their eldest son was born. He is known as Johann (Jan, John) George (Jerzy, Georg)

³ The three memoirs are as follows: G. Forster, *A Voyage round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop "Resolution" Commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the Years 1772, 3, 4 and 5*, in two volumes, B. White, Fleet-Street etc; London 1777; J. R. Forster, *Journal of a Journey from London to Plymouth & a Voyage on Board His Majesty's Ship the Resolution, Captain Cook Commander, from Plymouth to the Cape of Good Hope*, ms., 1772–1775 (remained unpublished during Johann's life); J. R. Forster, *Observations Made during a Voyage round the World, on Physical Geography, Natural History, and Ethic Philosophy. Especially on 1. The Earth and the Strata, 2. Water and the Ocean, 3. The Atmosphere, 4. The Changes of the Globe, 5. Organic Bodies, and 6. The Humans Species*, G. Robinson, in Pater-Noster-Row, London 1778.

The three memoirs were (re)printed posthumously as follows: G. Forster, *A Voyage round the World*, in two volumes, ed. N. Thomas and O. Berghof, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu 2000; J. R. Forster, *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster 1772–1775*, in four volumes, ed. M. E. Hoare, The University Press, Cambridge (UK) 1982; J. R. Forster, *Observations Made during a Voyage round the World. John (Johann) Reinold (Reinhold) Forster*, ed. N. Thomas, H. Guest and M. Dettelbach, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu 1996.

⁴ Cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 25, and *passim*.

⁵ An excellent secondary source on the Forsters' biography is: M. E. Hoare, *The Tactless Philosopher: John Reinhold Forster (1729–98)*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne (Australia) 1976.

Adam. Seven of the children born to Johann Reinhold and Justyna Forster survived.

Johann Reinhold Forster wrote that their Scottish ancestor emigrated there from England in the 17th century. For five generations the ancestors of the Forsters in Poland married within a narrow Scottish Calvinist émigré circle. They were almost all of strictly Calvinist denomination, and all of them had settled in the Gdańsk area. They were therefore able to keep intact the genetic, mental, and religious makeup of their ancestor. Nonetheless, Johann Reinhold Forster went to grammar school in Berlin. Later he studied theology in Halle.⁶ After graduation, he started work as a pastor in a Calvinist congregation in Mokry Dwór. It is almost certain that at home in Poland the Forsters spoke only German.

Johann Reinhold through self-study developed a considerable knowledge of natural science. In time, he became known as a promising natural scientist, with a particular gift for languages.

Meanwhile, in 1765 Johann received an invitation from St. Petersburg. to carry out research into the German settlements in the Volga region. Johann took his son George, then at the age of eleven, with him. Johann's Volga report proved to be too truthful. Therefore, the ministers of Russia's Empress Catherine II rejected it.

Thus Johann decided to emigrate to Britain. He took his son George with him. In 1766 they sailed directly to London. There Johann published papers on Volga flora and fauna. Consequently Forster was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in February 1772. In the Summer of 1767, Johann Forster moved to Warrington's Nonconformist Academy and stayed there until 1770 when he came back to London.

During his second London period Johann Forster continued to work frantically on his natural history papers. The fame of Johann Reinhold Forster as a naturalist was increasing. Two months after Cook's return from his First Voyage Johann published two works and dedicated them to Cook's natural historians Joseph Banks and Daniel Charles Solander.⁷

However, Banks withdrew from the Second Expedition. This indirectly led to King George III approving the appointment of Johann Forster as a prin-

⁶ The Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg, founded in 1694, one of the principal seats of Protestant learning (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Millennium 4th ed., CD-ROM, Focus Multimedia Ltd, Rugeley 2004).

⁷ Baronet Sir Joseph Banks (1743–1829) was English. He was long-time president of the Royal Society (1778–1820). His herbarium, now Banks' Florigerium kept in the British Museum, contains important collections by the Forsters from Cook's Second Voyage. It is considered to be one of the most valuable in existence. Daniel Solander, a Swedish botanist of the Linnean school, was an assistant of Joseph Banks. Solander made numerous drawings for Banks during Cook's First Voyage. (Cf. ibid.)

cipal naturalist and George Forster as his assistant on board *Resolution*. The nautical history of Cook's Second Voyage has been well known.⁸

Owing to their extraordinary efforts, the amount of scientific work done by two Polish citizens – participants in the Voyage was enormous. The cornerstone of the work seemed to be Johann's *Journals*, with its highly detailed daily entries. However, instead of *Journals*, Johann published his *Observations* and George issued his *Voyage*. Nevertheless, it led to further alienation of the Forsters in the capital. On the other hand, the book *Voyage* was universally prised on the Continent. It did not, however, bring the Forsters recognition in England or the eagerly awaited financial support or stabilisation. In 1778 George's German translation of the *Voyage*, titled *Reise um die Welt [...]*, was published in Berlin. It made him rather famous in Germany.

George's "pilot" visit to Germany secured for his father an appointment in 1779 as professor at the University of Halle. Meanwhile, in 1783, the government of "Rzeczpospolita" invited Johann to lecture on natural history at the University of Vilna. Eventually, Johann decided to remain in Halle. In spite of that, in 1784, George did go to the Vilna University. In the meantime George married Therese Heyne in Göttingen and in Halle defended his doctorate thesis on the edible plants of the islands of the Southern Ocean.⁹

In Vilna George lectured in natural history. He began collecting materials for an extensive geography of the South Pacific. He also wrote and then published a translation of the narrative of Cook's Third Voyage together with the essay *Cook, the Discoverer*.¹⁰ As a result, George's Europe-wide fame both as a Pacific natural philosopher and as a specialist on the Pacific voyages grew. Consequently, the Russians invited him to participate in their expedition "into the South Seas and the North Pacific". In September 1787 George left the University of Vilna for Göttingen. Yet the war between Russia and Turkey effectively ended these Russian preparations. Regrettably, George could not come back to the Vilna University because his tenure there had already been filled. In April 1788, he accepted a position of librarian in Mainz.¹¹

In October 1792, the French had occupied Mainz. George's openly joined the pro-French provisional government. George wrote to his father to the effect

⁸ An exhaustive source on Cook's Second Voyage is: J. C. Beaglehole, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure 1772–1775*, [in:] *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery. Four Volumes and Portfolio. (Edited from the Original Manuscripts)*, vol. II., Cambridge University Press, London 1969.

⁹ Note 1. Therese Heyne – daughter of Göttingen classicist Christian Gottlob Heyne (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 53).

Note 2. Göttingen University, founded in 1737 by George II of England in his capacity as Elector of Hanover, one of the most famous universities in Europe (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.).

¹⁰ Cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 57, and passim.

¹¹ Mainz – French Mayence, on the left bank of the Rhine opposite Wiesbaden and the mouth of the Main River, the birthplace of Johannes Gutenberg. A university city from 1477. (Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.)

that he was born in Poland and was serving the people of Mainz on his principles of freedom. In March 1793 George went to Paris to petition at the French National Convention for the annexation of Mainz to the French Republic. As a result, the German Emperor declared George a traitor and he faced the death penalty. Besides the Prussians captured Mainz. Therefore, George remained in Paris and he died there in January 1794 in utter penury, probably of pneumonia complicated by scurvy. Johann died at the age of 69. At the time of his death, he was a member of almost all the faculties at the University of Halle.

JOHANN REINHOLD FORSTER'S *RESOLUTION JOURNAL*

Johann Reinhold Forster wrote notes with reference to Cook's Second Voyage on numbered pages bound as volumes in leather. He referred to these notes as his "Journal" or "Journals". They are referred to below simply as the *Resolution Journal* or more simply as *Journals*. His remarks were very sincere. He wrote in his own, uncorrected idiom. In his day-to-day records, Johann registered a detailed story of the Voyage told from the point of view of a non-seaman, principal naturalist, and anthropologist.

The greatest part of Johann's biological and zoological research was devoted to taxonomical work. In other words, the Forsters tried to find which plants and animals lived in the places they visited during the course of their travels. Johann documented it all in *Journals*. On the other hand, Johann's *Journals* exemplified his increasing preoccupation with "Man". A close look at *Journals* reveals that the wealth of material gathered by Johann for the study of "Man" and cultures in Oceania was quite extraordinary.

It seems that Johann Forster developed his research plan during the Voyage. By the time the *Resolution* had reached the Cape of Good Hope, Johann had decided on a clearly defined programme of natural historical investigation. Yet, he did not define the final version of his research plan including ethnology until later, probably by the time he had explored Tahiti.

It should be noted that his scheme was extremely diversified. What was even more important is that his programme proved brilliantly creative. In addition, it can be seen that in his experiment design he forecasted and often defined a new era in natural history, which in the following century would divide itself into distinct fields of physics, chemistry, astronomy, navigation, geography, biology, zoology, earth sciences, sciences on mankind, its artefacts, society, and languages. The entries in *Journals* indicate that he intended not only to gather data but also to use them to interpret, explain, and build new theories and to put old ones aside. For us and for him alike, this point of view was novel.

The perusal of both Johann's and Cook's logs shows that it took the *Resolution* four months to sail to Cape Town and additional four months to sail from

the Cape to New Zealand. It seems that the second leg was an extremely tiring period for Johann. It can be inferred that the sense of solitary misery, wretchedness, and desolation was at its extreme. If anything should happen, they could not count on any outside help. In mid-December, in poor visibility due to a squall, *Resolution* lost her sister-ship *Adventure*. During the ensuing run eastwards, the *Resolution* made her incursion into the Deep South and crossed the Antarctic Circle, where “few or none will ever penetrate”. Outside there was almost nothing but icy stormy wind. Fog permitting, they occasionally saw icebergs, and sea birds.

