Terra Australis Incognita during the Age of Exploration: a window into the changing European world view

Adam Aaron Marshall

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TERRA AUSTRA LIS INCOGNITA DURING THE AGE OF EXPLORATION:
A WINDOW INTO THE CHANGING EUROPEAN WORLD VIEW

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Humanities/Teacher Education Division
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Adam Aaron Marshall
July 2010
This thesis, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

July 2010

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DEDICATION

I thank God for guiding me to Pepperdine University, and for giving me the strength to complete my Education. Thanks to the entire History Faculty, with special thanks to my thesis committee members: Drs. Ed Larson, Darlene Rivas, and Stewart Davenport. I also thank my wife Lisa for her patience, support, and proofreading during these challenging academic years, and my son Wesley, who has endured my moods and angst with a smile. I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my dear grandmother, Martha Mathilde Marshall, who encouraged me to accomplish my goals, and gave me much help along the way.
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Terra Australis Incognita During the Age of Exploration: 
A Window into the Changing European World View

by

Adam Aaron Marshall
July 2010
Dr. Edward J. Larson, Chairman

ABSTRACT

For nearly two millennia some Europeans believed that a vast, wealthy, and peopled continent, Terra Australis Incognita, lay in the southern ocean, and acted as a stabilizing counterweight to the northern landmasses. The presence of this frontier, if only imaginary, represented geographical opportunity, and served as a psychological safety valve. Until discoverers possessed the ability to accurately chart the southern seas, the existence of the theoretical continent went unchallenged.

Two voyagers serve as bookends in this search during the Age of Exploration: Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós (1565-1615), and Captain James Cook (1728-1779). Beyond their actual voyages, these men serve as philosophical representatives of the ages in which they lived: the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. By examining the written records left by Quirós and Cook, one can discern a clear change in the vision of and for the mythical continent. The philosophical distance between Quirós and Cook mirrors the change which took place among intellectuals in Europe during the same period. Quirós sought to form a religious Utopia on Terra Australis. He found the small island of Santo, Vanuatu, and embellished it into a fifth continent of the world. After Quirós, European men of letters moved Terra Australis to the forefront of the popular imagination by using it as a setting for their works.

By the time Captain Cook sailed, the Enlightenment was in full flower. The tolerance for Renaissance legend began to wear thin among all but a few ardent believers. Humankind wanted to know exactly what lay in the South Pacific. Cook embodied this empiricism, doggedly sailing around the South Pole until no more room could be found for an additional continent. Terra Australis vanished not only as consequence of navigation and cartography, but in tandem with the emerging scientific ethos. Humankind lost the possibility of ever discovering another vast and wonderful continent, and traded the romance and Christian humanism of Quirós for the skepticism and severity of Cook.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Until the end of Captain Cook’s second voyage in 1775, a few influential people still believed that, in addition to the known continents of the world, the earth contained a large, rich, and populous continent known as Terra Australis Incognita. Natural philosophy dating from the time of the ancient Greeks required additional land area in the southern hemisphere to act as a counterweight to the northern land masses. This arrangement kept the earth in balance at the center of the universe. In psychological terms, the southern land represented possibility. The brutal living conditions of Europe, with plague, religious strife, and absolute monarchies, fueled an increasing desire for an “other,” and better place, as described in Thomas More’s seminal 1518 work, Utopia.¹

The role of the expanding frontier in the American psyche serves as a fair analogy for the role played by Terra Australis. In his Frontier Thesis of 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner identified the importance of the American frontier in the shaping of the American character. In his sweeping and controversial thesis, Turner identified the American frontier as a sociopsychological safety valve. This safety valve existed

because: “an area of free land has continually lain on the western border of the settled area of the United States.” This free land provided “a gate of escape to the free conditions of the frontier...free lands meant free opportunities.”

In a manner similar to the American frontier, Terra Australis became entrenched in the European psyche, and a fixture on world maps. The second century map of the astronomer Ptolemy portrayed a large landmass named Terra Incognita: “land unknown” (Figure 1). Renaissance Europe rediscovered Ptolemy’s geography in about 1400, which included, as Robert Clancy describes it: “a landlocked Indian Ocean surrounded by an amorphous and continuous Terra Australis Incognita.”

Marco Polo’s thirteenth-century voyage account, in which he allegedly traveled by land from Italy to China, also became part of the fabric of wishful southern geography. He described a wild and mountainous southern land, peopled by idolaters, but rich in gold, wood, and elephants. Polo’s names “Beach,” “Locach,” and “Maletur” appeared on European maps following his voyage, but no one knew for certain where he had been.

Camino Mercedes, in *Producing the Pacific*, notes Magellan’s fascination with Polo’s

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3. Ibid.


6. Ibid., 18.
account. Even if Polo had not traveled beyond Asia, his writings influenced future voyagers, and added to the elusive geography of the South Seas.\(^7\)

The Portuguese disproved the continuity of Ptolemy’s southern land by rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1482, and sixteenth-century European cartographers adjusted the world map accordingly by separating both Asia and Africa from Terra Australis. In 1570 Abraham Ortelius depicted a large southern landmass which covered much of the southern hemisphere, and jutted north of the Tropic of Cancer in two places (Figure 2). Ortelius designated this land *Terra Australis Nondum Cognita*—“southern land not yet known.” Gerardus Mercator depicted the same landmass, and simply used the name *Terra Australis*. These maps would inform the sixteenth-century Spanish voyages expressly aimed at finding this land.\(^8\)

The size and location of Terra Australis varied over time. Did the landmass qualify to be a continent, or was it a large island like so many others in the southern oceans? The continent shrank as a consequence of middle seventeenth-century literature, which popularized Terra Australis as a beautiful, fruitful and inhabited island. Terra Australis also saw competition from another southern landmass portrayed by a group of French maps from the city of Dieppe. These maps depicted a large landmass in the Indian Ocean named Java la Grande.\(^9\) It roughly coincided in location and extent with Australia,\(^7\)

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7. Ibid.


New Guinea, and New Zealand, were they not separated by water. The name “Magellanica” arose in the wake of that great navigator’s voyage, and described the land he mistakenly believed to be attached to Tierra del Fuego, and which extended south toward the pole; essentially synonymous with Terra Australis.

Not all Renaissance European world maps included Terra Australis. Some omitted it entirely, and some portrayed a landmass the size of Antarctica, pulled northward toward the Cape of Good Hope. Terra Australis finally surrendered to the southern landmasses that we know today: Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, and Antarctica. Europeans hoped and believed for as long as possible that at least some of these lands cleaved together, and navigators had to break them apart a piece at a time, and sometimes more than once.

The name Terra Australis can cause confusion because it suggests a connection to present day Australia—the only island continent other than Antarctica. Though these names have become intertwined, the Portuguese explorer, Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós used the name Austrialia del Espiritu Santo, in reference to present day Santo, Vanuatu. This name meant “Austrian land of the Holy Ghost,” in honor of King Philip III’s Austrian Royal House.10 Quirós played no part in the discovery of Australia, as he never made landfall there. The Dutch navigator Willem Janszoon claimed Australia’s official discovery in 1605.

Figure 1. Fifteenth-Century Depiction of Ptolemy’s Geography
Source: Wikimedia Commons. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ptol%C3%A9m%C3%A9_Ptolemy_map_15th_century.jpg

Figure 2. The 1570 Abraham Ortelius Map.
The name Australia derives from the Latin word *Australis*, which simply means “southern.” Australia gained its name following the voyages of Matthew Flinders during the nineteenth century. Prior to Flinders, Australia bore the name “New Holland,” given it by the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman in the 1640’s. To add to the already confusing nomenclature, the English buccaneer William Dampier twice landed on Australia during the late seventeenth century, in one instance describing it as part of the larger continent of Terra Australis.

Terra Australis endured on maps and in the European psyche for a very long time; its history following a winding path from Antiquity to the Enlightenment. Many authors summarize this history, among whom are J.C. Beaglehole in three works: *The Life of Captain James Cook*, *The Exploration of the Pacific*, and in the edited journals of Cook, published by the Hakluyt society. Camino Mercedes, in *Producing the Pacific*, conveys the history of this evolving land form in narrative, and also through the use of European world maps. Miriam Estensen represents perhaps the most recent scholarship on Terra Australis. She offers a succinct history of the vanishing continent, focusing on the late Renaissance Spanish quest in her 2006 work, *Terra Australis Incognita*.

This essay does not seek to unravel the entire history of Terra Australis, but focuses on the fabled continent from 1595 to 1775. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós and Captain James Cook form bookends in the search for Terra Australis during the Age of Exploration. Europe’s intellectual journey can be read in the written record of these men, in the record left by other voyagers, and in the travel fictions of the seventeenth century.
which used Terra Australis as a setting. In these three areas Terra Australis serves as a window into the changing European world view. The aim of this essay is to demonstrate that Terra Australis disappeared not only as a consequence of geography and navigation, but also as a result of the intellectual coming-of-age in Europe. By the time Cook disproved the existence of Terra Australis, Europe no longer held intellectual space for mythical lands. The world lost the need for counterpoise, the psychological safety valve of another frontier, and the last terrestrial Utopia.

Upon the temperate and fertile landmass of Terra Australis, Europeans imagined an ideal Christian community akin to More’s Utopia. More’s work, along with legends of an earthly paradise, animated the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Spanish voyages in search of such a land. Upon his return from Santo, Vanuatu in 1606, Quirós presented the world with a bonafide paradise. Although the reality of Santo departs from Quirós’ embellishments, the memorials he wrote stoked the fires of discovery for a century and a half. Because of his influence as late Renaissance continent promoter, this essay begins by examining the two voyages he made, and his connection to men who later wrote about and sailed for Terra Australis.

While explorers probed the South Seas for an additional continent, seventeenth-century men of letters posited a more ideal society set in Terra Australis. In his 1636 The Antipodes, Richard Brome hearkened back to the Middle Age traveler’s tales of Sir John Mandeville. Brome’s work cast off European superstitions and prejudices about the southern latitudes in preference for geographical reality, which prefigured the
Enlightenment mind set. Other seventeenth-century writers made direct ties to Quirós by invoking his imagery in their works. The British political writer Henry Neville, and the French authors, Denis Veiras, and Gabriel de Foigny set their stories in Terra Australis. All of these authors criticized European governmental excesses, and explored the boundary between utopian and dystopian societies. And although they offered differing descriptions of Terra Australis, they fueled the popular belief in an exotic southern land. All of these fictional works, to be considered in the third chapter of this essay, undermined the utopianism of More, and the idealism of Quirós. As Europe gained geographical and scientific knowledge, intellectual space for mythical lands began to close.

Between the time of Quirós and Cook, the Dutch East India Company voyages of Abel Tasman, the voyages of the English Pirate William Dampier, and the scientific voyages of Edmund Halley sought Terra Australis. These voyages shrank the territory in which it might be found. The fourth chapter of this essay considers these voyages, as well as key intellectual developments in Europe that pushed the world toward the Enlightenment.

During the eighteenth century, Cook contemporary and Royal Society Fellow, Alexander Dalrymple grasped the utopian thread extending from Quirós. He became the last major advocate for the existence of a vast and habitable southern continent. An anachronistic thinker, Dalrymple resurrected the Abraham Ortelius map. He also reasserted the ancient idea of counterpoise, which required the weight of an additional landmass larger than Asia, which lay between Australia and South America. Ironically he
chose the emptiest stretch of Ocean on the planet. Dalrymple’s fervor infected some members of the Cook party, including the famed naturalist Joseph Banks, a friend of Dalrymple, and later president of the Royal Society. Both men appear in the final chapter of this essay.

During his voyages, Cook carried the volumes that Dalrymple had penned on Pacific geography, and invalidated nearly all of his conjectures regarding Terra Australis. Though an understated man, Cook claimed credit for finally ending the search for the southern continent, and took credit for traveling as far by ship as man was capable during his lifetime. Upon reaching Santo, near the end of his second voyage, Cook proved Quirós to be a man either deceived or dishonest for his overblown description of this island.

Cook demonstrated a near complete embrace of the Enlightenment scientific ethos. He also benefitted greatly from technological advancements made during his lifetime. The British solved the age-old problem of accurately determining longitude, with John Harrison’s invention of the H4 chronometer in 1759. Cook’s navigational tools and skills far surpassed those of Quirós, but his brilliance lay in the fact that he only charted exactly what he observed. This gift enabled him to make his greatest discovery: the non-existence of a habitable southern continent. Because he looms so large in this story, the final chapter is primarily dedicated to his work.

With the loss of Terra Australis, Europe lost a psychological safety valve, and also the humanistic ideals of the Renaissance. The romance and mysticism of Quirós gave way to the unflinching empiricism of Cook. Whereas Quirós sought to form a Christian
agricultural Utopia on Terra Australis, Cook sought only to determine exactly what lay in
the South Pacific. Cook’s preternatural determination, and complete intolerance for
fictional geography, destined him to drive the final nails in the coffin of Terra Australis
Incognita. When he finished, the world was an entirely different place. By becoming a
known place it had, for romantics and idealists, become a place of diminished opportunity.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

At the end of J.C. Beaglehole’s 1966 work, *The Exploration of the Pacific*, he wrote two paragraphs that inspired this study. After noting the tremendous achievement of Magellan’s 1521 circumnavigation, he states that two other Pacific explorers stand out above all others, “curiously opposed”—Quirós and Cook.\(^{11}\) Quirós embodied the spirit of Renaissance exploration, and Cook equally embodied the Age of Enlightenment. These men bracket the central subject of this essay, which is the search for the continent of Terra Australis Incognita during the Age of Exploration.

In addition to the germ of an idea supplied by Beaglehole, another key work informs this essay, and bridges the intellectual, literary, and exploration history of Terra Australis—David Fausett’s 1993 *Writing the New World*. Fausett identifies Terra Australis as a rich literary source of utopian imagery, and also as an enigma that “symbolized the growing contrast between mythical and empirical knowledge.”\(^{12}\) Fausett encapsulates the main argument of this thesis when he states, in the context of Austral fiction, that “the progressive separation of fact from fiction or allegory would eventually raise empiricism into an end in itself, displacing myth in favor of today’s dichotomized, dismembered forms of knowledge.”\(^{13}\) This essay presents an example of Fausett’s


\(^{13}\) Ibid., 6.
argument by examining the historical record produced by Quirós and Cook, and in doing so, further explores the European intellectual journey toward empiricism.