Inside the cold, dark, and cramped cabin streams of seawater on Johann’s head, a prevailing dampness, as well as urinating animals were their constant companions. In the entry in his *Journals* dated 27 November [1772], Johann gives testimony to the effect that the seams of the deck over his cabin were suffering from extensive neglect. As a result, they were incapable of keeping out the water from the daily routine of scrubbing the deck:

[...] now the Ship began to roll in a high head Sea, the Seams were all enlarged & broken, & the pitch gave way, so that I was fairly soused [sic], which was very uncomfortable [...]. Were my Cabbin [sic] larger [...] my Cot could be thus disposed, that it could not leak on my head [...].¹²

For Johann, surviving in his very inadequate lodgings must have become a real test of endurance. To make matters worse, at one point when sailing through the Southern Ocean, Cook was worried by the state of the ship’s livestock, and prepared quarters for them between Johann’s and the Mate’s cabin. It was the proverbial last straw for J. R. Forster, who wrote:

March 15th [...] We have been obliged to prepare a better & warmer birth for two Ewes & a Ram [...] I was now beset with cattle & stench on both Sides [...] The room offered me by Capt. Cook, & which the Master [’s] obstinacy deprived me of, was now given to [...] creatures, who [...] shit and pissed on one side, while 5 Goats did the same afore on the other side.¹³

Yet, the cold, wet, and smelly living quarters did not manage to deter J. R. Forster from doing his work. He became engrossed with scientific research on the structure and origin of ice, which surrounded the ship. He put forward several theories, among them, the tentative proposition that pack ice did not originate from land, that seawater could freeze, and that cold has a tangible physical quality similar to matter: “[...] one might be induced to believe, that

¹² J. R. Forster, *The Resolution Journal* (1982), p. 185.

¹³ Ibid., p. 233.

cold is a real Substance [...] which enters the water & expands it, whilst it is formed into Ice [...].¹⁴

On 25 March, they sighted New Zealand, and on 27 March, they anchored in Dusky Bay (Dusky Sound).¹⁵ *Journals* details events on their second landfall on the Southern Hemisphere after the Cape of Good Hope. Johann wrote that during five weeks at anchor the Forsters and Anders Sparrman (who embarked at the Cape) used to the utmost their opportunities to gather natural history data.¹⁶ They were particularly successful in collecting specimens for the “sciences” of ornithology and ichthyology. Further, Johann had to work during the night to preserve frugal specimens. Often to keep awake during the hours of darkness, he would submerge himself in a barrel of water placed in his cabin. In addition, whilst at anchor in Dusky Bay, Johann for the first time began his research on indigenous peoples. In his *Journals*, he wrote an account on the Kati-Mamoe peoples.

They next dropped anchor in Queen Charlotte Sound on the north-eastern tip of the Southern Island. Johann seemed to be enthusiastic regarding the opportunities this stay offered. From his point of view, probably the single most important event was the reunion of the *Resolution* with the *Adventure*. J. R. Forster wrote that from the officers and astronomer of the sister ship he obtained the skins of birds collected in Tasmania and details of their astronomically derived geographic positions. In addition, the Maoris offered a wealth of information. For example, J. R. Forster for the first time observed the sexual habits of Maori women.

Johann wrote that on 7 June [1773] the ships raised sail again. The final destination on the first leg of their Oceania cruise seems to have been Tahiti. They remained at anchor there from 16 to 31 August. According to the *Journals*, the Forsters’ main interest was natural history. The search for plants was tedious and time consuming. Even so, Johann found time for his increasing preoccupation with “Man”. He engrossed himself with the study of the various branches of anthropology. In his *Journals* Johann described mournful maraes (religious enclosures), his friendship with many people and their habits. Here he started to think about his theory of civilisation and well being of the population, and wrote about “[...] circumstance [which] contribute [sic] towards the happiness of its Inhabitants [...].” However, he was aware that not all in Tahiti was happiness. There were political changes wrought by time and war.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁵ Cf. ibid., p. 238, Fig. 7, where the same geographical feature is called both “Dusky Bay” and “Dusky Sound”. On the same page Johann spells it “Duskey Bay” or “duskey Bay”.

¹⁶ Anders Erikson Sparrman (1748-1820) was a Swedish naturalist (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit).

From Tahiti, the ships sailed approximately to Huahine and later to Raiatea tracking Tasman's discoveries of 1648.¹⁷ They passed the Hervey Islands and in October reached Tonga or the Friendly Islands. At the same time, Johann in his *Journals* collected more notes on comparative physical anthropology.

Further, on 8 October, the Expedition left Tonga for Queen Charlotte Sound in New Zealand. During this run, Johann composed in his *Journals* a comprehensive study of the archipelagos they had visited during the two months between 11 August and 8 October. This portion of time encompassed the Oceanian part of the first round trip from New Zealand via the Pacific islands back to New Zealand. The elder Forster recorded his first rudimentary explanation of the complex hierarchical societies and the linguistic relationships of present-day Polynesia. Overall, in the above-mentioned time span encompassing two months, J. R. Forster collected a multitude of observations recorded in *Journals* and a large number of artefacts.

Three weeks after leaving Tonga disaster struck. On 30 October [1773], they were beating against a storm east of the present-day Cook Strait in New Zealand. In the course of their struggle, a prolonged squall separated them from their sister ship. Johann wrote:

Lost Company of the *Adventure* this night [...] We could go in a harbour behind an Island, had we not lost sight of *Adventure*; thus we are obliged to be exposed to the fury of weather, on account of this ill sailing Ship, which has been a dog upon us during all the Expedition.¹⁸

They were never to see *Adventure* on the Voyage again. In November, when the storm abated, *Resolution* anchored for three weeks in Queen Charlotte Sound.

Johann wrote in *Journals* to the effect that the Forsters and Sparrman collected many botanical specimens, including thirty new plants. To Johann's mortification, they also witnessed for the first time an act of cannibalism, when a Maori boiled and ate the head of a boy recently slain in a skirmish. Johann made a calculated guess that *Resolution*'s gifts such as nails and other artefacts of civilisation might have been the cause of the recent warfare and the resulting savage and inhuman cruelty of eating human flesh.

¹⁷ Note 1. Abel Janszoon Tasman (born in 1603 in the Netherlands, died probably before 22 October 1659, certainly before 5 February 1661). He is considered to be the "greatest of the Dutch navigators and explorers". Cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 72, and *passim*.

Note 2. Both Forsters in their memoirs wrote about Tasman often. An excellent secondary source on Tasman is: J. W. Backhouse, *Abel Janszoon Tasman: His Life and Voyages*, William Grahame, Hobart (Tasmania) 1896.

¹⁸ J. R. Forster, *The Resolution Journal* (1982), p. 415.

Finally, on 15 December [1773], *Resolution* left New Zealand for her second forage Deep South. Soon they entered the freezing zone; the ice covered the sea as well as the sails. On 21 December at the beginning of the Southern summer, they crossed the Antarctic Circle again. They sailed further south. J. R. Forster described the weather outside “as cold as hell [sic]”. J. R. Forster wrote that the conditions of the crew were appalling. Johann’s cabin was full of water. Even his pillow floated freely in the “briny deluge”. He was beset by rheumatic pains and wrote exasperated:

Decembr [sic] 28 [...] I got again a Rheumatic & was confined to my bed for those 2 days. [...] Jan. 3^d [...] I never stir out of the Cabin, the least current however throws me again in a fever [...] The fever overcame me at last [...] despair is visibly painted on all faces [...] Jan. 5th [...] A great continent cannot be there [...] especially not, for all the great sea & swell come from thence & could not be formed under a great track of Land [...] What helps it to harass the Ship, the rigging, the crew in these turbulent Seas.¹⁹

In his *Journals* J. R. Forster, summed up Captain Cook’s ambitions and aspirations possibly quite aptly:

But we must submit, there are people [Cook], who are hardened to all feelings, & will give no ear to the dictates of humanity & reason [...] to leave nothing to [...] future discoverers, by their perseverance, which costs the lives of poor Sailors or at least their healths [sic] [...] they will give their genius full Scope, but wo! the poor Crew under them [...].²⁰

On 18 January he wandered when would this “cruise [...] shocking to humanity” and “interest & vanity” of James Cook give way to “humanity”.²¹ On 20 January J. R. Forster mentioned that the ship’s surgeon “Mr [sic] Patten [...] expects [...] to see more than half of the Ship’s company sick” if they continued sailing in Southern waters.²² Johann wrote in the lowest of spirits: “I do not live, not even vegetate, I wither, I dwindle away [...]”.

Further, Johann wrote that on 30 January [1774] the ice finally checked Cook’s progress south. Johann recorded: “[...] we discovered an Ice-Field of immense extent [...] it was impossible to go any further South: & in good faith, I believe, it is so far South, as ever any man in future times shall choose to go; it being nearly 71° South [...].”²³ At that time, James Cook noted in his Journal:

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 441.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 444.

²¹ Ibid., p. 447.

²² Ibid., p. 448.

²³ Note 1. Ibid., p. 451.

"I who had ambition not only to go further than any one had done before, but as far as it was possible for man to go [...]"²⁴ Cook realised that the crew had reached the limits of their tolerance, and that he had to turn north again. Johann wrote that the Captain did so in February, after consulting with his officers about the soonest possible return to the Tropics. James made his decision none too soon. The Captain's rheumatism and cold became so severe that his life was in danger. J. R. Forster apparently forgot Cook's "interest & vanity" and later in his *Journals*, he noted with concern the symptoms of the Commander's illness and in most tender terms pleaded with him to rest for his own good.

Fortunately, James Cook's first crisis passed by 11 March 1774 when they sighted Easter Island. *Resolution* lied at anchor near the island from 14 to 17 March. Johann Forster spent one whole day of this period studying the huge and mysterious stone statues and comparing them with the material culture of the indigenous natives.

For the following three weeks, the ship sailed in search of the Marquesas, first discovered by Mendanna in 1595.²⁵ On the island of Tahuata (Mendanna's Santa Christina) in the Marquesas the Forsters collected new data on plants, fish, and the habits of the native humans. Later, on their way to Tahiti they passed through the Northern Tuamotus, via the King George Islands. At Takaroa Johann gathered, and recorded in *Journals*, further intelligence for his developing theory of the origin of coral reefs.

Finally, on 22 April, the ship anchored at Matavai Bay in Tahiti. They stayed on this and other islands of the Society Archipelago for three weeks. There, Johann worked hard and divided his attention between his study of "Man" and natural philosophy. In the meantime, in his *Journals* J. R. Forster noted the material prosperity, which he found among the people living both along the coast and in the plains of Tahiti. It could be inferred that he was constantly looking for somewhere to gather new data for his anthropology studies. His findings show that the material culture and local custom, especially their impressive naval fleet manoeuvres in Tahiti held a great fascination for him. Accordingly, in the neighbouring island of Raiatea, he met an exclusive party of nobles from the other islands of the Archipelago. Not satisfied with this social anthropological discovery he went into the interior of Raiatea. After assiduous search, he apparently found somebody he was looking for. It was the "divinity teacher", Tutavai, who passed to J. R. Forster the knowledge of "Names of Gods & Divinities of various ranks" and other points of local cos-

Note 2. They reached in fact 71° 10' South latitude (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Non-Narrative Legacy*, p. 76).