Beyond Beaglehole and Fausett, viewpoints expressed in a number of secondary sources are synthesized, and areas of relevant scholarly debate highlighted. Because this essay includes intellectual, literary, scientific, and geographical elements, it places a disparate group of scholars in historical conversation. Because the literature of Pacific exploration is nearly as vast as the Ocean itself, this literature review considers a few significant areas of scholarly debate. The issues to be considered are the meaning and legacy of Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, the changing European vision of the South Pacific and Terra Australis between Quirós and Cook, the changing nature of utopianism over the same period, and the meaning and legacy of Captain James Cook.

The Meaning and Legacy of Quirós

Even given his significant contribution to Pacific exploration, Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós accounts for far less historiography than James Cook, is a less tarnished historical actor, and a less polarizing figure generally. Quirós, if he is mentioned at all, is often portrayed as a vain enthusiast who further confused the late Renaissance geography of the Pacific. As with most stereotypes, this characterization contains some truth, but misses his contributions to geography, navigation, and utopianism. In the words of J.C. Beaglehole, “no name was more on the minds of geographers and discoverers than his.”

Even though Quirós has generated a more modest historiography than Cook, his image ranges from play-actor, and dishonest self-promoter, to a dedicated member of the

Franciscan Order of Catholicism. This complex portrait makes him an enigma. This thesis employs him as a philosophical representative of his age, in an effort to establish the Renaissance vision for Terra Australis, and includes him as a representative member of the European intelligentsia who shared a common world view.

Nearly every historian credits Quirós with sincere religiosity, but many also label him a zealot beyond the mainstream of polite society, and also an anachronism. If these charges can be made to stick, it would challenge his credibility as a representative of his age. The problem with this presentist point of view is that it equates religious passion with oddity, and overlooks the counter-reformational climate in which Quirós thrived. He exceeded his shipmates in religious zeal to the point of incurring their ire, but his behavior in Vanuatu matched the written words of King Philip III in the dispatches that authorized the Quirós’ voyage.

Mercedes Camino, in *Producing the Pacific*, offers a complex thesis of Quirós, on the one hand crediting him for his influence on Pacific explorers that followed him, yet also noting his anachronistic and devious ways. She describes him as “the imaginator of the myth of a Pacific utopian world,” with a biblical, folkloric, and classical understanding of the South Seas, and an adherence to Medieval chivalric tradition. The

15. Ibid., 125.
“imaginator,” moniker affirms the influence of his writings because his eighth memorial became one of the most widely-circulated documents of its kind in Europe.¹⁷

In addition to his role as the promoter of the utopian continent, Camino also defines Quirós as the “the most theatrical of all discoverers,” and a propagandist and co-conspirator in the grand Spanish “production” of the Pacific space.¹⁸ This elaborate stage play included travel narratives, maps, and rituals of religion, conquest, and possession which aimed to shape European public perception. These machinations represented part of the Spanish “discourse of power,” as outlined by Michael Foucault.¹⁹ Mercedes Camino ultimately softens Quirós’ image by crediting him with profoundly Christian and even mystical religious tendencies, but could one man embody such contradiction?

Other scholars credit Quirós with braggadocio and self-deception, but most affirm his sincerity. Mystical faith and passion flow from his writings, and these traits formed a central part of his character. He strove with all of his might to Christianize the non-Catholics of Terra Australis. J.C. Beaglehole states that “his heart yearned over an innumerable multitude of heathen who seemed before his eyes to perish everlastingly.”²⁰ His ardent desire to secure a second voyage to Vanuatu overflowed to produce a

¹⁷. Ibid., 29.
¹⁸. Ibid., 102.
¹⁹. Ibid., 101.
somewhat fictionalized voyage account, but if nothing else, his religious sensibilities rang true.

In *Terra Australis Incognita* Miriam Estensen places Quirós under the banner of the Spanish crusader spirit, and a chapter title in her book “Gold, Souls, and the Mythical Continent,” encapsulates this vision for the New World. This author takes some exception to this characterization because it underplays the ascetism of Quirós that emanated from his affiliation with the Order of Saint Francis, and which ran counter to the crusader’s lust for gold and glory.

Miguel Luque and Carlos Mondragon unpack the religiosity of Quirós’ in their article, “Faith, Fidelity, and Fantasy.” They identify Quirós’ religious pedigree with precision, and acknowledge his zeal, but assert also that he was not “so unusual as to be exotic.” They underline the importance of his quasi-mystical religious bent, millenarianism, and his embrace of the utopianism of Thomas More, which was a philosophical tie to the century prior to the one in which he lived--another scholarly assertion of the anachronism of Quirós. Luque and Mondragon produce a more nuanced image of Quirós, however, which balances anachronism against obvious ties to religious and political power. The anachronism of Quirós does not place him outside the intellectual mainstream, but makes him the ideal representative of Renaissance exploration because he looked backward toward a vanishing world view.


Through his eighth memorial, written to King Philip III of Spain in 1609, Quirós described in technicolor the continent portrayed on the Mercator and Ortelius maps. Through this and other writings he inspired voyagers and philosophers for two centuries, fathering the “myth” of Terra Australis during the exploration age. In this case the word myth does not mean an entirely fictional voyage account, but an “ideologically loaded” one. The myth of Terra Australis represented the acquisition of another continent, great wealth, and natives easily bent to Christianity.

Quirós can be forgiven some of his geographical and rhetorical inaccuracy because he lived during a time in which the literary and graphical portrayals of the physical world were not rigidly defined. As David Fausett notes “Map-making was suffused with fictional elements, and fiction confused with fact; both being largely dependent on hearsay reports.” Humankind yet believed that the earthly paradise might be discovered, and Quirós spoke directly of “an earthly paradise,” in his eighth memorial. In the lifetime of Quirós, Europe had not yet stepped in to what Fausett describes as the “breach between fictive and scientific description.” Again Fausett strikes close to the heart of this essay, as I examine both ends of this breach, with Quirós


positioned at the fictive end, and Cook at the scientific one. In the period between these two men the European world view changed almost entirely, and at the end of this period, mythical continents found no place in their ideology.

The Changing European Vision of Terra Australis

To ascertain how the European world view changed in a century and a half, the European visual arts produced from South Sea voyages provide a useful yardstick. This subject rests in the work of two scholars who examined European artistic portrayals of the South Pacific between Magellan and Cook. Bernard Smith’s *European Vision and the South Pacific*, and William Eisler’s *The Furthest Shore*, offer slightly different theses. Both of these studies extend beyond the scope aim of this essay, and contain subtleties which cannot be fully explored here. Both works, however, affirm the broad artistic trend from neoclassical to realistic depiction of life and land in the Pacific Ocean. The trend toward realism in the visual arts mirrored the broad philosophical trend in Europe from Rationalism to empiricism, and the changes in the way that South Pacific images were recorded by Europeans resulted as a consequence of this changing world view.

Bernard Smith argued that Renaissance Europe recorded a Classical and Arcadian visual record, in keeping with the cognitive theory of perception, which states that seeing is conditioned by knowing.27 The shipboard artist served as an “illustrator of the convictions of the group to which he belonged.”28 South Sea natives were not to be


28. Ibid., 1.
rendered in their imperfect forms, but idealized in the style of neoclassical art. This idealizing tendency extended from ancient times through the Renaissance. Smith notes that the emerging empiricism of the Royal Society in the seventeenth century demanded more realistic depictions of natural subjects. The illusions created through neoclassical portrayal vanished with the increase of knowledge.29

William Eisler, in *The Furthest Shore*, offered a refinement to Smith’s thesis. Eisler argued that, prior to the eighteenth century, Europe produced a “bipolar vision” of the South Pacific: neoclassical and Arcadian in some cases, and wanton and savage in others.30 In the case of Quirós, few visual images of his voyage survive, but given that Smith and Eisler include written imagery, his description of Terra Australis fits with neoclassical idealization. In the 1690’s William Dampier, in contrast to Quirós, wrote an account of Australia that included a barren landscape and a savage population.

Realistic portrayals climaxed with the Royal Society-sponsored voyages of Captain Cook, which produced a wealth of visual records of land, people, flora and fauna. And though these images contained some neoclassical idealism, this tendency diminished significantly. Not only artists, but men of science waxed neoclassical at times. Joseph Banks chose the word “Arcadia” to describe Tahiti, and the French explorer Bougainville

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29. Ibid.

produced an account of Tahiti that read like a memorial of Quirós. At the end of the day, however, realism eclipsed idealism in European visual and written records of the South Pacific.

Utopianism

With the word Utopia, Thomas More named an ideal island community in his work by the same title. Scholars debate the central message of Utopia, but More tipped his hand somewhat by saying that it represented the “best state of a commonwealth.” In examining the history of Terra Australis, one will encounter some form of utopianism throughout the entire exploration age. In Faith, Fidelity, and Fantasy, Miguel Luque and Carlos Mondragon explicitly tie the philosophy of Quirós to More’s Utopia. Though he lived a century after More, he embodied the Renaissance spirit, which sought Christian communitarianism and agrarian perfection in a tropical climate.

The Spanish utopian urge in the New World predated Quirós, and the famous guardian of indigenous rights in the New World, Bartolome de Las Casas, provided the most tangible example of it. Victor Baptiste argues that More drew his inspiration directly from the writings of Las Casas. In response to the Spanish genocide against


33. Victor Baptiste, Bartolome De Las Casas and Thomas More’s Utopia (Culver City: Labyrinthos, 1990), vii. The thesis of this essay is that More based Utopia directly on the writings of Las Casas, and Utopia was a satirical representation of the Las Casas colony.
New World natives, Las Casas appealed to the Spanish crown 1519. He affirmed the dignity and humanity of the native people, and requested a large grant of land to form a religious agrarian colony in South America. Though his colony failed to take root, his writings influenced both More and Quirós. Quirós became heir to the Spanish utopian urge, and his efforts in Vanuatu mark the end of Spain’s utopian efforts in the New World.

During the seventeenth century, Europe drifted from the utopianism of More as empiricism began gaining intellectual ground. Although Royal Society men considered themselves to be eminently practical, they did not spurn utopianism, but contemplated an ideal state of humanity reaching beyond the commonwealth. R.H. Syfret, in “The Origins of the Royal Society,” offers an interesting glimpse into the idealism of scientific men, whose credo became “Pansophia”—the universal and continuous improvement of man through science.

J.A. Comenius, the seventeenth-century Czech educational reformer and religious leader, touted Pansophia as the universal antidote to “ignorance, misunderstandings, hallucinations, and errors.” He proposed universal books, schools, education, and even the use of a universal language. Men such as Comenius included religious truth as part of human progress, and these elements combined to become a form of millenarianism: the

continual improvement of humankind through knowledge would usher in an era of peace and prosperity.  

The degree to which Pansophia undergirded the founding of the Royal Society is debatable, but one can identify with less controversy the desire for human improvement through science, technology, and education. These three ingredients entered into the Enlightenment definition of progress, and as the eighteenth century dawned, the need for human progress began to overshadow the need for religious conversion. Cook’s voyage records contain examples of this urge toward improvement, with little emphasis on Christian evangelism.

**The Meaning and Legacy of Cook**

Standing in stark contrast to the passionate, religious and embellishing Quirós was James Cook, who, in the words of J.C. Beaglehole, stood as the “master of a regulated and secular enthusiasm.” This essay employs Cook as the quintessential Enlightenment man, and because of his embrace of empiricism, this destination is not a difficult one to reach. The world view of Cook, as it can be determined from his voyage records, completely departed the world view of Quirós, and like Quirós, he is the ideal representative of his age.

This essay considers Cook’s legacy from the vantage point of his impact on science, geography, and navigation. Cook’s dramatic death on Hawaii in 1779 has


colored his entire legacy and generated a din of historical conversation, but his work prior to his death qualified as an unmitigated success. Historian Michael Hoare compares the impact of Cook’s work to the astronauts landing on the moon, which “transformed the way man viewed himself and his world.”\(^{37}\) Given the weight of Cook’s achievements, it would be easy to join the cheering section, and J.C. Beaglehole sounded these notes in his landmark work, *The Life of Captain James Cook*. His work receives criticism today for its worshipful tone. In 2003, Nicholas Thomas wrote *The Extraordinary Voyages of James Cook*, to “step behind the false certainties of both the heroic and anti-heroic biographies of this navigator.”\(^{38}\) Cook succeeded dramatically and failed dramatically, and given his lasting impact on the world, he will always be a magnetic historical figure.

With regard to Cook’s second voyage and his search for Terra Australis, few if any monographs exist that are dedicated to this subject. Many biographies mention Cook’s continent search in passing, however. Nigel Rigby’s *Captain Cook In the Pacific*, and Richard Hough’s *Captain James Cook: A Biography* both briefly treat Cook and Terra Australis. J.C. Beaglehole’s *The Life of Captain James Cook*, and his introduction to the edited journals of Cook also provide useful information on this subject.

Cook looms large in the history of Terra Australis because he wrote its final epitaph. He owed part of the credit for this achievement to fortune because his life


occurred at a time when technology, geography, and philosophy converged to make the finding or not finding of the southern continent inevitable. He played his part with a particular flair, departing the methods of his forerunners, to fully embody the empirical method. In this respect he stands alone, and this attribute led to his greatness as a navigator. Some of the men who traveled with Cook shared his Enlightenment world view, Joseph Banks among them, but Cook offered the clearest example of this new thought paradigm.

The narrative that follows details actual and intellectual voyages made in search of Terra Australis over one hundred and seventy years, and takes note of the diminishing intellectual space available for mythical lands. To my knowledge, this history does not exist elsewhere, which partly justifies its writing. One will find many works summarizing the search for Terra Australis from time immemorial. This essay restricts itself to the Age of Exploration, and examines the two main characters in the story of the vanishing continent.
CHAPTER 3

Spain Seeks the Fabled Continent

The Spanish quest for Terra Australis arose in the climate of the Catholic Counter-Reformation following the mid-sixteenth century council of Trent. In addition to affirming Catholic orthodoxy, Trent birthed new religious orders and a missionary zeal to evangelize the heathen in faraway lands. Spain’s desire for territory, gold, and scientific gain also propelled the search for the mythical south land. Three voyages departed New Spain toward these ends. Alvaro de Medaña led two of these voyages in 1567 and 1595. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós served as Medaña’s Chief Pilot on his second, and led the third voyage in 1606. Renaissance enthusiasm for discovery joined ancient and Medieval legend in quests for the biblical Gold of Ophir, the riches of Incan warrior Tupac Yupanqui, and even the earthly paradise sought by explorers from Antiquity. The voyages of Medaña and Quirós failed to find great riches, to plant any new Spanish colonies in the Pacific, or to convert natives to Catholicism. Though they achieved none of their stated goals, these voyages strongly shaped European perceptions of the South Pacific, especially through the writings of Quirós. Through his journals and memorials, Quirós promoted his influential vision of Terra Australis, inspiring seventeenth century writers of utopian literature and explorers who continued to search until the time of Captain Cook. Eighteenth-century men of science caught Quirós fever, seeking to lay claim to a “new fifth part of the world.”