²⁴ Cf. J. C. Beaglehole, *The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure*, p. 321.

²⁵ Note 1. Álvaro de Mendanna de Neira, the Spanish mariner and discoverer (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.).

Note 2. An excellent secondary source on Mendanna's voyages is: J. C. Beaglehole, *The Exploration of the Pacific*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1968.

mogony. The daily encounters with the local population helped both Forsters to acquire a practical knowledge of the local Polynesian dialects. Johann took advantage of this fluency in communication to pursue extensively his ethnological field survey, which he faithfully recorded in *Journals*.

In mid May they started the second voyage from the Society Archipelago to Queen Charlotte Sound in New Zealand. This voyage was the last chance for J. R. Forster to gather data before Cook's third and last sweep Deep South. He was well aware of this and therefore worked very hard gathering and analysing data. He meticulously recorded the events and his feelings in his *Journals*.

Sailing westwards, they approached Niue (Cook's Savage Island) on 22 June. On the island, fierce opposition from the natives interrupted J. R. Forster's collecting of botanical samples on shore. In his log, Johann included a "treatise on tactics while dealing with the hostile tribes". On June 27, they were sailing in the Tonga Archipelago. There, on the island Nomuka, another confrontation with the natives occurred, Clerke's musket was stolen, tempers ran high, and in the ensuing confusion Wales forgot to wind up the ship's chronometer. J. R. Forster noted in his *Journals* this "negligence" by the astronomer against the principles of navigation.

James Cook's next target was Tofua, where in his *Journals* J. R. Forster insisted that there was indisputable evidence of the volcanic origins of the island. They sailed on, passed the islet of Vatoa, south-east of the Fiji group, and in mid July entered the archipelago of the New Hebrides (or Vanuatu), previously visited by Quirós and Bougainville.²⁶ *Resolution* was now in present-day Melanesia. They cruised between islands inhabited by inhospitable tribes. The *Journals* recorded the ensuing scuffle on 22 July (sic), apparently in Port Sandwich, Vanatu:

[...] when just the Cap^t appeared on deck & pointed a gun at him, but the fellow coolly pointed the Arrow at the Cap^t & then he got a charge of small shot into his head, he clapt [sic] immediately his hand to his head, but immediately pointed the arrow again at the Capt [sic], when the 3^d Lient [sic] gave him a full charge of small shot into his Face, which caused him to lay aside his shooting Scheme, & he paddled astern as fast as possible, then another fired an Arrow from the Starboard side of the Ship at the Cap^t, which went into the Mizen [sic] Shrouds & dropt [sic] into the Sea

²⁶ Note 1. Pedro Fernández de Quirós (1563-1615), Portuguese mariner best known for his Pacific voyages of discovery in the service of Spain (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 71, and passim. The reader can refer to the seminal source on Quirós, namely: C. Markham, ed., *The Voyages of Pedro Fernandez de Quiros*, "Hakluyt", no. 14-15 (1904-1905), London.

Note 2. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville (1729-1811), French chef d'escadre (commodore) in the naval operations, later vice-admiral, a diplomat, a member of the French Academy of Sciences, a senator, count, and member of the Legion of Honour. Bougainville had been sent explicitly to learn as much as possible about the alleged Southern Continent. He was the 14th circumnavigator in Western history, and the first French maritime circumnavigator (1766-9) (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, pp. 47, 115, and passim).

& was afterwards picked up: but a bullet was sent after him for his too great officiousness, however he came off unhurt [...] which motion was vastly accelerated by the discharge of a large Gun over their heads [...].²⁷

The British landed only for a very short time. Cook eventually decided to stay longer on Tana. There, Johann, in his *Journals* made his preliminary conclusions on volcanoes. Apart from seeing many volcanoes and collecting an abundance of plants, J. R. Forster came across rich sources of anthropological material. He studied the natives' physique and nakedness. He recorded in *Journals* that some of them were:

[...] slender but finely proportioned, very black, with crisp woolly hair, all naked & have only a bag for the genitals, but the Scrotum is free [...].²⁸

However, some of them:

[...] were the most disagreeable [sic] creatures I ever saw. [...] some young Girls were stark naked, & so were young boys. The Men had a string round their belly about the Navel, very strongly tied, or rather so as hardly any Man, not used to it, could bear, & their Scrotum was naked & the other part of the Genitals was wrapped in a cloth & fastened to the belt or String [...].²⁹

He found the people of the New Hebrides most intriguing. Their ethnography in terms of material culture and social organisation was fairly diverse. Their languages were complicated. Johann gathered in the *Journals* enough anthropological data to be able to classify cautiously the inhabitants of the New Hebrides into a separate category of the people of the Pacific archipelagos. In his records, J. R. Forster laid the foundations for the study of Melanesian anthropology. Nevertheless, in his jottings he stressed the tentativeness of his anthropological conclusions and the need for longer research in order to draw better judgments.

Yet, he was bolder in his natural history opinions. Based on the preliminary work on the flora of the New Hebrides, which George, Sparrman, and he had carried out, Johann began to systematise the data collected during the *Resolution's* passage. In his *Journals*, he attempted to show that a very clear relationship exists – in terms of the geographical, altitudinal and climatic distribution – between the “floristic zones” of the East Indies, present-day Melanesia, present-day Polynesia, and New Zealand.

²⁷ J. R. Forster, *The Resolution Journal* (1982), p. 566.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 565.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 568.

Johann finally landed in New Caledonia and gathered precious data on biology and the local language which “had no affinity with those we had learnt before on other islands, a circumstance sufficient to discourage the greatest and most indefatigable genealogist”. Then steering through reefs and shoals off the south-eastern tip of New Caledonia they encountered the Botany Isle, a treasure ground for the Forsters’ biology, “which you might walk around in a few minutes, and [gather] more than 20 to 30 different Species of Plants”.³⁰

Sailing from there by way of the newly discovered Norfolk Island, they finally reached their last Pacific destination before sailing eastwards to the Atlantic Ocean. It was Queen Charlotte Sound in New Zealand. During the three weeks’ stay, Johann added substantial botanical and ethnographical data to his *Journals*. He also recorded that some of the Maoris talked about the “engagement” between a certain European ship:

[Oct.] 28th [...] There circulates on board a Story, made up I believe on purpose, that the Natives told, that a Ship arrived on the Coast of the Northern Isle in a great Storm, & was there broke [sic] to pieces. The Men in her were safed [sic] on shore, & had an Engagement with the Natives, wherein they killed many Natives, but not being able to keep up a Fire, the Natives came up & killed & devoured them all. This our people interpret to have been the fate of the *Adventure*, but the Natives are by no means constant in their Story, so that there is little to be dependend [sic] upon this Tale.³¹

However, further he wrote:

[Nov.] 9th [...] [Maori called “*Pittière*”] related that about 10 months ago a Ship had been here, & was gone out to Sea again & had not been shipwrecked as other people told us.³²

On 11 November 1774, they left New Zealand for good. They aimed for the southern tip of South America and while doing so sailed in the mid fifties latitudes. Finally, *Resolution* anchored for a week at Christmas Sound, Tierra del Fuego. There, Johann collected botanical specimens and patiently examined the “unintelligible” language, “make”, and customs of the

[...] most wretched & dirty of all humans [sic] beings I ever saw in my life [...] The Scrotum long. The Men had nothing to cover their privities. [sic] [...]. Features are hard, the Face broad, the Cheekbones outstanding, Nose flat, the Nostrils & Mouth large. [...] And stunk immoderately after Thrane-[sic] oil. The women are much of

³⁰ Ibid., p. 662.

³¹ Ibid., p. 676.

³² Ibid., p. 681.

the same make, their Breasts are hanging down, but not so much as in the Nations in the Isles.³³

Observing natives there, J. R. Forster added in *Journals* a valuable thesis to his theory of culture. In his notes, he inferred that the development of the society depended on the climatic zones.

Finally, they got under way, doubled the Horn, and later anchored off Staten Island. There, Johann took a large number of new birds. On 17 January, J. R. Forster landed with a shore party including Cook at Possession Bay in South Georgia. It was Johann who suggested the name South Georgia to Captain Cook. Among other things, J. R. Forster suggested the name Southern Thule for one of the promontories. In addition, Cook named one of the deep indentations Forster's Bay, on modern maps shown as Forster's Passage.

Johann wrote that finally, on 21 February, Cook could consider the "Expedition as finished".³⁴ Afterwards Cook altered his course northwards and aimed for England via Cape Town.

JOHANN REINHOLD FORSTER'S "SYSTEMATIC" BOOK – OBSERVATIONS

For some critics the book *Observations Made during a Voyage round the World* is Johann Reinhold Forster's principal "philosophical" discourse on his three-year round-the-world Voyage on board Cook's flagship *Resolution* (1772–1775).

It went into print almost a year after George Forster had published his *Voyage*. However, the main substance of *Observations* was ready long before George could even consider writing *Voyage*.

Johann Reinhold Forster was alluding in *Observations* to the fact that he was prevented from writing a narrative where his experimental data gathered in *Journals* could be chronologically "connected" (or linked). Then his dilemma was how to put together the data from *Journals* in a book, which he intended to publish under the title *Observations*. He used his own special approach to bring his experimental material together in a coherent fashion, in order to deduce his theories.

A scrutiny of *Observations* shows that only one third of Johann's book was concerned with physical geography and non-human life. Biology and zoology apart, the bulk of J. R. Forster's work related to the problem of "Man".

³³ Ibid., p. 698.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 725.

The modern reader should study *Observations* in conjunction with *Journals*. These two works, when considered together, show how Johann as a natural historian, defined nature in its 18th-century meaning. Johann's definition of nature encompassed the ideas of oeconomy [sic] and of the progress of civilisation. In *Observations*, the notion of oeconomy, frequently referred to by Johann, links this progress with nature. For him "nature is the soul of the oeconomy". He referred to *Observations* as the "[...] insight into the oeconomies of nature [...]".

From reading Johann Forster's works, it could be inferred that he was aware that "new" natural history developed in England in its most aggressive form. In particular, the Admiralty needed natural history for its own "economy" or global scale "naval strategy".

However, it was not the strategic aims of the Admiralty that motivated Johann Forster on board *Resolution*. He was interested in work that complied with the scientific part of natural history, that of Linnaean taxometry.³⁵ As a natural historian, J. R. Forster is honest and aspires to make himself known among other honest "scientists".