39. The title of a 1617 English translation of Quirós’ eighth memorial.
**Quirós The Man**

In 1904 the English traveler and geographer Clements Markham translated the records of the Medaña and Quirós voyages for the Hakluyt Society. The introduction to these two volumes includes a concise overview of both Terra Australis, and the late Renaissance Spanish voyages. Markham translated nearly all of the explorer accounts relevant to this history, especially the writings of Quirós. The famous Spanish poet, Belmonte Bermudez, served as Quirós’ scribe, and his poetic flair likely entered the record. To counter Quirós’ glowing account of himself, Markham included the accounts of his detractors, Luis Vaes de Torres, his second in command, and an insubordinate Spanish nobleman, Diego de Prado y Tovar.

Quirós’ movements prior to joining Medaña’s crew are something of a mystery. He was born about 1565 in Portugal, in the hometown of the famous navigator, Vasco de Gama. The annexation of Portugal by Spain in 1580 directly impacted Quirós career. His rival aboard ship, Diego Prado y Tovar, underscored his Portuguese heritage and insinuated that he was disloyal to Spain.

Quirós gained his knowledge of the sea allegedly as a clerk on merchant ships, and carried the reputation of being an able pilot and cartographer. His only extant chart of the Pacific does not bear out his talent as a cartographer, as it is a crude piece of


41. Diego Prado y Tovar, “Two Letters written by Diego de Prado y Tovar to the King, Philip III, and to his Secretary Antonio de Arosteguí, in Markham, *The Voyages*, 2:511-13.
draftsmanship at best, which may reflect the standards of his day and not his ability. At any rate, he secured the post of Chief Pilot on Medaña’s ship, likely by employing his legendary skills as a salesman. Friend and foe alike credited him with persuasiveness and an abundance of words.

In a letter to the Viceroy of Peru, King Philip III underscored the sea-faring abilities of Quirós’ by stating that the scientists at Rome “say that there are few pilots who know as much as he does; that he is expert in making globes, and charts for navigating; that he well understands the use of instruments necessary for navigation, and that he showed them two of his own invention.” Quirós issued specific navigational instructions to his pilots which covered daily rations, shipboard safety, navigational practices, signs of land, signs of rocks, knowledge of currents, protocols for dealing with native inhabitants, interpreting weather, etc. Given his extensive knowledge of navigation, Quirós can rightly be viewed as a Renaissance man of science, and counted among the best navigators of his time.

The 1595 Medana Voyage: Quirós Catches the Vision

The 1567 and 1595 voyages of Alvaro de Medaña’s sought the gold of Ophir, which Solomon used to gild his temple in Jerusalem. He named the Solomon islands during his first voyage, hoping that they contained this legendary gold. His second voyage aimed to christianize and colonize the Solomons, but he could not locate them on

42. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós , “Narrative of the Voyage of Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós in 1606,” in Markham, The Voyages, 1:168.

43. Ibid., 183-191.
the second attempt. He instead landed in the Marquesas and Santa Cruz Island groups, ultimately dying of fever in the latter location.

Miriam Estensen recounts these voyages in *Terra Australis Incognita*, and she characterizes the second Medaña voyage as a journey “steeped in avarice, moral insensitivity and random bloodshed.” Things went horribly wrong on the island of Santa Cruz. The Spanish killed a few hundred natives, including Chief Malope, a friend to both Medaña, and to the young Quirós. In a mutinous climate Medaña ordered the stabbing of his cantankerous Camp Master for serial insubordination. Quirós distanced himself from this travesty, publicly lamenting the Camp Master’s death. After Medaña’s death, his widow, Doña Isabel Barreto broke established precedent by commanding the return voyage to Manila. During the hellish return voyage, the crew ran short of food and water, but rather than offering sustenance, Doña Isabella hoarded her supplies of oil and wine. Quirós faithfully plotted her return course but publicly denounced her parsimony.

Even given the travails of this journey, the sight of exotic locales and non-Catholic natives fired the missionary zeal of Quirós. On Magdelena island, in the Marquesas group, his fears for the impending damnation of an angel-faced youth

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45. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, “Second Voyage of Alvaro de Medana,” in Markham, *The Voyages*, 1:77-8. Quirós opposed this execution on the basis that the Camp Master was killed only for his failure to keep silent.

46. Ibid., 108-9.
particularly haunted him: “I have never in my life felt such pain as when I thought that so fair a creature should be left to go to perdition.”  His concern for the soul of this young man and others enabled him to endure the next ten years that it took to secure a second voyage. His last voyage, with official religious, economic, and military purposes, would be his last, and the final attempt by Spain to colonize Terra Australis Incognita.

Spain and Terra Australis

After Quirós won the favor of Pope Clement VIII, and King Philip III, the king issued three despatches in 1603 which authorized his voyage. The king offered predictable objectives for the voyage: “much and very good land exists which has a temperate and therefore a habitable climate. It is very desirable to lose no time in discovering that southern region, unknown until now, which will be a great service to God.”  The Counter-Reformational zeal to win converts again came to the fore: “his ends and objects being the service of God and my service, and the conversion of these people to our holy faith.” Lastly, the king noted that Quirós’ talent for charting and navigating would “give true knowledge of the latitude and longitude of places, ports, and capes discovered in various voyages.” Given that the world maps of record were based

47. Ibid., 17.


49. Ibid., 168.

50. Ibid., 168.
on the anecdotes of mariners and hearsay, Quirós might produce a clearer geography than that found in antiquated, Middle-Age maps.

*The Voyage of Quirós*

Three ships departed Callao (Lima) 21 December 1605, carrying some 300 men, weapons, and provisions. The *San Pedro y San Pablo* carried Quirós. Luis Vaes de Torres piloted the second ship, redundantly named the *San Pedro*. The launch went by the name of *Los Tres Reyes*. The voyage sailed west south west in search of land; if none was found, they would make for Santa Cruz Island. After Santa Cruz the voyage would make for Manila via New Guinea, and ultimately back to a convenient port at New Spain.

After three days at sea Quirós became incapacitated due to migraine headaches. His absence would be a repeated theme during the entire voyage, and may account for his uneven leadership. He mustered his strength for important religious occasions, but was unavailable at key moments during the voyage, to his detriment. At one such moment, when his ships departed Espiritu Santo, Torres’ ship became separated from the other two, and was forced to make the homeward journey alone. Torres blamed Quirós for this mishap in his letter to King Philip III stating that the lead ship “sailed without notice, did not sail on the proper course, nor with good intention.” 51

An unpopular leader, during the voyage Quirós forbad swearing and gambling, and made long and moralizing speeches. Aggravated by his absence and misguided management priorities, the crew fought amongst themselves, gainsaid Quirós’ judgement.

and openly defied him at times. In his letter to the king, Torres criticized Quirós’ for his failure to punish insubordination. Even with these shortcomings as a leader, his voyage did not produce the horror story of the second Medaña voyage. He only recorded one death, that of the Father Commissary, Fray Martin Munilla, who produced his own account of the Quirós voyage.

In his famous eighth memorial, Quirós named twenty-two islands discovered during his voyage. Espiritu Santo formed the jewel in his crown, and was his Terra Australis. It is the present day island of Santo in the Vanuatu group. He called it an island on one occasion in the memorial, so one wonders if he actually knew that he landed on a relatively large island, or if he really believed it to be land of continental extent. In fairness, the sea level view of these islands, as Quirós approached them, can present an illusion of a continuous shoreline. But his belief sprang as much from a preexistent hope and dream rather than from survey. Torres recorded the same approach to Espiritu Santo differently: “In sight of the island and around it are many islands, very high and large, and to the southward one so large that we stood for it.”

During the actual voyage to Espiritu Santo, religious observance occurred nearly nonstop. Quirós named the islands in honor of saints, masses were conducted, the Latin hymn, Te Deum Laudamus rang out, and confessions were heard. The earlier voyage of

52. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, “Eight Memorial of Quirós ,” in Markham, The Voyages, 2:480.

Medaña recorded surprisingly few instances of public worship, but Quirós included constant references to religion, which indicates the level of importance that he placed upon it. The crescendo of religious observance occurred at the Bay of Saint Philip and Saint James (Big Bay) Espiritu Santo, in the nascent Spanish settlement of Vera Cruz. Quirós erected a church, conducted twenty-one masses, and founded the Knights of the Holy Ghost, a chivalric order patterned after the Knights of the Golden Spur, which Bartolome de Las Casas founded a century earlier. “I have come with authority from the Supreme Pontiff, Clement VIII, and by order of the King, Don Philip III, I, Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quirós, in the name of the most Holy Trinity, take possession of all the islands and lands that I have newly discovered, and desire to discover, as far as the South Pole.”

The Spanish explorers spent a month in paradise, June of 1606, on the island of Espiritu Santo. The audacious claims of ownership made by Quirós proved difficult to realize, and native resentment boiled over into violence when the Spanish began to sow the land and explore the interior of the island. The sailors felt the effects of a long sea voyage and unfamiliar surroundings, and many became sick. Quirós began to lose his grip on the men, which led to their disorganized flight from the island. The mark that the Spanish made on the island of Espiritu Santo would not be a lasting one. When the Cook

party anchored in the Bay of Saint Philip and Saint James in August of 1774, they could find no trace of the settlement of Vera Cruz.

Figure 3. The Medaña, Quiros and Torres Voyage Tracks

The World View of Quiros

Catholicism

Every part of Quiros life, as he recorded it, revolved around his Catholic faith. He embodied the very spirit of the Counter Reformation, desiring to out-compete the Protestant kingdoms for new land and souls. Prior to embarking on his 1605 voyage Quiros determined to make a pilgrimage from Seville to Rome for the year of the Great Jubilee in 1600. To finance his pilgrimage he sold personal items, donned pilgrim’s
clothing, and walked staff in hand to Valencia, where he boarded a ship for Italy.\textsuperscript{55} When in Rome he sought the blessing of Pope Clement VIII over his nascent voyage in a meeting arranged by his influential friend, the Duke of Sesa. Quirós received a special dispensation to cover those that might die unconfessed while at sea. Shrewdly, he also requested letters of recommendation from the Pope. For good measure, he also procured a set of blessed rosary beads and a piece of wood from the cross of Christ.

In another example of strategic reverence, on his return trip from Rome, Quirós paid his respects at the Convent of the Escorial in Madrid. He happened upon King Philip III while at the shrine. He carried a written memorial at the ready in order to petition the king for his voyage, and though he did not state it, he must have informed him of the Pope’s blessing that he received. Whatever transpired between them, The king agreed to see to the voyage preparations personally.

One cannot overstate the motivating role of religion in the life of Quirós. From the time of the second Medaña voyage, He carried this exalted sense of his own spiritual purpose. As Miriam Estensen writes, he had the “conviction that he had been singled out by God to bring Catholicism to Terra Australis Incognita.”\textsuperscript{56}

Beyond his Christian fervency, Quirós held particular loyalty to the Franciscan Order. Some historians have even described him as a “tertiary” of the Franciscan Order—a

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 163.
\textsuperscript{56} Estensen, \textit{Terra Australis Incognita}, 102.
title granted to lay persons demonstrating a proper striving for a Christlike existence.\textsuperscript{57}

In his book entitled \textit{Terra Australis–A Franciscan Quest}, Celsus Kelly boils down the Franciscan ethos to poverty, simplicity, and the sacred humanity of Christ, in the model of St. Francis (1182-1226).\textsuperscript{58} He also notes, in his introduction to the journal of Fray Martin Munilla, the prominence of the Franciscan order in every aspect of the Medaña and Quirós voyages.\textsuperscript{59} The Quirós voyage aimed to depart on the Feast of St. Francis, but was not able to sail for another month. Both Medaña and Quirós carried several Franciscan friars, and Quirós hand-picked those aboard his ship. Upon their departure, rather than appearing in uniform, Quirós and his officers wore the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis.\textsuperscript{60} And when Quirós arrived at Espiritu Santo, he claimed the lands in the name of the Catholic Church, and “in the name of my father, St. Francis.”\textsuperscript{61} He mentioned the King of Spain only as an afterthought.

Quirós’ loyalty to a mendicant religious order probably accounts for his initial reluctance to mention the wealth of Terra Australis. In a telling incident on Espiritu

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59. Celsus Kelly, \textit{The Terra Australis- A Franciscan Quest, 1948}. Kelly seeks to place the Medaña and Quirós voyages within the larger context of the Franciscan missionary thrust into the New World.

60. Ibid., 438.

61. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, “Narrative of the Voyage of Pedro Ferndinand de Quirós in 1606,” in Markham, \textit{The Voyages}, 1:250.
Santo his men urged him to “make tests to ascertain whether they contained the metal called gold, so acceptable in the eyes of men.”62 In More’s Utopia, gold served only to mark the ears of criminals, and Quirós followed More’s lead by describing gold as an almost alien substance. Given the legendary gold of the Biblical Solomon Islands, he knew that gold preoccupied the minds of his sponsors and shipmates. His religious sensibilities dictated his reply: “he had only come to discover lands and people; and that, as God had been pleased to show him what he sought, it would be neither just nor reasonable to risk the whole for the part.”63 In his desperation to secure a second voyage, in a memorial to King Philip III, he finally invoked the potential wealth of Terra Australis in the form of pearls, silver, and tribute.64

Beyond the Catholicism of Quirós, and even beyond his loyalty to the Franciscan Order, he held a particular millenarian world view. In “Faith, Fidelity, and Fantasy,” Miguel Luque and Carlos Mondragon note that Quirós’ Portuguese hometown of Evora featured robust and even radical sectors of the Franciscan order.65 A splinter group, known as Capucos, resided there, and practiced an emotional spiritual life that sought to emulate the life of Jesus.66 In their words Capucos “ were opposed to an emphasis on the

62. Ibid., 277.
63. Ibid., 277.
64. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, “Eight Memorial of Quirós,” in Markham, The Voyages, 2:490.
65. Luque and Mondragon, Faith, Fidelity and Fantasy, 139.
66. Ibid.
rational in religious instruction and nurtured a peculiar millenarian vision that anticipated Paradise on Earth.” Though Quirós does not reference this group by name, this assertion fits with his behavior, and with the vision he put forward of a paradisiacal Terra Australis.