He regarded his "scientific" knowledge as public property. Therefore, he pleaded that it should be published at all cost. He defended his cause writing to the effect that this altruistic article of faith went beyond his self-interest or even strategic interests.

Consequently, the *Observations* are free of political consequences. The work contains geographical summaries of the natural phenomena encountered in the South Seas, such as minerals, stones, soils, plants, and animals, including humans, found on landings. These were all labelled in accordance with Linnaean taxometry.

According to Johann, the global distribution, or arrangements, of land, water, heat, and organic bodies is a conspicuous theme. The progress of humanity is the ever-present aim of both nature, and Johann's book. The formation of soil is presented as a spiralling cycle of birth, growth, death, and defecation for the future benefit of men.

The innovative if scientifically controversial theory proving that volcanism is a major Earth-building force in the South Seas occupies much of the initial chapters of the book. J. R. Forster postulates that in order to form a cultivated and managed form of nature, people should use the raw materials of volcanism, sedimentation, and soil formation. Such civilised nature is the crux of the oeconomy. Wild nature is decaying, while cultivated one is thriving.

³⁵ Carl von Linné (in Latin Carolus Linnaeus, 1707–1778) was Swedish. He is best known as a natural philosopher and a founder of modern taxonomy (nomenclature) in biology (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.). One of his greatest works propagated a Linnean Latin binomial system for the names of the species. It had an immense influence on the Forsters in their work as natural philosophers. They regarded Linnaeus as their principal teacher and corresponded with him.

The arguments presented so far in *Observations* were probably uncontroversial for the British government. Apparently, the real break with the British establishment over Johann Forster's philosophy came about because he was unwilling to submit to the "official theory" that ice meant land or, in other words, that seawater cannot freeze. In his *Observations* Johann provided a lengthy hypothesis to the effect that salt water could freeze. However, he had no firm evidence to support this.

Notwithstanding, only one third of Johann's book was concerned with the above-mentioned physical geography and non-human life. The bulk of J. R. Forster's work related to the problem of "Man" or "ethic philosophy". Johann Forster's "ethic philosophy" described culture in its various sub-forms such as customs, behaviour, arts, languages, vocabularies standardising translations and normalising islands' names.

Some of the "ethic philosophy" research had a clearly utilitarian aim. In particular, a list of native names for islands was a useful navigational tool, helping to stabilise new Pacific territories for the British on their ocean charts.

Here Johann touches on the fact that an "ethic philosopher's" linguistic competence with regard to the natives' tongue could have strategic consequences for the Admiralty. Proficiency in the native languages is pivotal for "ethic philosopher's" credibility back in Britain. It follows that the establishment in Britain needed to cultivate such a linguistic skill. Johann claims that the ability to attach the exactly right native names to the corresponding things is fundamental to two-way communication.

J. R. Forster expands the issue of communication into both verbal and non-verbal forms and calls it "philanthropic" understanding. It leads to an unambiguous dialogue, which is indispensable to round-the-word voyages of exploration. In such a voyage, the penetration of the nuances of meaning of the words and the behaviour of the natives may sometimes enable repairs and/or provisioning of the ship to be undertaken. Occasionally, it might even help to avoid conflict, which could be a matter of life or death. Anyway, according to Johann, aborigines should always be listened to and talked to in their native tongue, because it creates a vehicle of trust which should invariably provide local knowledge, always valuable and cost-saving, sometimes most important, perhaps even saving lives.

In all likelihood, Johann's preoccupation with cultures in *Observations* was due to the fact that both the range of his contacts with the people of Oceania, and the wealth of material gathered by him for his anthropological theories was unprecedented. Thanks to Cook's navigational strategy in the Pacific Ocean, the Forsters had a comparatively long-term contact with the inhabitants of the various islands visited during the resting periods of the Expedition. *Resolution* called on some islands more than once. Each time they made landfall, Johann and George collected fresh data on aspects of natural history, linguistics, and ethnography.

In particular Johann Forster used his research to formulate later his theories on cannibalism in New Zealand. From both Johann's and George's European point of view the eating of human flesh exceeds the "bounds of humanity". Still, both Johann in *Journals* and his son in *Voyage* understand that due to the education of Maori warriors, the institutionalised eating of slain enemies is placed "among the honours due to conqueror". Maoris consumed an enemy "slain in battle" in order "to consume his life force and snuff out the evil". Therefore Maori cannibalism is not "induced by necessity and hunger". J. R. Forster reasoned as follows:

We were likewise told by Capt. Crozet, the friend and companion of the brave but unfortunate Capt. Marion, that when he got possession of the hippah [sic] or fortress of the New Zeelenders [sic], in the Bay of Islands, he found immense stores of dry fish, fern-roots, and other roots, in houses filled solely with these provisions. It seems therefore, to me, by no means probable, that a nation perfectly convinced of the necessity of providing against the season of distress, and so very careful and active in collecting stores of eatables, should nevertheless have been induced by necessity and hunger, to eat the corses [sic] of those slain in battle.³⁶

However, if the outside world might be dangerous for *Resolution*, her barbaric crew in turn could equally exercise a deadly influence on the peoples of the Pacific islands with which they came in contact.

The Forsters in *Journals*, *Observations*, and *Voyage* mentioned frequently the cases of bloodshed, brutality, shooting, and disposessions and wrote in detail to the effect that in many places visited in the Pacific Ocean, either Cook himself or the crew of the ships under his command, wounded or killed a native, or two, or dozens of them. Here is one of the many lists of violent deeds committed by Cook and compiled in *Observations* by Johann Forster:

[...] we had killed a man at the Marquesas, grievously wounded one at Easter-island, hooked a third with a boat-hook at Tonga-tabu, wounded one at Namocka, another at Mallicollo, and killed another at Tanna [...].³⁷

In *Observations* Johann Forster generalises and remarks:

³⁶ Note 1. Cf. J. R. Forster, *Observations* (1996), p. 211.

Note 2. Johann is referring to Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne's and Julien Marie Crozet's (French) round-the-world expedition of 1771-1775 (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 118). Marion was killed and consumed by Maori, North Island, New Zealand (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Non-Narrative Legacy*, pp. 92-93; and K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 119, and *passim*).

³⁷ Cf. J. R. Forster, *Observations* (1996), p. 252.

[...] cruel [...] the civilised nations of Europe, who plunder, waste, and burn with so much eagerness, and so little concern [...].³⁸

The Forsters in *Journals*, *Observations*, and *Voyage* advocated the rights of indigenous peoples to decide their own fates. Consequently, they saw Cook's undertakings as an "intervention in the affairs of the natives". However, the Forsters never publicly criticised Cook as Commander or human being. Equally, they almost never criticised natives for their wrongdoings. The Forsters explained that Europeans were probably seen as intruders by the natives. Therefore, as has been hinted above, the Forsters attributed most incidents of violence between aborigines and the white explorers, to the clash of cultures. Johann Forster wrote in *Observations*:

The more barbarous, the less polished the manners of the nation are, the more MARKS OF CRUELTY [sic] towards strangers are generally observed; and in this respect, I should think, the natives of the tropical islands shewed the most favourable symptoms of friendship and philanthropy; for as soon as our ships arrived, they were received in the most friendly, generous, and cordial manner: even the attack made upon Captain Wallis, I cannot suppose to have been concerted, unless some previous insult or offence, had been given, perhaps unknowingly, by our people, which roused their revenge, and as they were unacquainted with the effects of our fire-arms, they thought perhaps, they might venture an attack upon a set of men, who had offended or insulted them; and as the British people did not then understand their language, they possibly might have demanded redress and satisfaction for it, which, not being complied with, on account of the difference and ignorance of the language, they thought themselves in the right to retaliate the injury upon them; though this unlucky attempt, proved fatal to many of their brethren. Wherever we came, though the inhabitants had not the least idea of the execution our fire arms were capable of making, they behaved very friendly towards us [...].³⁹

The Forsters in their memoirs criticised the deficiency in spiritual preparation for Cook's Voyages. The Forsters implied that this misjudgement on the part of the Europeans had as its source, among other things, the uncivilised element in Cook's crew. According to the Forsters, the Lords of the Admiralty did not choose the crews for *Resolution* and *Adventure* with a degree of care appropriate for the delicate nature of the expedition. Therefore, the crew consisted of the usual "dregs of society" commonly found on most European men-of-war at that time.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 253.

³⁹ Note 1. Cf. ibid., p. 252.

Note 2. J. R. Forster is referring to Samuel Wallis (1728-1795), who in the British Dolphin circumnavigated the world between 1766 and 1768 (cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Non-Narrative Legacy*, p. 97, and passim; K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 113, and passim).

Throughout *Observations* Johann repeatedly mentioned that he was aware of the destructive and/or degenerative influences the coarse British sailors (or for that matter Europeans) could have on indigenous cultures. If left without any form of control, in the end this presupposed debasement of the Pacific people could adversely affect both interacting civilisations.

It was only fitting, therefore, that some of his last words in *Observations* were, true to his Polish upbringing, less of an earnest entreaty than a warning that all men are equal.

GEORGE FORSTER'S NARRATIVE OEUVRE – *A VOYAGE*

The two volumes of *A Voyage round the World in His Britannic Majesty's Sloop "Resolution"* Commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the Years 1772, 3, 4 and 5, also referred to as *A Voyage*, were published by George Forster in 1777. Thereafter, I refer to this book as *Voyage*. It is the Forsters' only published narrative account of the Cook's Second Voyage. It is the best known of their memoirs.

It has already been mentioned that while writing *Voyage* George used his father's *Journals* as a source. Therefore, it is probably natural that most critics are adamant that in some aspects *Voyage* is the work of both Forsters. However, some critics are warning that the researcher has to be careful as to the true authorship of these fragments of *Voyage* which are seemingly not correlated with *Journals*. A literary analysis shows that *Voyage* in its substance is much more than a version of *Journals* refined for publication. In addition, whoever wrote *Voyage*, dealt with emotions and art differently from the way they were dealt with in *Journals*.

George wrote the "Preface" in *Voyage* in a peculiar, precise, almost immaculate, English which adhered to the formal register of his epoch. The reader could only wonder whether he really had been born twenty-three years earlier in an obscure Polish village, without any formal education whatsoever, and not knowing any English a mere twelve years before publication.

The idea prevailing throughout the "Preface" is to place the book, the author, and Johann Reinhold Forster in the best possible light in relation to the literary and political controversy between the Forsters and the British establishment. This subject rises to the surface very often in all the Forsters' writings.