**Quirós and Utopianism**

To lay the charge of utopianism at the feet of Quirós, it is first necessary to explore the definition of the word. The word *utopia* amounts to a clever play on the Latin words, as it can mean both “good place,” and “no place.” Counted among the golden books of the Renaissance utopian age, More crystallized the humanistic urge against absolute monarchies, an over-reaching church, societal injustice, and the uneven distribution of wealth. Though cryptic, More’s influence cannot be overlooked, as theists, deists, and atheists claim *Utopia* as a sacred text. Utopia also represents the rationalizing urge of the Renaissance, as the Utopians formed a better society than England, “with nothing save reason to guide them.”

Raphael Hythlodaeus, one of the speakers in More’s Socratic dialogue, like Quirós, hailed from Portugal, and sailed with Amerigo Vespucci. Hythlodaeus described the ideal agrarian island community, named after its conqueror, Utopus. Initially the isthmus of a larger landmass, the Utopians dug a channel to separate themselves, which

67. Ibid., 139.


69. Ibid., xvii.
yielded a crescent moon-shaped and defensible island nation. In a perhaps coincidental parallel, Quirós associated islands and island groups in the Pacific with larger landmasses, as if a mother continent had scattered nearby seeds. His eighth memorial lists twenty-two islands that he located, but the mother of all of these islets was Australia del Espíritu Santo. On the island of Utopia the points of the crescent moon bent toward one another to form a wide and sheltered harbor guarded by a treacherous strait. Curiously the island of Santo also features a wide, deep, and sheltered bay, less the treacherous strait. Even the landscape suggested a connection to Utopia.

_Utopia_ cataloged the many shortcomings of a monarchy, but Quirós avoided the subjects that might have harmed his cause with the King. He promoted the founding of a Christian agrarian community on Terra Australis, colorfully describing the food crops, fiber producing plants, fruits, nuts, etc. Like More, he depicted a self-contained, agricultural paradise: “It is noteworthy that these palm groves are like vineyards; yielding all the year round, not needing any manure, and thus requiring neither outlay of money nor time.”

70. Ibid., 57.

71. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, “Eight Memorial of Quirós,” in Markham, _The Voyages_, 2:480.
Like the Utopians, the people of Quirós’ Terra Australis did not esteem work too highly: “The natives are not to be looked upon as having our needs, tastes, and desires, nor our estimation of things; but as men who seek, with the least work possible to pass their lives, not to tire themselves about the rest of the things which tire us.” Quirós’ observations read non-judgementally, but are not entirely approving of the natives’ work.

72. Ibid., 482.
More would have applauded them for esteeming physical pleasure and eschewing the pursuit of wealth and luxury. Though More went farther than Quirós in his communitarianism, both men rejected the pursuit of wealth as a legitimate goal of one’s life.

In the forward to the 1964 Yale University Press edition of More’s *Utopia*, Edward Surtz noted that Utopia represented a pagan state that needed little adjustment to become a Christian one. With this observation, Surtz underlined one of the strongest ties between More and Quirós. Both envisioned nearly the same societal arrangement. Quirós found the natives of Terra Australis: “a decent people, clean, cheerful, and reasonable, and as grateful as we have found them...it will be very easy to pacify, indoctrinate, and to content them.” With but a little persuasion, the natives of Espiritu Santo would form Christian Utopia, in fulfillment of More’s vision.

*The Eighth Memorial of Quirós: Utopianism Distilled*

Addressed to King Philip III of Spain in 1609, Quirós’ eighth memorial qualifies as his most utopian missive. He penned this work after spending three frustrating years trying to gain another voyage. In a brilliant work of salesmanship, Quirós penned an embellished travel brochure: “I would remark that the lands I saw in 15° [south latitude] are better than Spain...and that others which were on the heights in front, should be an


earthly paradise.” Invoking the Arcadian imagery for which Renaissance explorers became famous, Quirós spared no superlative to describe Espiritu Santo:

At break of day and afterwards we found great harmony, caused by millions of different sorts of birds...We smelt many odors of flowers like orange flowers, from which I judged that the climate is mild, and that Nature maintains her order...The temperature and salubrity of the air is seen...none fell ill during a time of working, sweating, and being wet through. I have not seen sand deserts, nor any kind of thistles, nor thorny trees, nor trees with roots above ground, nor mangroves, nor places liable to be flooded, nor swamps, nor snow on the high mountains, nor crocodiles in the rivers, nor poisonous reptiles in the woods, nor the ants that are very harmful in houses, nor chiggers, nor mosquitos.76

Quirós correctly measured the latitude of Santo, but in many other respects, he completely misjudged and misrepresented the land. Today we know that crocodiles, mosquitos, chiggers, and poisonous snakes do indeed live on Santo. Had Quirós made a careful survey of the land, he would have found all of the above drawbacks. Instead he adhered to the images that lived in his best imagination, of an idyllic garden: perhaps the rediscovered Garden of Eden.

*The Geography of Quirós*

We do not know what charts Quirós carried on his voyage, but he certainly knew

75. Ibid., 478.

76. Ibid., 484-5.
of the Gerardus Mercator and Abraham Ortelius world maps. Both maps predated his voyage and circulated widely in Europe. In his presentation to the men of science at Rome, Quirós outlined Terra Australis in keeping with these maps: “All were persuaded, by proofs and reasonings he submitted to them, that there could not fail to be either a continental land or a number of islands from the Strait of Magellan to New Guinea and Java and the other islands of that great archipelago.”\(^{77}\)

Rather than clarifying the globe, Quirós’ writings added to Renaissance legend and lore. He certainly embellished his discoveries, but it is not known how far his reporting departed his own beliefs. In his eighth memorial, written in 1609, he wrote of Terra Australis: “Its length is as much as all Europe and Asia Minor as far as the Caspian and Persia, with all the islands of the Mediterranean and the ocean which encompasses, including the two islands of England and Ireland. That hidden part is one-fourth of the world.”\(^{78}\) As with the absence of crocodiles and mosquitos on Santo, his geography fell far short of reality. Certainly the twenty two islands named in his eighth memorial did not constitute land of continental extent.

Luis Vaes de Torres, Quirós’ second-in-command, wrote an account of the return voyage from Santo that does not square with Quirós in even simple respects. He matter-

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of-factly referred to “this island” of Espiritu Santo.\textsuperscript{79} When Torres learned that it was an island, and not a very large one at that, is not known. Possibly he needed to gain some distance from it to ascertain its extent. After Quirós and Torres became separated, Torres sailed to Spain via the East Indies, through the now famous Torres Strait, and Quirós returned to New Spain via the Pacific Ocean. Torres reported “an infinity of islands to the southward, and very large...for I doubt if in ten years could be examined the coasts of the islands descried [sic].”\textsuperscript{80} In this respect the accounts of both men agreed, even though each man witnessed a different group of islands. Much land lay in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, long-settled by the natives that lived there, but not yet claimed by a European nation.

\textit{Quirós and Navigation}

Quirós’ vision of Terra Australis conformed to an idealized Renaissance view, and his geographical knowledge was imbued by the uncertainty of his day. Like every other navigator, he faced the limitations of seventeenth century instruments. Latitude could be determined within reasonable limits, but longitudinal certainty would elude navigators until the time of Captain Cook, and amounted to what J.C. Beaglehole described as a “seemingly insoluble problem.”\textsuperscript{81} The Spanish employed the sandglass to

\textsuperscript{79} Luis Vaez de Torres, “A Letter from Luis Vaez de Torres to His Majesty,” in Markham, \textit{The Voyages}, 2:463.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 464-5.

estimate the distance traveled on a given bearing. The variables of wind speed, visibility, and the condition of the sea, made accuracy an impossibility, and added danger to an already hazardous undertaking. These vagaries likely doomed Medaña’s ship, the *Santa Isabel*, which became lost during the search for the Solomon islands on the second voyage. The ships groped blindly in the vast reaches of the Pacific, failed to rendezvous, and the *Santa Isabel* appears from recent archeological evidence to have wrecked on Pamau Island.

Quirós recorded the latitude of Big Bay, Espirtu Santo as 15 degrees, 10' south—very close to the actual latitude of the river mouths at the apex of Big Bay. He recorded his position as seventeen hundred leagues west of Callao. This estimate put him in error by 1720 miles—a stupendous miscalculation by any measure, but in keeping with the crude methodology of the day. Beaglehole notes that trans-Pacific voyages routinely underestimated distances by up two thousand miles. The preconception of a much smaller Pacific Ocean may also have colored these estimates.

The religious beliefs of Quirós allowed for the direct intervention of God in matters of navigation. A violent northwest wind threatened to throw them off course on


83. Ibid., 72.

84. Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, “Narrative of the Voyage of Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós in 1606,” in Markham, *The Voyages*, 1:263. In *Australia del Espiritu Santo*, Celsus Kelly credits Quirós with an estimate of 2000 leagues between Callao and Big Bay. This figure would render him in error by 670 miles—still a vast stretch of ocean.

their journey from Taumaco to Espiritu Santo. When asked a new bearing to compensate for the wind, Quirós simply said “Put the ship’s heads where they like, for God will guide them as may be right.” Shortly after Quirós gave these orders, they cited a high volcanic island to which they gave the name San Marcos, in honor of the saint being venerated on that day. San Marcos, and every other island that they encountered formed a link in the divine chain which led them to their ultimate destination of Terra Australis Incognita.

**The Impact of Quirós**

Pedro Fernandez de Quirós sailed deep into the Pacific Ocean on two occasions. This in itself was no mean feat, but unremarkable in the long catalogue of Pacific voyages. Names like Magellan, Drake, and Cook more swiftly spring to mind in the honor roll of navigators. Quirós’ name would likely be forgotten had he not been his own best advocate. While a bonafide Renaissance man of science, Quirós’ opportunistic salesmanship, Counter-Reformational Catholic zeal, and proximity to Church and State power enabled him to pursue his vision. And surprisingly, the idea of a shining religious utopia on a Pacific island paradise inspired men for two centuries. This inspiration infused the utopian literature of the seventeenth century, and found an eighteenth century advocate among the British Royal Society--Alexander Dalrymple. Though men such as Dalrymple did not adhere to Quirós’ particular vision, they longed for what he had seen, or what he claimed to have seen, Terra Australis Incognita.

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CHAPTER 4

_Terra Australis in Seventeenth-Century Fiction_

Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós ardently promoted the South Sea paradise of _Terra Australis_ until his death in 1615. His advocacy motivated explorers to continue searching for nearly two more centuries, and his ideal continent entered the literary record through seventeenth-century travel fiction. Men that set their stories in Terra Australis offered a less optimistic perspective on the earthly paradise, however. As Europeans gained greater ability to separate geographical fact from fiction, they also surrendered some of the intellectual territory occupied by imaginary lands.

Given that one-hundred-and-seventy years lay between Quirós and Cook, to jump directly from one to the other would be to overlook intervening events that shaped the European world view. To partly fill this gap, I will consider four widely-circulated works, among which were Richard Brome’s 1640 play _The Antipodes_, and three imaginary shipwreck survivor accounts from Terra Australis: Henry Neville’s _Isle of the Pines_, Denis Veiras’ _The History of the Sevarambians_, and Gabriel de Foigny’s _Terra Australis Incognita_. These works span the forty years from 1636 to 1676, and as their dissemination took some time, they spilled into the eighteenth century.

Terra Australis served different ends in each work, with recurrent themes shared among them. The influence of More and Quirós run like brightly-colored threads through the entire fabric. More gave the world an “other,” and better place than Europe, and the best state of a commonwealth, and from this paradigmatic ideal, one might also infer the opposite—a dystopia. And though the Shangri-la of Quirós became the setting for works
of Austral fiction, his sensibilities faded, and many controversial ideas invaded his paradise. Fault could be found in any utopia, and travel on the road toward Enlightenment required the setting aside of More and Quirós.

The remoteness of the South Sea lands allowed men of letters to gain distance between themselves and their dangerous ideas; a necessary prerequisite in a time of government censorship. A frank discussion of the sexual mores of Europe could be more easily conducted using the vehicle of an exotic location, for example. All of the works to be examined, with the exception of *The Antipodes*, claimed to be shipwreck survivor accounts. This claim lent an air of authenticity, and countered the fantastic elements contained in these stories. These accounts also corroborated the existence of Terra Australis, as each provided a rough location. Though the size of the landmass shrank following Quirós, these accounts fueled the popular belief in an exotic and extensive landmass in the South Seas.

*The Antipodes*

Inspired by the wild and fictitious Middle Age *Travelers Tales* of Sir John Mandeville, Richard Brome wrote *The Antipodes* to provide comic relief to the plague-ravaged citizens of London. Brome gained most of his comedic mileage by exploring the ridiculous possibilities afforded by an upside down world. Brome used the play to

87. All theaters in London were closed, due to a plague outbreak, from May of 1636 to October of 1637. Brome wrote the Antipodes under a 1636 contract with the Cockpit Theater in London.

lampoon the excesses of his age: “mannerisms, prejudices, changing attitudes, and fears present in the daily lives of Londoners.” Perhaps a reaction to his own personal experience, he especially targeted the excesses of Puritanism. For during the Commonwealth Puritans briefly closed the same London theaters where Brome earned his living.

*The Antipodes* represented the anti-London: “that which is farthest distant, foot to foot against our region,” In keeping with the anti-London “Everything goes contrary to our manners; wives rule their husbands; servants govern their masters; old men go to school again...maids do woo the bachelor, and tis most probable, the wives lie uppermost.

The main character, Peregrine, of the “Joyless family,” suffers Mandevillian hallucinations, believing himself to have traveled to the Antipodes. David Fausett, in “Writing the New World,” describes the Antipodes as “dramatic psychotherapy.” Peregrine, personifies an uprootedness resulting from a century and a half of

89. Ibid., xi.

90. Ibid., xi-xii.

91. Ibid., 29.

92. Ibid. 29-31.

93. The Joyless serves as a metaphor for the residents of London at this time, per the introduction to the University of Nebraska edition of the play.

Peregrinations to exotic places. His obsession with life south of the equator, represents the loss of psychic and moral equilibrium.

Peregrine’s mind swirls with wonderful and grotesque Antipodean images “of monsters, pygmies, and giants, apes, elephants, griffons, and crocodiles, men upon women, and women upon men, the strangest doings.” With regard to the people, he directly invokes Mandeville: “Are they not such as Mandeville writes of, without heads or necks, having their eyes placed on their shoulders, and the mouths amidst their breasts?” Per David Fausett, the images of human-like monsters living in the southern hemisphere would condition the later attitudes of Westerners toward the people they would encounter in the South Pacific, who were different from themselves.

Peregrine’s obsession with the Antipodes has eclipsed normal living, including marital relations with his wife, as she pines to be given a child. Here the dramatic psychotherapy comes into play. The other characters convince Peregrine that he has arrived in the Antipodes after a medically-induced sleep of several months. They present a dramatization—a play within a play, as in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. The players succeed in snapping Peregrine back to reality north of the equator, and also lead him back to his

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96. Ibid., 16.
97. Ibid., 29.
wife’s bed by pretending that she is an exotic creature from another land. All is well that ends well, one might say.

*The Antipodes* provides a small window into European belief about the southern continent at the time of the English Civil War. Initially it seems to reaffirm far-fetched accounts of the South Seas, but in reality Brome lampooned Middle Age notions of the South Seas. With its reference to Mandeville, and its proximity to the black plague, *The Antipodes* touches the Middle Ages. But by making light of prejudice and superstition it also faces forward toward the Enlightenment, and begins to embrace what David Fausett describes as the “abstractive thought” of the Enlightenment. Europeans wanted to know what was really to be found in the South Seas, and they would no longer settle for mere travelers’ tales.

*The Isle of the Pines: Terra Australis as Political Theory*

In addition to defining the ideal state of the commonwealth, *Utopia* catalogued the many ills of European monarchies, which included war-mongering princes, the machinations of self-interested courtiers, and the indolence and arrogance of kings. Henry Neville’s 1667 *Isle of the Pines*, highlighted additional threats to the ship of state, and became the most elaborate travel hoax ever perpetrated, circulating in Europe until the middle eighteenth century. During this period the European reading public


devoured travel accounts, and Neville’s work spread like wildfire, being translated into four additional languages within two years, and was even incorporated into voyage collections.\textsuperscript{102} Neville placed Terra Australis (the Isle of the Pines) at 76° east longitude, and 20° south latitude, in the Indian Ocean rather than South Pacific.\textsuperscript{103} In the footsteps of More, he depicted the island of Terra Australis rather than the massive continent of the Ortelius map.

The introduction to Neville’s work by Worthington Chauncy Ford provides a small biography of the man, here summarized. Born to a noble family in 1620, educated at Norton College, he served in parliament, and in Cromwell’s Council of State during the protectorate. He became caught between competing political ideologies—suspicious of Cromwell’s power grab, but no friend to the restored Charles II. His penchant for political theory inspired \textit{The Isle of the Pines}, which appeared in 1668. Thomas Hobbes admired his 1681 “Discourses Concerning Government,” but others reckoned Neville “a man of good parts, yet of a fractious and turbulent spirit.”\textsuperscript{104} He eventually withdrew from public life, all the while reading and writing about matters political.

Of all the works to be considered, the \textit{Isle of the Pines} is undoubtedly the most salacious, as it explores sexuality beyond the mores overtly sanctioned by Christian Europe, including polygamy, and also described violent confrontations among the islanders. At the time of Neville’s writing, post-Civil War Britain tilted toward the

\textsuperscript{102} Henry Neville, \textit{The Isle of the Pines} (New York: Bibliobazaar, 2008), 30.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 49.n

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 42.
legalization of polygamy in an effort to increase population. Two bills authorizing the practice were presented to Parliament in 1658 and again in 1675, with Neville a sitting member of parliament in the first instance.\textsuperscript{105} A. Owen Aldridge hints at Neville’s support of polygamy as his inspiration for writing this work.\textsuperscript{106} This interpretation strains credulity, as polygamy created most of the problems that arose on the Isle of the Pines. Others interpret Neville’s work as a satire in which he chose a controversial issue of the day, and made light of it by taking it to its logical extreme. Neville’s work could also be a sincere condemnation of polygamy, but given his ambiguity, the reader must decide upon the moral of his story.

In a brilliant work of subterfuge, Neville credited the Dutch captain, Cornelius Van Sloetten, for recording the account of William Prince of the Pines, whom he had rescued from an island hell. Van Sloetten swore to the veracity of his account, “to prevent false copies from being spread.”\textsuperscript{107} He also included the details of the return voyage from Terra Australis, including elaborate descriptions of the natives encountered during the journey.

The story commences with the main character, George Pine, a book keeper aboard an East Indian ship, surviving a shipwreck and taking refuge on the island of Terra Australis. He and the other survivors find the island to be “a paradise,” with abundant

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 466.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 464.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 85.
meat sources, fresh water, and pleasant weather. Pine quickly casts off his Christian morality, openly defiling the women, including the African slave girl from the ship. He impregnates them all, producing a prodigious offspring. When his children begin to interbreed, they swiftly overpopulate the island.

After the death of George Pine, his son William begins a chaotic rule: “They fell to whoredom, incests, and adulteries.” Those seeking to abstain from the dark festivities are raped in punishment. Indicative of the racism of the time, the African slave’s second son leads the evil doers before receiving a death sentence for his crimes. Another son of the slave woman causes an insurrection and is also executed. These unrests, and the prevailing decadence, force the islanders to develop a strict code of law.

In reading this work, at first blush, one wonders if Neville intended it as an elaborate joke rather than an elaborate hoax. Given the high stakes politics at play during his life, and his associations with the English Commonwealth, he likely had an higher purpose. Not only did his work repudiate the Utopianism of More and Quirós, it showed a progression from utopia to dystopia, which mirrored the actual experience of the Spanish on the island of Espiritu Santo.

Like More’s perfectly circular cornucopia, the Isle of the Pines initially provides all that its people need. But living in a state of nature, abundantly provided for, in a climate of sexual permissiveness, did not paradise make. Free love led to license, and fueled by the vice of overpopulation, free society ended in anarchy. Neville’s progression

108. Ibid., 69.

109. Ibid., 74.
also echoes Hobbes’s *Leviathan*. In the absence of muscular government, humankind would live in “continual fear and danger of violent death,” and in a “state of war--every man against every man.”\(^{110}\) Neville preached a cryptic message, but one counter to that of eighteenth-century philosophes such as Rousseau and Bougainville, who envisioned a state of nature as the best state of humanity.

*The History of the Sevarambians*

Of all the Austral fiction considered, the *History of the Sevarambians* is the longest and most complex. Described as part *Utopia* and part *Gulliver’s Travels*, Denis Veiras, or a group of authors, penned this novel in French, which first appeared in English in about 1675. Widely read in Europe, Immanuel Kant mentioned this work in the same breath with Plato’s *Atlantis*.\(^{111}\) Veiras apparently hailed from the Huguenots, but little is known of him, including the correct rendering of his name.\(^{112}\) His novel can be described as cryptic on many levels, as he introduced his name into the story in the form of anagrams: Sevarias as the founding father of Sevarambia, for example.\(^{113}\) Veiras placed Terra Australis one hundred leagues south of the Strait of Magellan—sufficiently distant from Europe as to be unverifiable.

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112. Some translations render it “Veiras,” and some “Vairasse,” or even “Vairraise.”

As in Neville’s *Isle of the Pines*, Veiras’ Captain Siden crashed on the shores of Terra Australis in 1655. In another deft deception, Veiras used the *Golden Dragon*—the name of an actual Dutch East India ship gone missing en route to Batavia. Though this work ultimately becomes dystopian, it first hearkens back to Quirós by appropriating the Utopian imagery of his eighth memorial: “The clearness of the river water, the sweet harmony of evening birds, the pleasant noise of the crystal streams...made such angelic music, that we imagined ourselves in paradise.” Veiras also touches Thomas More in describing the agricultural cornucopia of Sevarambia: “They have usually in their fields every year four crops of corn, because the ground wants neither heat nor humidity to bring forth, and is never parched with the drought of Summer...they know no difference between Summer and Winter.” The Island offers abundant fresh water, copious fish, and a serene ocean. In the midst of the beauty and fertility, tigers and crocodiles roam the island, and menace Captain Siden and his men. Metaphors for the threats to societal tranquility, they begin to erode the image of a proverbial island paradise.

In addition to threats from without, the colony of Sidenberge faced internal threats. The imbalance between men and women created immediate problems. Sidenberge contained 74 female residents, many of whom had been prostitutes bound for Batavia. The men quarreled over these women, and one man stabbed and killed another. Veiras used the problem of gender imbalance to propose a workable but controversial

114. Ibid., ix.

115. Ibid., 66.

116. Ibid., 59.
remedy. Captain Siden ruled that officers would each have one woman, and the other
men were entitled to the company of a woman every fifth night. This plan reduced the
total number of men that each woman would be required to service—a rational but
controversial remedy.  \(^{117}\)

A foraging party sent by Siden shortly encountered the native Sevarambians, who
bore a striking resemblance to Europeans, as they possessed navigational and military
prowess, and spoke Spanish, French and Dutch. They lead Siden and a few of his men up
river to the royal city of Sevarinde. The exalted lawgiver, Sevarias, upon founding the
city, exiled all criminals, the deformed, and morally defective persons from Sevarambia
to the city of Sporumbe, making a tidy work of the social problems there.  \(^{118}\) Through
some inexplicable magic, the waters of Sevarinde “cleanseth not only the filth of the
body, but it hath that influence upon the humors of men.” \(^{119}\) Sinners bear the marks of
their wickedness in the form of boils and scabs: “for this cause the inhabitants of
Sevarambia abominate the least sign of all lasciviousness.” \(^{120}\)

Veiras toys with the interface between the spiritual and physical worlds. Those
living in the city of Sevarinde are living in the transported earthly paradise, carried by
angels and planted on Terra Australis. The founder and lawgiver Sevarias intercedes in
death between the Sevarambians and the Glorious Being. The Sevarambians have

\(^{117}\) Ibid., 29.
\(^{118}\) Defectives are collectively called Spora by the Sevarambians.
\(^{119}\) Ibid., 63.
\(^{120}\) Ibid., 60.
harnessed the lost European art of the talisman to drive all evil spirits from their island. Veiras also employs biblical imagery to describe the otherworldly people that enrapture Siden and his men on their journey to Sevarinde.

Not surprising for a Huguenot, the subject of religious tolerance takes a central position in this novel. By European standards of the day, the Sevarambians are idolaters, worshiping the Sun as the representation of the perfect being. The sun represents the one true God, who is known as the Glorious Being, similar to a Platonist world view. As good Christians, Siden’s people refrain from participating in public sun worship, and are criticized for their intolerance. Veiras’ dialogue between Captain Siden and the Sevarambians underlines European religious excesses: “there is no jarring, disputations, and dissensions, as amongst you in Europe, but a blessed concord and agreement.”

_The History of the Sevarambians_ rationalized religion and foreshadowed the Enlightenment esteem of reason. “Reason teacheth to worship and praise him [the Glorious Being] for his goodness and innumerable mercies.” The “Rules of Reason” preclude drunkenness, gluttony, quarreling, murders, and villanies, which do not occur on a grand scale among the Sevarambians. Those that transgress reason are swiftly exiled to the outer colonies.

121. Ibid., 89.
122. Ibid., 88.
123. Ibid., 89.
124. Ibid.
The dystopian elements that emerge from *The History of the Sevarambians* are the intolerance of human frailty, weakness, and deformity, which marked a sharp turn away from Christian humanism. Additionally, in such a rigid society the individual lost freedom and autonomy, becoming a small cog in a large machine. In this respect, though the author or authors could not have known it, the Sevarambian society foreshadowed the authoritarian governments that later arose in Europe.

*The Southern Land Known*

The colorful and tortured Frenchman, Gabriel de Foigny, penned the last of the imaginary voyages inspired by Quirós to be considered in this essay. His 1676 work bore the title *La Terre Australe Connue*, and appeared by 1693 in English as *The Southern Land Known*, playing off the name “*Terra Australis Incognita.*” Foigny offered a rough southern latitude of the thirty-fifth parallel, but was unspecific with regard to longitude. From Saduer’s account (Foigny’s main character), one could gather that Terra Australis lay an unspecified distance east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. In his introduction to Foigny’s work, David Fausett provides an excellent biographical summary of Foigny, as does J. Max Patrick in “A Consideration of La Terre Australe Connue by Gabriel de Foigny.” This essay borrows from both sources.

Foigny’s life story provides the key to unlocking the metaphors he used in his novel. A Franciscan monk, Foigny fell from the grace of the Catholic church, and was


126. Ibid., 31-2.
defrocked for his licentiousness. He fled Catholic France for Geneva, briefly renouncing his Catholicism before the Consistatory—Calvin’s moral police force in the city. He fared no better there, breaking his marriage contract, and debauching his female servant. Driven out of Geneva, he wandered between Switzerland and Germany, teaching and writing theology. He continued in his incontinence, being accused of drunkenly vomiting on a communion table. His continual hounding by church and state authorities inspired Foigny to write his only significant work of literature, *The Southern Land Known*. In keeping with his tragic life, his book was likely published only posthumously.

Like Veiras, Foigny went to elaborate lengths to hide the source of the novel, claiming that he had obtained the account of James Saduer, the main character in his novel, from a French bookseller. The Venerable Company of Geneva, a fellowship of Calvinist clergy, condemned the work for its falsehoods and impieties, but never actually banned the book. Foigny described Terra Australis as a vast continent inhabited by hermaphroditic people that resembled Europeans.

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127. Ibid., xviii.
128. Ibid., xix.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid., xxiii.
131. Ibid., xxi.
132. Ibid., xxiv.
The Southern Land Known possesses the same breathless exuberance of Quirós. The unfortunate James Sadeur survives multiple shipwrecks by clinging to a plank, said by David Fausett to parody his crucifixion. He lands on Terra Australis to encounter a higher race of beings. Sadeur’s hermaphroditism marked him as an anomaly in his own land, but it saves his life in Terra Australis because the Australians are also hermaphroditic. Even more, their reproduction is self-induced and self-contained, and they are so innocent of it as to not know when and how it occurs. Not requiring a mate to reproduce elevates the Australians above the simple beasts, including the rest of humankind. The Australians abhor the untidiness of sexual activity. In an obvious parallel to Foigny’s life, Sadeur becomes sexually involved with a female refugee on the island, nearly receiving a death sentence from the islanders.