The above-mentioned literary and political controversy is presented in the "Preface" to *Voyage* in the following way. The younger Forster expostulates to the effect that the enemies of the Forsters had been already circulating accusations that the forthcoming book was written under a cover name of George and was in fact an edited collection of Johann's *Journals*, which certain authorities had expressly forbidden Johann from publishing. Hence, if the allegations were

true, George's book was unlawful. Therefore, George tried in his "Preface" to clear all doubts that he was in fact the sole author. Apparently, he also tried to win the readers over to his side in the dispute with the British Admiralty.

In contrast to the "Preface", *Voyage*'s main part roots itself firmly in the basin of the Pacific Ocean. At the same time it is faithful to its source, that is to Johann's *Journals*, which records in detail the whole Expedition.

George's Methodology In his *Voyage* George wrote about the lands he had visited on all the oceans with essentially the same attention to details using essentially the same tools of natural history and anthropology. According to George and Johann Forster, the interest, area, and mechanisms of natural philosophy and "science about 'Man'" were global. Therefore, the intensity of both the experimental and theoretical work did not depend on how alien to the Europeans the fieldwork encompassing the inert matter, biology, and "Man" was.

George's *Voyage* retained much of the form of Johann's *Journals*. Thus, like *Journals*, it is written with frequent, almost daily entries. In *Voyage*, like in *Journals*, the descriptions of events are interspersed with lengthy explanations and descriptions of ideas. They are scattered throughout the text, however. Therefore, it is worth grouping them into themes.

Natural History Features in Voyage In fact, both Johann in *Journals* and George in *Voyage* began the description of their natural history experiments with the subject of the geology of the tin mining area in Cornwall. Geology and mineralogy constantly challenged Johann in his *Journals* when he felt obliged to give a partial explanation of what he saw. In contrast, George's geological passages in his narrative are only descriptive.

However, in contrast to his father's endeavours in *Observations*, George almost never presented his theory on the significance of minerals or acquainted the reader with the hypothesis on the origin or formation of the general landscape. On the other hand, George, very reservedly, presented his hypotheses regarding the subjects of coral islands, icebergs, and volcanoes. In *Voyage* George only mentioned a theory as to why it was possible to find coral. George subscribes to his father's idea that salt water can freeze. Therefore, for the younger Forster, icebergs and the ice pack do not necessarily forecast land. Just as Johann in *Observations*, George could not prove it. During the expedition, George encountered volcanic islands. He did not suggest that volcanic activity formed the islands, but he does suggest that volcanic activity changed them.

The Forsters were under the considerable influence of Linnaeus and their research was therefore largely devoted to taxonomical work. Johann in his *Journals* described biological specimens in detail, paying attention to the shape, colour, structure, environment, and potential usefulness. It seems that in *Voyage* George was by contrast merely interested in usefulness in biology, and was looking only for biological discoveries of a practical nature. In addition, in

contrast to this latter work, much of the botanical research work *per se* received only a glancing attention in George's *Voyage*. In any event, the present author thinks that the apparent paucity of scientific botanical themes in *Voyage* did not mar the literary value of the book.

However, in his narration George devoted more space to "the study of 'Man'" than to the research of the botanical, zoological, and geological aspects of natural history. George left these last facets for his father's *Observations*. The important theme for George's book became the "history of 'Man'".

Features of a "History of 'Man'" in Voyage The elder Forster's interest in humankind might have influenced his son in his endeavour to become interested in various aspects of indigenous culture. It is probable that they must have influenced each other when drawing conclusions. It has already been hinted that Johann's influence predominated in the father and son team, however. Firstly, Johann recorded information on almost everything they saw in his *Journals*. Secondly, George used *Journals* to write his "theories of 'Man'" in *Voyage*.

George in *Voyage* probably consciously avoided the term "primitive". Today some researchers consider that this description was used quite unjustly for Pacific cultures by other contemporary Eurocentric writers. Notwithstanding, central to George's vision in *Voyage* is the conflict, which is apparent to him, between the European and the insular cultures of the Pacific. Yet, the principles of Montesquieu, which George in all likelihood adopted, allowed him to accept at the face value the strange cultures of the Pacific people he met with.⁴⁰

In addition, *Journals* and other writings left by Johann allow us to surmise that George and his father must have discussed these cultural alternatives together on board *Resolution* and later on, in England.

Obviously, the first problem, which faced them, was to try to comprehend the various aspects of the strange cultures they encountered. I have based my assumption on the fact that Johann repeatedly wrote in his *Journals* about the difficulties of understanding cultures without first learning the language as a native does. It is quite probable that George subscribed to his father's views that given the fleeting moments of the encounters, and the inadequacy of their linguistic competency, the real understanding of a strange culture was next to impossible.

The second task probably posed an even more challenging problem for George, namely how to make the Pacific culture acceptable to readers of *Voy-*

⁴⁰ Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu (1689-1755), French political philosopher whose major work, *Espirit des Lois* (The Spirit of Laws), was a major contribution to political theory (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.) Both Johann and George Forster read *The Spirit of Laws* and adopted it in their work as philosophers-historians on the Cook's Expedition. Montesquieu, just like the Forsters, was interested in practically every detail of all cultures for which he could find information.

age. In this respect he experimented to a great extent with his descriptions of Tahiti.

The younger Forster starts his initial description of the peoples of Tahiti by giving the reader a first glimpse of the Tahitians coming out in their canoe to meet the ship. From this and other examples in *Voyage*, it can be inferred that in the “study of ‘Man’” George wished to portray both the setting of the scene and natives of Tahiti in a way sympathetic to, and catching the imagination of, the reader. In the passage, George depicts for the benefit of his reader the natives’ dress and their behaviour. However, he does more than that. The scene captures the reader’s attention because it is so alive with action. The reader can almost see Tahitian gestures. It reminds us that the critics of George stress that this ability to paint mental pictures of people in action is one of his greatest virtues as a vivid stylist.

Accordingly, George’s first passage about Tahiti appears to the reader to be like the science of ethnography in action. The passage introduces the people of the island, coming to hail the strange vessel (*Resolution*) with a green leaf. This is the image, which fits well with George’s task in hand. His contemporary European readers would understand the significance of the green leaf. It denotes good intentions and promises pleasures, which George relates in more detail later. Here George’s style is prognostic. He introduces the right anticipations in his reader, who from this moment on would expect that the same style of the first contact would repeat itself at the other islands. Indeed, this friendly first approach predominates in George’s description of the islands to come.

Soon after George finishes his account of the first contact, he gives the reader the opportunity to look at the natives in more detail. Again, he chooses a dynamic approach, full of action, such as canoes in movement, surrounding the *Resolution*, bringing tokens of friendship and means of trade. The reader perusing this section senses that the artefacts and biological specimens had immediately begun to attract George’s attention as an artist. He writes about drawing new finds. It leaves one anticipating what they would look like on paper. For all that, he does not distract anybody who in a casual leisurely manner browses through his description of Tahiti, with an inappropriate scientific description of the specimens. Instead, he keeps the readers’ attention focused on the people.

In this task he is – to use a modern phrase – “user-friendly”. He chooses to emphasise these Tahitian customs which were most sympathetic to the potential European reader. He appeals to the rationalist and cultivated person. It appears that in his description of physical characteristics, George again turns to his “‘Man’ in action” device. For example, every Tahitian that he describes is in some kind of a movement. On the other hand, he gives a favourable touch to every feature of their physical description. In addition, he frequently stresses similarities with the typical European physique. In particular, George writes that Tahitians’ skin is not too dark, their eyes and hair are beautiful.

By and by, George tackles the issue of Tahitian women and sex. This is a topic which understandably aroused great interest in Europe. In comparison to

de Bougainville's description of a young Tahitian girl who boarded the French ship *La Boudeuse* and later absent-mindedly shed her attire and appeared completely unclothed, George is, however, extremely restrained.⁴¹ In his *Voyage* George permits no naked girls to distract his reader from his study of the culture of Tahiti. Instead of describing the bodies of the women without clothes, a common enough occurrence in Tahiti in his days, he would rather prefer to describe women's garments. The physical objective description of the clothes is detailed enough, but that is not his underlying objective. George focuses on his subjective feelings, which capture the attention of the reader, who learns that the seemingly savage women were perfectly capable of wrapping the cloth elegantly or draping it gracefully.

The issue of sex in George's description of Tahiti was so far alluded to purely in terms of the body and the fleeting description of the sensual reaction of man. George however, elaborated on sexual intercourse in his chapter on Tahiti when discussing the issue of morality, so important in every European description of Tahitian culture written both before and after the times of Cook. However, one can have the impression that George feels forced to present the issue of morality to the reader. For example, the younger Forster writes about the Tahitian women's sexual activity on board. Still, he does not appreciate it. On the contrary, George expresses his disapproval. To us, the young writer's attitude may seem strange, because, clearly, both females and the sailors behave on board exactly according to the so-called philosophical term of "universals". On the other hand, in his narrative George is so eager to accept the "universals" on other occasions.

It can be inferred that with regard to unrestrained sex, George's Eurocentrism does not allow him to adopt a flexible attitude towards human culture universals. George did not even try to find out whether lust belongs to the category of universals. He categorises it from the start as bad. He argues that it is collocated with promiscuity and is objectively detrimental to humans. For example, according to him, "lust diminishes" the average size of the "body" [physique] in a population.

Still, the accounts of the earlier European voyagers probably hampered George in his discussion of morals in Tahiti. The public in Europe, before Captain Cook embarked on his Second Voyage, had already identified Tahiti as a land where physical love was free. Therefore, George came to Tahiti with his negative preconceptions from which he was unable to free himself. Nevertheless, George tackles the issue of morality also during his other visits to Tahiti,

⁴¹ Note 1. Johann translated Bougainville's *Voyage autour du monde* (*Voyage round the World*) (1771) with George's help. This was a work of particular importance. Probably while translating this work, the Forsters thoroughly studied the history of maritime exploration from the earliest times to the contemporary period. (Cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, p. 47, and *passim*.)

Note 2. Regarding the Tahitian girl who boarded the French ship *La Boudeuse*, cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Non-Narrative Legacy*, p. 110.

as well as during his visits to other islands where promiscuity was evident. Each time George mentions the problem of morality anew, he tries to give the reader a source for further reflection.