Foigny’s work employs metaphor, like the previous works mentioned, to thwart the censorship that he experienced during his life. His work strikes back at the political and religious absolutism of centralized European states. James Sadeur’s hermaphroditism may describe Foigny’s religious syncretism acquired during his torturous spiritual journey. Foigny advocated for universal harmony and communitarianism, and has been called a populizer of rationalism. Predictably, analysts of Foigny identify him as a forerunner of Karl Marx.

133. Ibid., xxxiv

Whatever Foigny actually believed about the southern continent, he used it to portray remoteness and ideological division. He ultimately produced a dystopian work that underscored problems in European society. Through Sadeur’s journey to Terra Australis, Foigny indicated that he (humankind) was unfitted by nature for life in either Europe or utopia. And though a libertine in life, Foigny ultimately reclaimed his Catholicism, acknowledging humankind’s ultimate need for redemption. Utopia, it seems, will not be found in this world, but will have to await the next.

Chapter Summary

During the seventeenth century the European psyche still needed the psychological safety valve of Terra Australis, as popularized by Quirós in the early seventeenth century. This landmass appeared in various forms in the travel fiction of the seventeenth century. In some cases the massive continent of the Ortelius map shrank to the size of a garden isle like Utopia. This island or continent lay at an unspecified location in the Indian or Pacific Ocean, and though a beautiful land, Terra Australis suffered some of the intolerance and repression of European monarchies. In the effort to create an ideal society, the rights of the individual were sacrificed to the larger purpose of the state, and human frailty and weakness demanded a quarantine. The fictional journeys made to Terra Australis sought the boundary between utopia and dystopia, and inadvertently foreshadowed the repressive governments that would emerge in Europe. Perhaps due to South Sea explorer accounts, human sexuality took center stage in Austral fiction, as the intellectual vanguard questioned the mores of Europe. In the end, these

135. Ibid., 742.
men of letters projected their ideas onto a landmass that did not exist, though they did not yet know it.
CHAPTER 5

Seventeenth-Century Voyages in Search of Terra Australis

In addition to infusing travel fiction with his images of an earthly paradise, Pedro
Ferdinand de Quirós also inspired seventeenth-century navigators to continue searching
for another continent in the South Seas. Though his shipmates disputed the truthfulness
of his voyage account, and did not embrace his idealized geography, it would take nearly
two centuries for his glowing imagery to fade. Terra Australis would live until European
explorers left no more room on the earth, and philosophy allowed no more room in the
mind for fictional lands. This march from the fictive to the literal would require the
entire seventeenth century, and most of the eighteenth century as well.

During the one hundred and seventy years between Quirós and Cook, many
European voyages sailed in the South Seas, and a few bear particular mention, as they
diminished the area in which Terra Australis might lay. The Dutch navigator Abel
Jansoon Tasman sailed past the Vanuatu island group on his 1642 voyage, but did not
land, realizing that these islands could not be conflated into the southern continent.
In the waning years of the seventeenth century the English explorer William Dampier, the
so-called “Pirate of Exquisite Mind,” made two voyages, twice landing at Australia.136
The meager wealth and underdeveloped civilization that Dampier found there
disappointed him greatly. Another continent beckoned, if only it could be found.

136. Diana and Michael Preston, A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: Explorer, Naturalist,
and Buccaneer: The Life of William Dampier (New York: Walker & Co., 2004). This
biography is written in the form of popular history, and underlines Dampier’s brilliance
and quasi-scientific work in measuring wind, and illustrating and collecting plant and
animal specimens from the South Seas.
Edmond Halley, the famous mathematician and astronomer, sailed twice into the South
Atlantic in the late seventeenth century, with specific scientific aims, and the secondary
aim of discovering southern lands. Halley blazed a trail for men of science who would
follow him, most notably Captain Cook. The Royal Society and Admiralty co-sponsored
both men, and both men practiced empirical science.

Prior to the seventeenth century, beyond their imperial aims, state-sponsored
voyages sought the conversion of native peoples to Christianity. These sensibilities went
hand-in-hand with Classical natural philosophy, Renaissance utopianism, and Medieval
geography. Seventeenth-century commercial entities, such as the Dutch East India
Company, arose at about the midpoint of the Age of Exploration, and mark a trend away
from state-sponsored missionary voyages. Commercial efficiency demanded the best
available geography and navigation, but the need to increase scientific knowledge
happened sporadically as it served commerce. The advent of scientific voyages began
with the founding of the Royal Society in 1660, and the empirical emphasis of these
voyages quickened the march of Europe toward the Enlightenment.

*The Dutch Quest for Terra Australis*

Until the Dutch commercial empire emerged during the early seventeenth century,
Spain controlled the Pacific Ocean. The annexation of Portugal by Spain in 1580 united
the maritime power of the Iberian peninsula, and created what Oskar Spate famously
described as “The Spanish Lake,” in his volume by this title. 137 Spain’s power and

137. Oskar Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,
1979)
influence waned with the death of King Philip II in 1598, and faded with the voyage of
Quirós, and the indifferent rule of Philip III. Though war between Holland and Spain
would continue for more than a half century, the Spanish yoke fell off, allowing the
Dutch to dominate the oceans after 1600, with the British nipping at their heels.

To secure their commercial hegemony, the Dutch founded the East India
Company (DEIC) in 1602, and controlled maritime commerce in the Pacific and Indian
Oceans from the Cape of Good Hope to Magellan’s strait. J.H. Plumb captured the Dutch
Zeitgeist with the phrase “trade and not a crusade,” in his introduction to C.R. Boxer’s
The Dutch Seaborne Empire.138 The DEIC paid homage to famous European discoverers
that brought “untold blind heathens...to the salutary light of the Christian religion,” but
this motivation lived mostly in the past.139 In the Hakluyt Society volume entitled Early
Voyages to Terra Australis, R.H. Major notes Dutch ambivalence for discovery beyond
where they could monopolize trade, and a “general character of narrowness” associated
with the commercial spirit of the seventeenth century.140 This narrowness included a
secrecy regarding South Sea geography, and the destruction of spice supplies to command
a better market price.141

139. Andrew Sharp, The Voyages of Abel Jansoon Tasman (Oxford: At the Clarendon
140. Richard H. Major, Early Voyages to Terra Australis, Now Called Australia,
Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, no. 25 (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society,
1859), viii.
141. Ibid.
The DEIC used its commercial muscle to deploy ships of discovery into the South Seas, sponsoring the voyage of Willem Janszoon in 1605, the first European known to have landed on the Australian continent, and also the voyages of Abel Jansoon Tasman in 1642 and 1644. Given that Australia lay directly on their path from the Cape of Good Hope to the East Indies, the DEIC developed a fair outline of the island continent, save for the reef-strewn eastern coast.

Tasman’s first voyage nearly circumnavigated Australia, finding Van Dieman’s Land (later Tasmania), Fiji, Tonga, and New Zealand. His second voyage sought to determine if Australia and New Guinea were connected, but adverse winds blocked his attempt. Tasman delineated the west and southwestern coasts of New Guinea, and established the continuity of the northwestern coast of Australia, south to about twenty-two degrees.\(^\text{142}\) Tasman’s voyages, reflective of DEIC secrecy, left little written record. No account of his second voyage survives, but following his voyage, maps of the areas that he traveled to reflected his discoveries.

Tasman’s 1642 orders read like King Philip III’s orders to Quirós, and something like the Admiralty orders that Cook carried a century after Tasman: “to discover the remaining unknown part of the globe (that situated in the south, and probably almost as large, as is the old or new world).”\(^\text{143}\) This area would likely contain “many attractive and fruitful lands...many inhabited places in the pleasant climate and attractive sky...many

\(^{142}\) Ibid., xciv.

rich mines, and other treasures,” as one might find in the northern hemisphere.\textsuperscript{144} Despite his proximity to Espiritu Santo during his voyages, Tasman looked outside the wake of Quirós for \textit{Terra Australis}.\textsuperscript{145} The Dutch projected that the new continent lay in a latitude between fifteen and forty degrees south of the equator. They understood that anything south of forty degrees, given its frigid climes, might not be worth the finding.

With regard to navigation and cartography, the Dutch achieved a greater degree of precision than Quirós did. Andrew Sharp notes many errors in Tasman’s recorded locations, yet nearly every log entry opens with his coordinates.\textsuperscript{146} Even if he failed to pinpoint his exact position, he placed a high priority on knowing it. The large margins of error noted in Quirós’ coordinates could not be tolerated by the Dutch commercial machine.

\begin{flushright}
144. Ibid., 31.
145. Ibid, 74.
146. Ibid., 76n.
\end{flushright}
Figure 5. The Voyages of Abel Tasman

Figure 6. 1663 M. Thevenot Map of Australia and Terra Australis
William Dampier

Diana and Michael Preston deem William Dampier the most significant British Maritime explorer in the 200 years between Francis Drake and James Cook. He straddled the periods between unhindered plunder in the name of the English crown, and the high-minded observation of the natural world in the service of science. An enigmatic figure, on the one hand he plundered, and on the other he produced detailed drawings of birds and fish, and collected plant samples from Australia. He inspired later naturalists such as Joseph Banks, and set a standard of navigational prowess that foreshadowed the brilliance of James Cook, as he circumnavigated the globe three times. His colorful 1697, *A New Voyage Round the World*, also inspired Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, and Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*.

Though held at arms length by the religious men of the Royal Society, Dampier embraced their ethos of promoting knowledge in service of humankind at large. He also drafted the authoritative wind map of the Pacific Ocean, and presented his findings at the Royal Society meeting of 10 March 1697, with Edmund Halley in attendance. In these respects Dampier fits with the philosophical shift in Britain following the Restoration, which Preston describes as a move from inward and backward, to forward and outward-looking.

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148. Ibid., 232.

149. Ibid., 5.
Dampier made two voyages in search of Terra Australis, one of which was sponsored by the Admiralty. He found Australia (New Holland) during his first voyage of 1688, expressed his confusion as to where he was, and added some more to the map of the South Seas. He wrote “It is not yet determined whether it is an island or a main continent, but I am certain that it joins neither Asia, Africa nor America.”\textsuperscript{150} Later, in his 1697, \textit{A New Voyage Round the World}, Dampier included Australia as “a part of Terra Australis Incognita, the vast tract...which bounds the South Sea.”\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{150} William Dampier, \textit{A New Voyage Round the World} (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1937), Project Gutenberg Ebook # 0500461h, Chapter 16.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., Chapter 13.
Dampier rejected Australia and New Guinea out-of-hand because what he found there clashed with his vision of a south sea paradise. In his 1699, *A New Voyage Round the World*, Dampier credited the Aborigines with the “most unpleasant looks and the worst features of any people that I ever saw.” Their lack of acquisitiveness for his trading trinkets also frustrated him. In the end he deemed them the “miserablest people in the world.”

The Cornelius Witsen account of a 1678 Dutch voyage to New Guinea produced an even more withering account of the natives than Dampier. The Dutch expressed horror at the consummation of native oaths by the sucking of blood from arm wounds, and noted a “certain tint of red” gleaming in their native eyes, indicating a “bloodthirsty nature.” The charcoal face makeup on the women made them appear, “more like devils incarnate than human creatures,” which led to the conclusion that New Guineans were “more like wild beasts than reasonable human beings.”

When added to the Arcadian imagery of Quirós, the Dutch images of New Guinea fit the bi-polar European vision described by William Eisler, which was both

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155. Ibid., 92.
Classical and Arcadian, and wanton and savage. If one rejects Eisler’s thesis, the alternative may be less optimistic, as one might conclude that, within a few decades of Quirós, the dominant sea power of Europe traded religious motivations for commercial ones, and no longer viewed natives through the lens of Christian humanism. These controversial areas are open to interpretation, but one can state emphatically that seventeenth-century Europe improved upon the sciences of navigation and cartography. Along the way, it appears that they lost the mystique and romance of Quirós, and his shining vision for a New Jerusalem.

The Royal Society

The restoration of Charles II in England, following a brutal civil war, marked an important transition in the European world view. The Restoration closely followed the scientific revolution, and marked a period of greater freedom of thought and expression. In this spirit, Charles II gave official recognition to a group of learned men that met to discuss the experimental philosophy of Francis Bacon, an early advocate of the scientific method. The Royal Society, as it came to be known, adopted the motto “Nullius in verba,” in 1663, which roughly translates as “Take nobody’s word for it.” The Royal society opposed church and state domination of science, and vowed to only accept facts vetted by experimentation. This empirical trend also occurred in France with the

founding of the Montmor Academy in 1657, and with contemporary efforts by King
Carlos III to found a Spanish scientific body.\textsuperscript{159}

This move toward greater empiricism occurred partly as a reaction to the
rationalist systems of thought produced by seventeenth-century philosophers such as
Rene Descartes. Descartes constructed a system of knowledge based on self-evident
truths.\textsuperscript{160} Among these truths he included the a priori existence of God. Empiricists,
regardless of religious stripe, reacted against such ambitious and dogmatic metaphysical
systems.\textsuperscript{161}

\textit{Edmund Halley}

Carrying the Royal Society Banner was the brilliant astronomer and
mathematician Edmund Halley. Best known for the comet named in his honor, Edmund
Halley has also been called the father of terrestrial magnetism. He looms large in
Europe’s ideological march toward Empiricism. A friend of and collaborator with Isaac
Newton, Halley served as a Royal Society officer and international scientific
correspondent. He also urged his colleagues to observe the 1769 transit of Venus—a
cause to be taken up by James Cook a century later.

Halley led two scientific voyages into the South Atlantic in 1698 and 1699.
Though a less gifted leader than Captain Cook, Halley prefigured Cook’s eighteenth-

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\item 159. Syfret, “The Origins,” 79.
\item 161. Ibid., 4.
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century voyages in several respects. Though imperial aims partly justified his voyage, Halley pioneered a Royal Society-sponsored quest for greater knowledge of the natural world for practical benefit and improvement of British commerce. This model of sponsorship would continue to Cook’s voyages and beyond.