Overall, George tried to present to the reader the people of Tahiti in a positive and interesting way. George used the same technique of movement and rationalistic universals to pass to his readers the information about the people's behaviour. While he describes the characteristic gestures and actions of the Tahitians, he is interested both in the universals and in features of this particular culture.

As far as the universals were concerned, George concluded that Tahitians were as eager to know Europeans, as the Europeans were to meet the Tahitians. Unintentionally, George passes to his reader information about the method of his fieldwork in Tahiti regarding cultural behaviour. A reading of *Voyage* shows that firstly, he gathers data. Then he interprets the data by means of the technique of comparison with his classical ideal and with what he knows about cultures in general. It seems that George does it with two aims in mind, general (that is universal) and particular.

The present author infers that George sifts his data in his mind to find the metaphysical entity of universals that are natural to human culture and life. It can be presumed that after this filtering is done, what is left to him in his narration, is what he could characterise as belonging to a trait which is endemic to Tahitians, as a separate group of people. The technique, if what we deduce is true, is probably peculiar to the ideas of rationalism as such. Nevertheless, what is characteristic of George Forster is that he always starts from a positive attitude. Therefore, initially he considers strange people as being good by definition. In fact, it seems that in his inner soul he subjectively admires Tahitians. On the other hand, he apparently tries to conceal from the reader his subjectivism under a cover of rationalistic objectivity.

In this vein, George Forster continues his description of Pacific culture by tackling the problem of tattoos, which play such an important role within the Pacific Rim. However, G. Forster describes tattoos with a degree of dislike. He does not approve of tattoos as such. Yet, he argues that tattooing belongs to a universal trait of humans to ornament either their bodies or cloth.

This comparison reflects George Forster's rationalistic effort to find out the universals in between the multitude of strange cultural traits he observes during the Expedition. Here George probably shows the beneficial influence of rationalism. Most likely, the search for universals enables the follower of Enlightenment ideas to forget what in a given culture he does not like at first sight. Then, after searching for universals, the fact that something strange is subjectively ugly does not matter, as long as it can be explained as a trait universal to a human culture.

Therefore, the Enlightenment rationalism prevents hate, which so often a member of one culture feels towards another strange and apparently entirely different culture. This rationalism, characteristic of George Forster, enables

him, as it seems, to approach the strange Pacific cultures with an intuitive understanding. This initially positive attitude of George to other cultures was responsible for his success in transferring to his reader the ability to appreciate strange people and customs described in *Voyage*.

George Forster uses the rationalists' universals technique to justify in the readers' eyes something which otherwise would be condemned. Thanks to George's attitude the reader is able to accept differences in cultures, which from the opposite point of view, without George's help, he or she would be unable to approve. This ability of George to make his reader feel well-disposed towards superficially unacceptable cultural phenomena stems from the young Forster's deeply inbred philosophy that all people are equal in their right to cultivate their own ways of life. This idea is among others characteristic for late 18th-century Poland. Coincidentally, it is ever present in all the Forsters' memoirs.

Voyage predominantly is a piece of narrative prose, not a scholarly work. After all, the scientific aspects of the expedition the Forsters reserved for *Observations*.

Emotional Aspects George has achieved immortality because of the narrative aspect of his book *Voyage*. This fact was especially evident at the end of the 20th century. This particular period marked the renaissance of the Forsters' fame. Since then, critics have almost universally praised George for the elegance of his 18th-century English usage in *Voyage*, particularly for his style and idiom. Some consider him to be a superb prose writer, a master of landscape and ocean description. In his narrative descriptions, George obviously tried to distance himself from the objectivity of cool scientific record. He attempted to instigate in his reader a measure of admiration, even in situations which may appear strange to the European.

Possibly the most interesting aspect of *Voyage* is the question of the author's verbalisation of his personal emotions and responses. Sometimes it is important to compare them with those of Johann's in his *Journals*. In some way, in *Voyage* George voices his feelings with restraint. He already explained this lack of personal feelings in the "Preface" to *Voyage*, where apparently he wrote his rationalist manifesto. Nonetheless, the modern reader generally expects a personalised tale in a narrative book. Still, in *Voyage* George rarely enlarges on his feelings, and susceptibilities.

Contrary to Johann's *Journals*, George's *Voyage* includes almost no unburdening revelations, and very few confessions about impressions. To the researcher it seems as if George created an "objectivity filter" between his only source of information, i.e. the *Journals* – and the reader. This astonishes the modern reader, who takes into account the author's youth, his father's explicitness in *Journals*, and the amount of the sentimental literature which George had read before writing his *Voyage*. It looks as if George is hiding his feelings

about situations which are objectively difficult or grave, but is emotionally more himself when describing occurrences which are objectively trivial.

Still, George does not divorce himself from showing the emotional trends in his observations on more psychological matters. Nevertheless, attempting this, he tends to present a rather naïve, idealistic point of view. His belief in the goodness of man's nature had possibly been caused by his youth and his lack of experience. According to George, in the face of the universal goodness of human nature, all men are equal.

Therefore, the usage of the varieties of the word "heart" in George's descriptions is plentiful in *Voyage*. The young writer used in this word in situations which were inherently emotional, such as bidding someone or something farewell, or someone's death. On the other hand, George is faithful to his reader and relates the facts from the Expedition, which exemplify the truth that man does not always have a good heart, or that man can sometimes be evil. However, it had not diminished his faith in man's goodness. Nonetheless, he comes close to criticising man's nature when writing about the habits of the young aristocrats of the Tahiti archipelagos who travelled around the islands, doing nothing but eating, having free sex, and killing all their progeny at birth.

George's stereotype of an "inherently good man" relates closely to his own concept of the "noble savage" introduced probably for the first time by the inaugural visit of the French to Tahiti. In line with this concept, he repeatedly calls the natives the "children of nature". Still, although George openly admires the character of the natives, he is too honest to subscribe to all conventions of the "noble savage" described by the French mariners. In contrast to the European stereotype of a "noble savage", George's natives of the isles, although inherently good, show also imperfections of a bad character.

However, there are three dominant aspects of description used in George's narrative. In the first one, namely the description of physical phenomena and of life on board, George showed his aversion to displaying any subjectivism. Conversely, on the subject of "Man", he is subjectively optimistic. The third aspect of George's narrative connects with his description of the scenery of the land and the ocean. In this description, George can be quite subjective.

For Johann in *Observations* nature was not an object of adoration for its beauty. Anyhow, while examining George's writings about nature one has to be careful. In fact, for the researcher it seems that for George the single denomination "nature" has a dual meaning, and a dual usage. The reader probably should consider it as two separate entities. The first and most important one for George is the rational definition of nature, as natural history, cosmos, creation, earth, universe, and world. Here nature is a subject for the natural historian, or philosopher, to measure, to collect, to research on, and to note on paper, coolly and objectively, as a drawing or in handwriting. This objective research of nature is, to use the clichéd phrase – "second nature to him". Here nature is a habitual topic of a scientist's research.

The second designation, namely nature as a view, landscape, countryside, and scenery, as well as the surface of the ocean in calm and in storm – plays a second fiddle in *Voyage*. Clearly, the reader subconsciously feels that this kind of nature during the Voyage needed imitation in words as well as on paper, or on canvas. Yet, George must have been aware that the approach to the viewer or the reader had to be entirely different from the approach to a cool scientific audience. It appears that George learned this second approach to nature as object of admiration gradually throughout Cook's Voyage.

It would be well to remember that George's task during the Voyage was to draw nature understood as objects of natural history. Some critics of art consider his extant drawings from the Expedition to be masterpieces. It can be presumed that in the course of the Voyage he mastered the art of drawing superbly well. He had a close, influential, and professional contact with the Expedition's rather friendly painter, William Hodges.⁴² Hodges was a landscape painter by profession. His task, as opposed to George's, was to paint nature as an object of admiration. Hodges, therefore recorded not only what he saw, but also added an element of beauty to the landscape, the people, the ships and the ocean. Yet, "at the end of the day", William and George performed the same duty. Both William's and George's tasks during the Expedition were to carry out the role of recording, which today would be performed by a digital camera.

On the other hand, at the outset there had been a pronounced difference between the techniques of the two artists. George came to the Voyage, at a days' notice, as an apprentice drawer of flora and fauna. In contrast, the Admiralty engaged Hodges as an accomplished artist for the Expedition.

George Forster had apparently the same problems as Hodges. On the one hand, he felt himself obliged as a natural historian to present in *Voyage* the nature, and people, as a physical world, and nothing else. On the other hand, George knew that the readers of a narrative work would expect a book based on the principles of beautiful prose. These principles required the treatment of nature as an object of admiration or fear, never as the product of a mathematical equation. It stands to reason that George consulted Hodges on the principles of painting, and that George used these discussions later in *Voyage*.

It is also probable that during the Expedition George consulted Francis Masson, a gardener at the Royal Gardens in Kew, in London.⁴³ He was taking a passage on the *Resolution* to collect exotic plants and seeds at Cape Town and

⁴² Note 1. William Hodges (1744-1797) was an English painter (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.). The sponsors of Cook's Second Voyage hired William Hodges to preserve on canvas undistorted information about distant places. Therefore, during the Expedition in his art he put emphasis on absolute fidelity to nature.

Note 2. An excellent secondary source on W. Hodges's life and his paintings is: B. Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969.

⁴³ Francis Masson (1741-1805) was a Scottish botanist and gardener (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.; K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Non-Narrative Legacy*, pp. 118, 121).

its neighborhood. Francis might have inspired George with the traditions of the English garden. Anyway, if one were looking for them, one could find traces of English garden traditions in *Voyage*'s descriptions of the landscape.

This tradition postulated informal, almost wild, landscapes of a garden rather than organised ones. It was different from the formal, organised garden tradition found at that time in Poland, and France. Anyway, in *Voyage* descriptions of wild landscapes are closer to the tradition of the English garden, than to the tradition of the Polish garden found, for example, near Gdańsk. For the same reason French, or German lovers of gardens at that time would probably be dissatisfied with the disarranged nature of New Zealand. However, George's descriptions of New Zealand's landscape met with approbation on the Continent. George's wild landscape descriptions have something in common with "picturesque" trends visible in English style of painting.

The "picturesque" English style of painting presented certain aspects of the scenery, which were earlier not admired very much on the Continent of Europe. These aspects included precipices, crags, and hanging woods. Writers transferred the above-mentioned visual expressions into literary form, including the travelogue genre, for example "Grand Tour" memoirs. There the authors either painted wild nature in their words or made allusions to the "picturesque" painters. Therefore, wild landscape description had a certain role to play in the travelogue genre before the younger Forster published *Voyage*. George might have read this kind of "picturesque" prose or verse before starting his work on *Voyage*.

However, in his narrative landscape descriptions George often does not copy the complete scene as he sees it before his eyes. For example, in the case of Dusky Bay, he limits himself to the most important features of the setting. When he writes about wild nature, these salient traits include the characteristics of the terrain. Yet George is a master of descriptive detail, which invokes in his reader the whole picture. He does not subscribe wholly to the "picturesque" trend in art. In one of his rare critiques of Hodges' paintings, he writes in an anecdotal style that probably the artist had lost his original painting or sketch drawing, and painted the new one from memory. George finds fault with this new picture, which is the painter's imagination, and is not faithful to reality.

Apart from the details of wild scenery, such as in Dusky Bay, or the all embracing view, like in St Helena and its castle, colour also played an important part in George's descriptions. For George green is a synonym for fertility. Foaming white water, which was mandatory in the "picturesque" trend of painting, is often present in George's descriptions, too.

For example, Dusky Bay was full of water cascades and George in *Voyage* alluded to them often. It looks as if George had his eye focused on the white watery aspects of the "picturesque" mode. Sometimes George only mentions the presence of water using the word cascade or waterfall. Sometimes he gives a fuller description, including all colours of the rainbow and the contrasting onomatopoeic sounds, like the Cascade Cove in Dusky Bay. George is a keen

observer and has an eye for motionless water too. For him a perfectly glassy surface of a bay in completely still air at dawn is an occasion to paint in words unforgettable mirrored mountains. If water in the form of rainbow waterfalls, and white, green bound springs or looking-glass tranquil inlets, is deficient, then George substitutes the ocean as part of the colourful scene. The ocean is ever-present in George's evocation of Dusky Bay. It also reigns in his description of the castle-island in Funchal.⁴⁴ There the reader can imagine ocean green or blue, rather than white.

However, George mentions the colour green more often than white. White was apparently associated in his eyes with water, ice, or snow. It seems that for George green is an element of foliage, and of life, and is an adornment by itself. The reader has the impression that old castle's rocks, cliffs, and mountains are for the young writer more beautiful if covered by bushes and trees. Still, the high mountains, bereft of the green foliage, capped by white snow, are not so much beautiful, as fearsome.

As far as the present author can tell, the cliffs, either topped by a castle or not, and the mountains have in George's writing a common feature, namely steepness. Close examination of George's descriptions indicates that for him the wild is also precipitous. George combines this kind of sheer scenery adorned with greenery in one expression: "romantic-wild". For the reader it seems that this compound word is for George less comprehensive than "picturesque", although for him the old cliff-castle is not so much "picturesque" as "romantic" and "wild". These words belong also to the stock phrases of the "picturesque" movement in both painting and the travelogue literature of that time. Nevertheless, these references must have been popular at George's time in the language of English gardening. Their usage by George might again indicate his discussion of the subject with Francis Masson on board *Resolution*.

The tradition of Polish gardening has already been mentioned in this work when referring above to the style of George's descriptions of wild natural phenomena. George may have remembered his garden from Nowy Dwór near Gdańsk in Poland. The reader can infer this because Johann wrote that he and George spent in that garden all available free time looking for plants, insects, and birds. In addition, the present author is in possession of a lithograph of his garden there. It looks more "civilised" than the model English garden of the 18th century. However, from reading *Voyage* it can be inferred that George was under the influence of the English wild garden. He valued it more than the cultivated Polish, or French mode of out-door life. George Forster in *Voyage* made references both to the French, civilised, and English, wild styles of gardening.

In *Voyage* George does not provide the readers with a great deal of evidence of his attitude towards the conventional paraphernalia of the wild Eng-

⁴⁴ Funchal – city and capital of the Madeira Islands in the Atlantic (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.).

lish garden. Still, the reader necessarily attributes to George's description one element of the culture of English outdoor home life, namely the watery cascade. He alludes to it quite often. It is said that in England, no matter how they made the garden, it had to have a cascade, either natural, or artificial. Maybe that is why George mentions cascades so frequently in *Voyage*.

Alternatively, perhaps he does this because in his Polish garden at home there was no waterfall. Therefore, for him a cascade was an element of the exotic. On the other hand, he might have remembered that the river Motława had flowed just behind his old home. In this case, a cascade would be for George an element of nostalgia for his childhood in Poland.

Whatever the reason, George shows in *Voyage* his atavistic affection for anything watery, which either is still, or flows, or otherwise is in motion, horizontally or perpendicularly.

However, from reading *Voyage*, it can be inferred that George both feared, and loved the ocean. That is why his description of the stormy ocean is so moving. Sometimes he conveys his awareness of the perilous situation that the ship is in. On several occasions, he wrote in *Voyage* about an actual escape from death. The words showing his genuine and terrible fear of the hurricane wind apparently dramatically heighten the narration. It comes with no surprise when we read that everybody on board was as much afraid of the gusting air as George was. Some of the dangers he must have imagined. He was not a trained sailor.

Nonetheless, for George, the bitterly cold, razor sharp and rock solid hurricane force squalls, and the ocean agitated to the extreme by the confused, veering, and periodically-incessant gale strong winds were not only negative. It could be inferred that for him it was also a medium of artistic qualities of the "picturesque". When George described his first experience with a tempest on board *Resolution*, his interpretation appeared to be full of strange beauty. It seems that George the "artist" almost appreciated the rushing water. For the present author the disorderly scene of the terrible waves had something akin to the disorderly landscape that he later described writing about Dusky Bay.

In addition, reading *Voyage* leads to the supposition that on board *Resolution* at the time of storm, the dangers either objective or imagined were equally true to George. For example, apparently, during the Southern probe near Antarctica, the exposure to jeopardy was more penetrating in George's perception than ever. In one instance, George wrote about a mammoth wave that slammed the board and flew over the ship. It seems that the ocean in fury for George is an entirely unpredictable natural force. In the relevant passages George overtly conveys his mood, when he is sure that the ocean is above the control of the mariners. We can paraphrase that gloomy melancholy pervaded their quarters. The crew felt their helpless dependence. They were apprehensive and felt acute depression.

Nonetheless, for the present author George's masterpiece is the ostensibly "poetic" description of the relatively protracted and strong gale off North Is-

land, New Zealand. This particular storm was already mentioned in this article above in the section on Johann's *Journals* and the entry dated: "30th October [1773]". The crux of the story is seemingly banal. Inadvertently the ships approached the present-day Cook Strait from the wrong, leeward, eastern side. The combination of the katabatic "rivers" of air cascading down the high mountain tops, and the funnelling effect of the Strait itself kept *Resolution* and *Adventure* for a week struggling in the teeth of the constant gale force, and icy cold air-streams.⁴⁵ Because of the formation of the terrain, the winds had two characteristics. Firstly, they were constant in their directions, being always contrary to the squadron's course. Secondly, they were very unpredictable with reference to their strength. They slackened to zephyrs and strengthened up to hurricane force not rhythmically but according to the action of the sun and the overall weather picture. At first torrential rain, and then cloudless skies contrasted the colours' setting. The result of this struggle was twofold.

Firstly, it was material. At this level, it slackened the rigging, tore the sails, made life on board wet and miserable. Eventually and most importantly, it caused the separation of *Resolution* and *Adventure*. The latter was apparently not seaworthy enough even to try to sail against the gales. She could not set her sails. She was drifting helplessly rather than sailing. Therefore, the persistent hurricane strength blasts drove her far out into the ocean, and she never rejoined *Resolution* again:

We sailed all this day towards the land, having been driven off many leagues during the storm. [...] The next day we were disappointed once more at the mouth of the strait, and got a contrary wind, which blew a storm before night. The same weather continued for two days following, almost without intermission. [...] On the 29th [sic] [October] [...] In the evening we lost sight of the Adventure our consort, whom we never rejoined again during this voyage. The foul wind which in the morning on the 30th [sic] certainly contributed to separate her from us entirely, she being so far astern that this wind must have had infinitely more effect upon her than upon our ship.⁴⁶

Secondly, the result of the storm was spiritual. It gave George a stimulus to create the longest and probably most beautiful description of the ferocious and untamed nature in the whole of his *Voyage*. Apparently, to describe in words his experience during the storm George used four devices: events, sound, vision, and touch. The present author presumes that George consciously divided the description into four separate sections, each one dealing with each of the episodes, and senses, separately. In other words, the four sections of

⁴⁵ Katabatic – also called downslope wind, or gravity wind – wind that blows down a slope of a high hill or mountain due to gravity and increased density caused by cooling (cf. *ibid.*).

⁴⁶ G. Forster, *Voyage* (2000), p. 267.

events and senses live their own lives. They almost fail to communicate with each other.

Probably, George's intent behind the description was three-fold. Firstly, as a natural scientist he struggled to record in words the physical characteristics of the weeklong storm. On this platform, he chronicled the predictability of the contrary wind direction and the total unpredictability of its force. From the standpoint of a scientist, he documented dispassionately the disintegration of the ship's infrastructure, both technical in terms of its hull, rigging, sails, and the living quarters, and the deterioration of the crew's physical ability to cope. He registered the strength as well as the temperature of the air. He chronicled both the dimensions and the physical properties of the tops, and bottoms of the waves. Finally, he accounted for the behaviour of birds on the ocean, and a scorpion in the main cabin.

Possibly, his second aim was a cultivated, and beautiful mind's picture.

Presumably, his third purpose was to connect the natural history and artistic dimensions in one harmonised narration of an aesthetic value. As it seems, he succeeded entirely in his aspirations.