Halley aimed to measure and map the variation in the compass needle between magnetic and true north toward the improvement of navigation. He observed and recorded his declination over the course of his voyage to produce the first isogonic map. The Admiralty orders he carried instructed him to “stand so far into the south, till you discover the coast of Terra Incognita, supposed to be between Magellan’s Strait and the Cape of Good Hope.” Halley’s ship Paramour traveled as far south as the 52nd parallel, ostensibly the farthest southerly voyage ever made. Halley reported seeing two large, ice-covered islands, streaked with black earth. He soon realized that the islands were floating icebergs which imperiled his ship. Foggy conditions added to the danger, and forced his retreat. Halley sailed within thirteen degrees of the Antarctic Circle, and


164. Ibid., 266.

within about two degrees of South Georgia Island, nearly encountering the ice of Antarctica. 166

Even given the precedent-setting nature of Halley’s voyages, they contributed no new territory to the British Empire, and barely survived mutiny. They served to warn others of the hazards of South Sea ice, and cautioned the Admiralty against civilian command of a naval ship. Halley’s fallibility doomed Alexander Dalrymple’s chances of commanding the Endeavor ship a century later. Dalrymple included Halley’s voyage in his 1775 catalog, and jealously wished for the glory gained by Captain Cook, who sailed in his stead.

166. Ibid., 99.
Figure 8. Edmond Halley’s 1701 Map of Compass Variation

Chapter Summary

During the seventeenth century the European psyche still needed the Terra Australis popularized by Quirós. Voyages made during this century limited the possible extent of the southern continent and eroded the idyllic European vision of the South Seas. Dutch East India Company ships encountered the continent of Australia, as did the English pirate William Dampier. Neither party liked what they found there, and rejected it as the fulfillment of an age-old dream. During this same century Europe witnessed the Scientific Revolution, and the founding of the Royal Society, with like fellowships in other lands. This international brotherhood of scientists sought knowledge of the natural world for the continual betterment of humankind—what would become the utopianism of the eighteenth century. Dampier’s 1699 voyage partly fell under this banner, and the contemporaneous voyages of Edmund Halley entirely fit these ideals. Both men embraced Empiricism, which formed one philosophical strand in the larger cord of Enlightenment thought. Neither the Dutch, Dampier, nor Halley found Terra Australis, however. The search would be taken up by eighteenth-century men, most notably Joseph Banks and Captain James Cook.
CHAPTER 6

_Terra Australis During the Eighteenth Century: Incognita No More_

As the eighteenth century dawned, the existence of Terra Australis remained an open question. Britain and France dominated the high seas, with the British gaining supremacy following the Seven Years War (1756-1763). During this century Britain also claimed a significant work of explorer history in three volumes by John Callander entitled, _Terra Australis Cognita_. Callander’s work mostly plagiarized the famous 1756 French catalog of South Sea voyages by Charles de Brosses entitled, _Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes_. In his introduction Callander expressed ambivalence about the size and location of Terra Australis: “In effect, we call by the name of the Terra Australis, all that part of our earth which lies beyond the three Southern points of the known world in Africa, Asia, and America; that is to say, beyond the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan.”167 Later in the same introduction he became more definite: “It is evident from Tasman’s voyage, that New Guinea, Carpentaria, New Holland, Dieman’s Land, and the country discovered by Quirós, make all one great continent, from which New Zealand seems to be separated by a strait, making indeed a very large country, but far less than Quirós imagined.”168 Callander also cited the deficit of land in the southern hemisphere as sufficient to counterpoise northern lands.


168. Ibid., 43.
Two British circumnavigations immediately preceded Captain Cook’s three voyages, and both aimed to establish a permanent British toehold in a high southern latitude. Commodore John Byron, grandfather of the famous poet, circumnavigated the earth in 1764, as did Captain Samuel Wallis’ in 1766, but neither man settled the Terra Australis question. Wallis became the first European to reach Tahiti in 1767, and his party tantalizingly reported seeing a large landmass to the south, which apparently was just a large bank of clouds.  

Captain Cook’s voyages followed hard on the heels of Byron and Wallis. Cook sought to fill gaps in global geography, and to further humankind’s knowledge of the natural world, in all cases being sponsored in part by the Royal Society. His first voyage observed the 1769 Venus transit, and also sought Terra Australis, with his second voyage of 1772 expressly aimed to finally settle this longstanding question. His third voyage of 1776, sought the Northwest Passage, the very last geographical myth, and during this voyage the great navigator died. The South Sea paradise of Quirós vanished with Cook’s second voyage, as he proved that Terra Australis Incognita did not exist, at least as conceived for two millennia. He openly took credit for this accomplishment, likely his single greatest achievement as a navigator.

Alexander Dalrymple did not join Cook on any of his voyages, but played a pivotal role in the quest for Terra Australis. Like Callander, he compiled a large catalog of South Sea voyages, loaded with his own justifications for the existence of Terra

Australis. Though a man of science, Dalrymple quixotically revived ancient natural philosophy and Medieval geography, and lionized the accomplishments of Quirós to become what J.C. Beaglehole described as “the world’s last best advocate for Terra Australis Incognita.” Dalrymple placed his continent well to the south of Espiritu Santo and stretched it over 100 degrees of longitude. He correctly identified Santo as just a large island, but maintained that Juan Fernandez and Abel Tasman had touched Terra Australis. Cook studied Dalrymple’s catalog of South Sea voyages, but disproved most of his wishful conjectures by the end of his second voyage.

Joseph Banks, Royal Society Fellow and famous naturalist, added scientific prestige to Cook’s first voyage, as he represented the best and the brightest among men of science. He collected a wealth of new plant and animal specimens, and contributed to ethnographic knowledge of the South Pacific. With regard to the continent search, Banks held out hope that they would discover Terra Australis, but wavered between doubt and belief in its existence. Banks formed a symbiotic professional relationship with Cook, and each man became famous following their voyage, with Banks the larger celebrity. He parlayed his fame into a Royal Society presidency that lasted forty-one years.

Captain Cook provided stellar leadership in directing the continent search. He also exploited recent technological advancements in navigation, on his second voyage carrying the first functional chronometer aboard ship. Though he checked it against other methods, by voyage end he knew that longitude could now be easily determined. The importance of this advancement cannot be overstated. As Brian Richardson notes in

Longitude and Empire, Cook was the first navigator who could “confidently wander the open ocean.” Whereas previous navigators hugged the shores of continents, Cook could chart a course from point to point. He also did not need to keep a continuous record of his position, but only needed to ascertain it sporadically. The inability of previous navigators to know their true position had allowed the myth of Terra Australis to survive so many European voyages to the South Pacific–some four hundred between the time of Magellan and Cook.

Among the three men, Dalrymple, Banks, and Cook, Cook stands out as the most methodical and scientific man. He wedded his navigational prowess to a yeoman’s practicality. Though not a man of letters, or yet a Royal Society Fellow, Cook lived out the Enlightenment ethos of proving his facts by measurement in a full embrace of empiricism. Cook applied this new methodology to both land and people, producing stark descriptions of native people devoid of Renaissance romance, Christian humanism, and utopianism. He barely mentioned religion in his writings, indicating that evangelism was not a significant concern of his voyages. And though he cited problems with human


172. Ibid.

nature while describing South Sea cannibals, he offered the antidotes of agricultural development, education, and commerce rather than salvation. In keeping with his unsentimental nature, Cook shed no tears for a lost continent.

*Alexander Dalrymple: The Last Best Continent Advocate*

Alexander Dalrymple bridges the philosophical gap between Quirós and Cook, as he looked back to the world view of Quirós, and became an eighteenth-century advocate for the existence of Terra Australis. No biography on Dalrymple yet exists, but his biographical outline can be gleaned from secondary sources such as Beaglehole’s *Life of Captain James Cook*. Ken Tregonning’s 1951 “Alexander Dalrymple: The Man Whom Cook Replaced,” provides much of the biographical information in this essay. Memoirs also exist, credited to Dalrymple, but scholars doubt their veracity.

Alexander Dalrymple was born in 1737 to an upper class Scottish family involved in East Indies trade. His father, a Scottish member of parliament, stirred the young man’s imagination with geography lessons and anecdotes of the South Seas. These formative experiences planted in Dalrymple a passion for South Seas discovery and geography. His substantial societal connections provided for a situation as a writer in the East India Company at Madras. Dalrymple began his work with the East India Company in 1752, at the tender age of fourteen.  

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175. Ibid., 55.
In spite of his limited formal education, Dalrymple possessed a keen mind, teaching himself Spanish so that he might decipher Spanish voyager accounts in the East India Company library at Madras. Tregonning characterizes Dalrymple as an assiduous student and maker of maps. Dalrymple also thrust himself into the Anglo-Dutch East Indian spice trade rivalry. Over a three year period Dalrymple conducted his own voyages of discovery in the Malay Archipelago hoping to strike trade agreements and undermine the Dutch spice hegemony. Dalrymple distinguished himself internationally with his cartography and correspondence with French cartographers of note such as Charles de Brosses. Elected to Royal Society membership in 1765, Dalrymple also became the first hydrographer to the Admiralty in 1795, which rendered him an expert on the surface waters of the earth.

From the time of his return to England from the East Indies in 1765, Dalrymple vehemently promoted exploration in search of Terra Australis. He invoked Christian duty as a primary motivation for this effort, quoting the Elizabethan statesman, Sir Francis Walsingham: “Every true Christian is born not for his own private wealth and pleasure, but rather to help and succor others.” Duty demanded the claiming and conquest of new lands, in Dalrymple’s words, “to invigorate the hand of industry by opening new vents for manufactures, and by a new trade to increase the active wealth and naval power of the

176. Ibid., 57.


178. Ibid., xx.
country.” He mixed a potent cocktail that was one part religious mandate and one part profit.

In the 1849 Sketches of the Royal Society, Sir John Barrow devotes five pages to the career and Royal Society Membership of Alexander Dalrymple. A friend would not have written such a scathing account. He stated that Dalrymple exhibited the symptoms of “decayed faculties,” which were joined to his “irritable habit,” and “perverse temper.” He also gave credence to accusations that Dalrymple misrepresented Spanish and Dutch voyage accounts “to support his own ill-grounded conjectures.” Though he does not mention the southern continent directly, this was likely his subject, as it was so often Dalrymple’s. Barrow also characterizes him as “an impracticable and obstinate man,” noting Dalrymple’s refusal to vacate his post as the Admiralty’s first hydrographer, even when his health had failed.

Dalrymple’s penchant for South Sea geography motivated him to produce some fifty travel pamphlets in addition to his 1760 catalog entitled An Historical Collection of the several Voyages and Discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean. These volumes began with his heros, Columbus and Magellan, but also included translations of the Quirós and Tasman voyage journals. Because of his haughtiness and irascibility, and his unwavering

179. Ibid., xxi.


181. Ibid., 137.

182. Ibid., 138-9.
belief in Terra Australis, history has colored Dalrymple as something of a buffoon. This characterization obscures his talents as a geographer. Tregonning describes him as “the unrivaled authority on the South Seas.”

R.H. Major credits Dalrymple for being well-informed and laborious, and second only to Richard Hakluyt, the sixteenth century geographer, in gaining commercial prosperity for Britain.

Dalrymple’s geographical expertise did not escape the notice of the Royal Society, which recommended him to command a 1769 voyage to observe the transit of Venus. The Admiralty rejected him in favor of James Cook. This slight embittered Dalrymple to Cook and rendered him a lifelong critic of the captain. Dalrymple stubbornly persisted in his belief in the southern continent in spite of contrary indications. After Cook’s first voyage Dalrymple shifted Terra Australis south of the 40th parallel—the southernmost latitude Cook reached on his first voyage. Nearly out of whole cloth Dalrymple produced a detailed map of the undiscovered land, ignoring Cook’s recent survey in favor of the 1570 Abraham Ortelius map.

Dalrymple described the search for the southern continent as “the great passion of his life.” Though he made the case for its existence primarily from voyager accounts, he admitted that his mind filled in the gaps: “an active mind, long employed on any subject, will acquire ideas from very faint lines.” Indeed. Dalrymple filled the area


between western Australia and Juan Fernandez island with land, between the latitudes of 40 and 62 degrees. This prodigious landmass covered an area: “equal in extent to all the civilized part of Asia, from Turkey to China inclusive.”186 As surprising as it may seem, Dalrymple echoed the Late Renaissance words of Quirós’, who said of Espiritu Santo, “That hidden part is one-fourth of the world.”187

Dalrymple offered bold predictions about the wealth of Terra Australis: “There can be no doubt that countries so well situated, so extensive, and so full of civilized inhabitants, must afford a very beneficial commerce.” Dalrymple’s continent also teemed with people: “the number of inhabitants in the southern continent is probably more than 50 millions.”188 One wonders why such a large and advanced population had not made a voyage of their own to any part of Europe.

As a final and irrefutable justification for the existence of Terra Australis, like John Callander, Dalrymple joined the counterpoise chorus: “In the southern latitude, the land, hitherto known, is not one eighth of the space supposed to be water...this will probably be made up in the southern lands and islands not yet discovered.”189

With the embrace of Aristotelian cosmology during the Age of Enlightenment, the anachronism of Dalrymple was complete. Though he took up the lost cause of Quirós,

186. Ibid., xxiv


188. Dalrymple, An Historical Collection, xxvi & xxviii.

189. Ibid., 13-14.
his world view cannot be called Utopian in the manner of Thomas More. His desire for commercial and imperial gain precluded the embrace of religious and communitarian societal schemes. But he adhered to Renaissance geography and possessed the unbounded optimism of Quirós. With religious fervor, Dalrymple believed that better land lay yet to be discovered, and part of his destiny was to aid in this discovery.

Joseph Banks and the Increase of Natural Knowledge

The inclusion of Sir Joseph Banks on Cook’s first voyage placed it on a sure scientific footing. With his work of collecting and recording new plants and animal species Banks carried forward the Royal Society mission of advancing useful knowledge. Knowledge gathered for the betterment of humankind fulfilled part of the Enlightenment definition of progress. And in this regard, Banks went so far as to state, after his journey aboard Endeavor, that he was the first man of science to have made a satisfactory voyage during “this enlightened age.”