George uses professional seafaring language depicting the slow deterioration of the ship's equipment under the pressure of the long storm. It is probable that George stresses the confidentiality of the subject reserved mainly to the seamen's eyes by using a staccato of harsh highly specialised, hermetic nautical terms. First to give up are the dry living quarters of the crew. Then comes the first torn sail, and then the wind tears to pieces more sails in succession. The deterioration of the rigging, the hull, and the cabins follows in the list. Here George opts for using every-day words. Still, George tries to employ in the narration a given term only once. This device intensifies the importance of the decline. This "dégringolade" must have intensified the physical dangers facing the crew. George decided to increase the feeling of precariousness by mentioning a near-miss incident:

The continual strain slackened all the rigging and ropes in the ship, and loosened every thing, in so much that it gradually gave way and presented to our eyes a general scene of confusion. In one of the deepest rolls the arm-chest on the quarter-deck [sic] was torn out of its place and overset, leaning against the rails to leeward. A young gentleman, Mr. Hood, who happened to be just then to leeward of it, providentially escaped by bending down when he saw the chest falling, so as to remain unhurt in the angle which it formed with the rail.⁴⁷

Even during the extreme heat of the battle with the storm, George did not forget about his natural history research. He was a very keen observer of birds during the storm. Here a "black shear-water" kept the ship company by means

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 266.

of hiding “under the lee of [...] waves”. There the ship “passed an albatross sitting fast asleep in the water, perhaps fatigued by violence of the preceding gale”. In the “captain’s cabin” George observed with interest “a scorpion, which had lain concealed in a chink [...] its appearance alone was horrid enough to fill the mind with apprehension [...]”⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the visual, acoustic, and tangible aspects of the storm itself surpassed even the terror of the experience with the supposedly deadly scorpion. The wind for George had all those three sensory aspects. However, he decided to invoke these sensations in the reader not by direct description. Instead, George used a sophisticated chain of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. This sequence appealed to the reader’s memory of his or her perception of the wind. Therefore, the words served as sensory tentacles for the reader to experience in vision, sound, and touch the events of the wind slowly or rapidly gaining in strength, once slackening to calm, only to explode into a hurricane again. The wind started with the innocent “shift”, it culminated in a “hard gale”, and “tempest”. It had its vicissitudes expressed among others in the words “abated”, or “sprang up”.

Yet, it could be presumed that in trying to describe the expanse of the ocean under a heavy storm at the approaches to the present-day Cook Strait, George was faced with the same dilemma as when he attempted to give in words an account or representation of another storm at a certain shore in New Zealand where George and his party beached their boat. The middle high perspective viewed from the ship or from the shoreline probably gave an opportunity for a detailed, and colourful, relation. In contrast, the vista from the mountaintop plausibly erased the details, giving the fainter haze of greens, and blues. However, in return, it apparently accorded G. Forster entirely new possibilities for the characterisation of the boundless landscape. Similarly, the ocean on the wave top was objectively full of colours signifying the expanse of the seascape open to unrestricted view. The mammoth waves were visible everywhere; in all likelihood to George they were similar to the terrestrial mountaintops in Dusky Bay. Still, at the bottom of the mammoth wave it was superficially different. For the younger Forster it was most likely gloomy and terrifying. On the other hand, it alternated quickly as the ship soon climbed onto the following wave top.

George conveyed to the present author the message that the absence of visual sensors inside the ship did not subdue his perception of the storm. In contrast, reading in *Voyage* about the uncomfortable feeling of being cold and wet at places where that one would expect it to be dry and warm, intensified in the present author the awareness of the gale. The sounds were onomatopoeically conveyed, amplified and made to reverberate. Apparently, there was no respite. One could not rest.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 267.

The description of the storm off the Cook Strait in present-day New Zealand is a fitting fragment to our departure from the discussion of *Voyage*. Metaphorically speaking, this description was both one of the causes and the harbinger of the tempests to come in George's life. However, the *Resolution* rode out all gales. She anchored in a safe haven in England after the Pacific expedition. On the other hand, the last hurricane in George's life would lead to his total destruction.

CLOSING REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

Johann Reinhold Forster and his son George were important figures of the Enlightenment period in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Scotland, England, Britain, and Germany.

The Forsters were always loyal to the King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in need, they served the Commonwealth, as any of its citizens should. Nonetheless, for reasons known best to themselves, the Forsters moved back to the country of their ancestor and decided to become English (British). As the English overran Scotland, the Forsters decided to become English (British).⁴⁹ At that time, they did not speak any English. Nevertheless, in England Johann assimilated quickly to the harsh conditions he found there. His fame as a natural historian grew. As a result, he was invited to take part as scientist in the British Navy Expedition to the South Pacific Ocean. Johann was allowed to take his eldest son, seventeen-year-old George with him.

When he was taking part in Cook's Second Voyage, George was merely helping his father. However, within two years of their return to Britain, and within approximately six months from the moment his father gave this task to him, he produced in London the main narrative account of the Voyage. It turned out to be probably the most remarkable travelogue in the entire history of British and English-language maritime literature up to the end of the eighteenth century. Since then, it has been best known under its shortened title *Voyage*. George's father was equally successful. Despite the fact that the British Admiralty forbade Johann to publish his *Journals*, within a few months, he had published in London Europe's first truly scientific book on maritime exploration. Its shortened title was *Observations*. Later, back at the University of Vilna in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, George wrote the first ever, and one of the best, evaluations of all Cook's Voyages. There he placed Cook's

⁴⁹ Overran – metaphorically speaking. The history of Scotland and of the term “Great Britain”, which had been in use since 1603 (when the English and Scottish thrones were united and when James VI of Scotland became James I of England), and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, which was formed by the Act of Union in 1707, is well known (cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, op. cit.).

achievements in the context of professional, comprehensive history of European maritime expansion. The Forsters also published several major works on natural history. These works were meticulously prepared and were, at that time, revolutionary. The list of all their published and unpublished works written in Latin, English, and German is several pages long.⁵⁰

Probably the most important literary work of the Forsters was written in English. However, during a certain period of their lives, the Forsters wrote in Gdańsk Patriciate German, and in German spoken in Halle, Göttingen, and Mainz. Therefore, their works written in these various dialects of German belong to the worldwide heritage of the German language, and culture.

Similarly, the Forsters' scientific and literary output in English belongs to the British cultural tradition and to the worldwide heritage of the English-language culture.

Therefore, to summarise, the Forsters' total scientific and literary output written in Latin, English, and German and lectured in Polish and Latin at the University of Vilna, is a part of the legacy of thought of the Latin (Greco-Roman) cultural heritage and tradition, of both the Germanic people and English people all over the world, of royal "Rzeczpospolita", and "last but not least", of the Scottish nation.

The framework and repository for all the Forsters' activities on Cook's Second Voyage were Johann's logbooks, which he named *Journals*. The best aspect of the *Journals* is the spontaneity of Johann's feelings entrusted there without restraint.

In *Journals* Johann had, out of necessity, collected data in their chronological sequence. By contrast, in *Observations*, he was in a position to arrange them according to thematic type and field of research. Johann Forster's method of scientific inquiry was superior to those of his predecessors. Because of the territorial extent of Cook's Second Voyage, Johann was particularly well equipped with comparative material. This was particularly evident in what Johann called "research on 'Man'". If Johann Forster's predecessors compared societies and civilisations at all, they did so with reference to Europe and the ancients. On the other hand, Johann was in a position to compare civilisations among themselves and because of this to propose a host of anthropological and linguistic theories. In his book *Observations*, he was both able and willing to stress both differences and similarities between Tahitians, Society Islanders, Maoris, and Tongans. These and other theories and facts made *Observations* the major scientific book on oceanic studies in the history of the English (later the British Navy) voyages of exploration up to the end of the eighteenth century.

The Forsters' *Observations* and *Voyage* complemented each other. Nonetheless, it was the latter work which brought to the Forsters fame during their

⁵⁰ Cf. K. K. Vorbrich, *Memoirs of the Forsters [...] Selected Issues*, pp. 230-233.

lifetimes, and which consequently carried George back to the First Commonwealth. George created an oeuvre of literature. He introduced into his father's field records a spirit of artistic expression, which immortalised the work. The extent to which Johann may have helped him has been a matter of fierce conjecture by the Forsters' critics.

Within approximately six months George translated it into German. Some critics usually refer to this translation by its shortened title *Reise*. In a short time, he became one of the most accomplished writers in the history of German eighteenth century travelogue literature.

A close analysis of *Journals*, *Voyage*, and the various sources, which George put into the bibliography list, brings to light his artistic craft, and his skill as a young natural historian, ethnologist, and anthropologist. It makes clear the assiduousness with which George would link together two apparently dissimilar ends, scientific exactness, and artistic expression. As a result, George created on two independent levels, scholarly, and humanistic. Although each of them exists separately, they are transparent with reference to each other within one book.

George was faithful to his title. Nonetheless, he exceeded the expectations. The variety, and sheer number of the factual substance on biology, mineralogy, geology, and geography was unprecedented. On top of that, he added his father's and his own documentation on the "research on 'Man'". It was a novel approach for the travelogue genre.

His second major innovation was the introduction of a substantial literary trait to the traditional travelogue. On this aesthetic level, George developed the impression of a direct spectator's tale.

The third crucial modernisation of the travelogue mode was introduced in *Voyage* by the smoothness of his literary construction. An important element throughout the whole text of *Voyage* is the uniformly excellent English language, unchanging in the form of a refined and smooth monologue.

Probably *Voyage*, due to its prevailingly literary quality, is the only narrative work by the Forsters about Cook's Voyage, which could, and should, be viewed as a separate entity.

The above-mentioned writings of the Forsters had three types of distinctive features: literary, scientific, and the last, but equally important, cultural-political. With reference to the last aspect, the fact that the Forsters were Eurocentric is true without doubt. However, the Forsters' Eurocentrism was fundamentally different from Cook's, Bougainville's, and all other European ocean explorers before them.

In contrast to their English fellow voyagers, the Forsters never considered European culture superior to other cultures. Quite to the contrary, they wrote that the Europeans should learn from other cultures. In turn, other cultures, if they wanted to, could learn from them. The Forsters' Eurocentrism was deeply rooted in the Commonwealth's traditions.

In addition, the Forsters for the first time ever wrote clearly about the long-term political angle of all three of Cook's Voyages.

It is the present author's hope that this study has been successful in its main aims, which were to ascertain the value of the Forsters' literary work and to help to bring the Forsters' Polish and British heritage out of oblivion.

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FIGURES

Fig. 1. HMS *Endeavour* (Cook's First Voyage), replica, enters Sydney harbour (Australia). Photo K. K. Vorbrich, 2002.



Fig. 2. HMS *Endeavour* (Cook's First Voyage), a scale model, Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney. Photo K. K. Vorbrich, 2001.



Fig. 3. Southern cape of Tasman Peninsula in Tasmania. Photo K. K. Vorbrich, taken on board of s/y *Zoe*, Australian ensign, during the author's sailing voyage in J. Cook's footsteps in 2001-2002.



Fig. 4. Leaving South point of Tasmania, Pacific Ocean, sailing towards Tasman Sea. Photo K. K. Vorbrich, taken on board of s/y *Zoe*, during the 2001-2002 sailing voyage.