In addition to being an icon of the Royal Society, Banks also stood at the center of eighteenth century agricultural improvement. For the polite classes in England, the landed estate represented the paradigm of enlightened knowledge, as it was believed to be

190. Ibid.


the foundation for economically prosperous and well-regulated societies.\textsuperscript{193} Bank’s work in horticulture on his own estates, and later at the Royal Gardens at Kew, aimed to extend the enlightened agricultural paradigm to those living overseas.\textsuperscript{194}

With regard to pedigree, Banks was the antithesis of Captain Cook. Born to wealthy London parents in 1743, Banks fell just shy of what Patrick O’Brian described as the ideal English husband of the eighteenth century, who had 10,000 pounds a year and a deer park.\textsuperscript{195} Banks earned 6000 pounds a year and owned an estate the size of Hyde Park. Cook hailed from a family of day farm laborers, and the Admiralty paid him some five shillings a day for his services.\textsuperscript{196} The disparity in wealth between the men did not prevent their professional collaboration. Both men achieved remarkable things on the only voyage that they shared. Banks directed the gleaning of anti-scorbutic plants to prevent Scurvy among Cook’s men, and Cook furthered the naturalizing of Banks by taking him to exotic and uncharted locales.\textsuperscript{197}

Bank’s influence extended beyond the Admiralty and Royal Society, and he counted among his friends King George III and Lord Sandwich, Royal Society Fellow and later First Lord of the Admiralty. Banks also belonged to the Society of

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\item \textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 346, 367.
\item \textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 259.
\end{itemize}
Antiquarians, and was an ex-officio member of the Board of Longitude. Naturalists of his day described his party aboard *Endeavor* as the best equipped mission of its kind ever dispatched. Banks and company produced an explosion in the knowledge in natural history, as they collected specimens of 3000 plants, made 955 drawings, named 110 new genera of plants, and identified 1300 new species. Bank’s presence aboard *Endeavor* continued the tradition that began with Edmund Halley, which was to include a man of science aboard an Admiralty ship.

Historians do not all credit Banks with scientific gravitas, as he is described as both an eminent man of science and a silly dilettante. He hailed from the upper classes, possessed wealth, and had connections to powerful people in polite English society. The charge of dilettante arises because he directed his own education in botany at Oxford, took no degree, and hired a private tutor to further his interest. He also financed his own botanical excursion to Africa and North America in 1766.

Firm divisions between scientific disciplines did not exist at the time of the *Endeavor* voyage. This fact renders Banks less of a dabbler, as he moved among many disciplines, and contributed to useful knowledge on many fronts. Beyond botany and natural history, he can also be counted among early Pacific ethnographers. His journals illustrate a keen interest in English-Native relations. Beyond his interest and participation in cross-cultural sexual encounters, he documented native cultural practices and religious ceremonies which would benefit explorers that came after him.


199. Ibid., 85.
With regard to the search for the southern continent, Banks carried a copy of Dalrymple’s catalog of South Sea Voyages, and one of his charts.\textsuperscript{200} Though he did not possess Dalrymple’s fervor, he maintained a hopeful agnosticism about the existence of Terra Australis. He acknowledged a “prepossession,” toward belief in the southern continent, admitting that his reasons were weak.\textsuperscript{201} Given the weight of history on the subject, Bank’s hope was understandable. Though he doubted the theory of counterpoise, he desired to continue his work in natural history wherever new land could be found.\textsuperscript{202} Banks took great satisfaction in the unique flora and fauna of Australia, yet he knew that he was not standing on the Terra Australis of Antiquity.\textsuperscript{203} By 1770 his doubts grew as to existence of Terra Australis. The \textit{Endeavor} had already covered a large swath of the South Pacific Ocean without discovering extensive new land. If another continent existed, Banks realized that it would be “prodigiously smaller in extent than the theoretical continent makers have supposed it to be.”\textsuperscript{204}

\textit{Captain Cook and the End of Terra Australis Incognita}

Given his humble origins, James Cook seems an unlikely person to have finally killed Terra Australis. But perhaps his soberness, industriousness, orderliness and thrift--traits that J.C. Beaglehole associated with Yorkshire farmers--uniquely gifted Cook for

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\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., 137.
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\textsuperscript{202} J.C. Beaglehole, \textit{The Endeavor Journal of Joseph Banks}, 38.
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\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 40.
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his task as a navigator. Cook hailed from the village of Marton-in-Cleveland, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, a village near the Scottish border. Cook entered the world in 1728, being the son of James and Grace, and the second of seven children. His baptismal record identifies him as “James ye son of a day laborer.” Like a hardworking and practical farmer, Cook spared adornment in the account of his second voyage entitled “A Voyage Toward the South Pole.” Though he received help to compile his account, the end product reads like his journals, which were obviously his primary sources. He kept his philosophical cards close to his chest, only occasionally offering a glimpse. Professionalism dictated that he produce a more detached voyage account than that given by Quirós, which is in itself an indication of how the world had changed. Cook’s philosophy and world view can only be gleaned from a few of his writings and from his actions.

Terra Australis and Cook’s First Voyage (1768-1771)

All three of Cook’s epic voyages, arose, as Brian Richardson notes, in response to clear scientific problems of his day. Observation of the Venus transit would yield the length of the astronomical unit—the distance between the earth and the sun. After making this observation from Tahiti in 1769, Cook sailed in search of Terra Australis, until the

206. Ibid., 3.
207. Richardson, Longitude and Empire, 6.
Great Barrier Reef pierced the hull of the *Endeavor*. This incident nearly doomed the entire crew, and cut the voyage short. Another voyage would be required to finally establish the existence or non-existence of Terra Australis.

Cook’s first voyage accomplished a great deal geographically. After rounding Cape Horn, and taking time in Tahiti to observe the Venus transit, Cook sailed for New Zealand. He carried the De Vaugondy chart, which portrayed Australia and New Zealand as separate islands, unlike the amorphous blob of land portrayed on the Thévenot map (Figure 6). Cook answered two basic questions through his work at New Zealand: it was comprised of two large islands separated by a strait, and it was not connected to a larger continent.

Cook’s chart of New Zealand stands as a monument to eighteenth-century mapping, and he employed an unprecedented method to produce it. While reconnoitering the shoreline, he would first establish the position of his ship, keeping it as still as possible. He then took a bearing on a prominent coastal feature. After the moving the ship, and reestablishing his position, he took a bearing of the same coastal feature to determine its coordinates. He never touched land during much of his map-making process. The charts he produced contained errors, and also generalized the coastline by


interpolating between prominent features. Nonetheless, this new method of map-making represented a quantum leap forward from previous navigators. Some of Cook’s charts saw use for more than a hundred years.

Figure 9. Captain Cook’s 1770 Chart of New Zealand
Cook offered commentary on his own map, noting where he was sure of the accuracy, and where he was not, and later admitted to some errors of position in major features of New Zealand. These admissions suggest the possibility of absolute accuracy in mapping, an idea not likely considered by earlier navigators. This bent toward absolute accuracy marks an important shift in world view. Cook would soon strip away the fuzzy idealism of Quirós and Dalrymple, and humankind would soon know every jot and tittle of the landscape, not only in New Zealand, but across the entire globe.

Toward the end of his work at New Zealand, in March of 1770, Cook expressed his doubt as to the existence of Terra Australis. “And as to a Southern Continent I do not believe that any such thing exists unless in a high latitude, but as the contrary opinion hath for many years prevailed and may yet prevail it is necessary I should say something in support of mine [position] more than what will be directly pointed out by the track of this ship in those seas.” His 1768 voyage track around Cape Horn was 35 degrees east of his voyage track leaving Tahiti. In thirty degrees south latitude, the two voyage tracks lay within twenty degrees of longitude. He found no signs of a large landmass on either track, but he noted that a large peninsula could jut into the area of ocean that he did not cover. “What foundation have we for such a supposition, none that I know of but that it must be either here or nowhere.” In the same section of his journal Cook touched on the discoveries of Quiros’, mentioned the suppositions of Dalrymple, and a few Dutch

211. Ibid., 288.
212. Ibid., 288.
voyages that sought Terra Australis. None of these men proved that the southern continent existed, and his own travels bolstered his own doubts. Evidence against the existence of Terra Australis mounted, and especially against the possibility that it lay north of forty degrees south latitude in the Pacific Ocean.  

After charting New Zealand, *Endeavor* made its way north along the eastern coast of Australia, a virtually unknown coastline before Cook. Australia proved a difficult territory for the *Endeavor* to navigate, especially when the party reached the Great Barrier

213. Ibid. 290.
Reef. The Endeavor stuck fast to the reef, forcing Cook to jettison cannons and ballast. *Endeavor’s* hull had been pierced by coral, which plugged the hole and slowed the leak, but effectively ended the voyage.

After the crash at Endeavor Reef, as the location came to be known, Cook made repairs and limped to Batavia through the Torres Strait. The route he chose settled the long-standing question of how these two landmasses were related, in a small consolation to Dalrymple, who suspected that the strait existed based on the Quirós record. Unfortunately neither Australia nor New Guinea qualified as Terra Australis.

_Small consolation_ to Dalrymple, who suspected that the strait existed based on the Quirós record.

_Cook’s Second Voyage (1772-1775)_

With a foreshortened first voyage, Cook failed to establish the presence or absence of a southern continent. That the issue might be “wholly cleared up,” Cook advocated for and received a second voyage. On his first voyage *Endeavor* rounded Cape Horn, and made northwest for Tahiti. En route to and from Tahiti, Cook covered a lot of the South Pacific Ocean, but found no significant landmass. On his second voyage, he did not limit himself to Dalrymple’s suppositions, or even to the Pacific Ocean. He sailed around the globe at as high a southern latitude as he could muster, and crossed the Antarctic circle three times.

In response to the dangers of his first voyage, Cook’s second voyage included two ships: Cook’s ship *Resolution*, and the *Adventure*, piloted by Tobias Furneaux. Johan

214. Ibid., 288-90.

215. Beaglehole, _The Life of Captain James Cook_, 278.
Reinhold Forster and his son George replaced the Bank’s party as Cook’s naturalists. The continent search began in earnest when the ships made due south from the Cape of Good Hope in November of 1772. They first sought to fall in with the island named in honor of the French explorer, Lozier Bouvet. Not finding the island at the given coordinates, Cook concluded that Bouvet had mistaken ice for land. In reality Bouvet gave bad coordinates, and his island would not be found again until 1898.\textsuperscript{216}

Bearing east and south from the alleged location of Bouvet Island, Cook and company became the first explorers to cross the Antarctic circle on 17 January 1773. Forced north by pack ice, and separated from the \textit{Adventure} by fog, they entered the Indian Ocean, passing near to but not seeing Kerguelen Island. In mid-March of 1773, \textit{Resolution} headed for New Zealand to rendezvous with \textit{Adventure}. During the ships’ separation, \textit{Adventure} passed by Tasmania, but Furneaux did not establish if it was attached or detached from Australia, much to Cook’s disappointment.\textsuperscript{217} The ships stayed in the tropics until November of 1773, when they set forth for their second sweep of the South Pacific. Bearing southeast from New Zealand, they crossed the Antarctic circle again in December of 1773. Forced north again, Cook attempted to locate the land seen by Juan Fernandez, and portrayed on Dalrymple’s chart, to no avail.

\textsuperscript{216} Robson, \textit{Captain Cook’s World}, figure 2.03.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.
Following the Juan Fernandez sweep, Cook and the Resolution reached their southernmost latitude of 71 degrees on January 30, 1774, having gone farther south than any group of men before them. Faced with the possibility of being frozen into the ice, Cook turned north again. At this point he offered some interesting observations about himself and his achievements: “I will not say it was impossible anywhere to get in among this ice, but I will assert that the bare attempting of it would be a dangerous enterprise and what I believe no man in my situation would have thought of. I whose ambition leads me not only farther than any other man has been before me, but as far as I think it possible for man to go, was not sorry at meeting with this interruption.”

From his farthest southerly latitude, Cook cut a meandered swath north through the stretch of the Pacific containing the least amount of land area, where he encountered Easter Island and the Marquesas. On 24 August 1774 Cook approached Espiritu Santo of Quirós’ fame. He noted the illusion of a larger landmass presented by the island group as he approached it. Being familiar with the work of Quirós from Dalrymple’s collection of voyages, Cook knew where he was when he entered the bay of St. Philip and St. James


219. Ibid., 513.
(Big Bay). Others doubted that they stood where Quirós had because they found no traces of Vera Cruz, the short-lived Spanish settlement.\textsuperscript{220}

From Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides), Cook passed again through New Zealand, and then made south for the fifty-fourth parallel, covering parts of the Pacific unexplored during his first voyage. On 27 November 1774, in 55° south, 138° west, Cook “gave up all hopes of finding any more land in this ocean and came to a resolution to steer directly for the west entrance of the straits of Magellan.”\textsuperscript{221} He rounded Cape Deseado on 17 December 1774, and made this final declaration on that ocean: “I have now done with the Southern Pacific Ocean, and flatter myself that no one will think I have left it unexplored; or that more could have been done in one voyage towards obtaining that end than has been done in this.”\textsuperscript{222} Thus ended Dalrymple’s South Pacific continent. Cook had but a little more work to do to eliminate the continent from the South Atlantic Ocean, and from the entire globe.

\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 516.
\textsuperscript{221} Cook, \textit{A Voyage}, 153.
\textsuperscript{222} Cook, \textit{The Journals}, 2:587.
Figure 11. Cook’s Second Voyage Track, 1772-1775
Source: National Library of Canada, used by permission

Figure 12. The World After Cook, 1784
The Final Death of Terra Australis Incognita

From the Straits of Magellan, Cook passed by the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, sailing east until he crossed the southern track that he made when his second voyage began. As Cook passed through the South Georgia Island group, he conjectured that land covered the southern pole. “It is however true that the greatest part of this southern continent (supposing there is one) must lay within the polar circle where the sea is so pestered with ice, that the land is thereby inaccessible.”

Cook wrote the official epitaph for Terra Australis Incognita on 21 February 1775. The world would of course need time to receive and digest this information, and yet more time to grieve the loss. Not so with Cook:

I had now made the circuit of the southern ocean in a high latitude, and traversed it in such a manner as to leave not the least room for the possibility of there being such a continent, unless near the pole and out of the reach of navigation...thus I flatter myself that the intention of the voyage has in every respect been fully answered, the southern hemisphere sufficiently explored and a final end put to the searching after a southern

223. Ibid., 637.
continent, which has at times engrossed the attention of some of the
maritime powers for nearly two centuries past and the geographers of all
ages.224

Given Cook’s thoroughness, his words could not be disputed. Terra Australis Incognita, the long sought-for continent, was no more.

_A Changing Vision of Paradise_

On 25 August 1774, when Cook and his companions entered Big Bay, Espiritu Santo, the world had come full circle in its search for the continent that Quirós identified as Terra Australis, and a new fifth continent of the world. Quirós’ lofty descriptions of Espiritu Santo could not hold up under Cook’s scrutiny. Surprisingly, the man that penned the most stinging rebuke of Quirós was not Cook, but his lieutenant Charles Clerke: “He [Quirós] has given a most pompous description of this island in his memorials to the King of Spain...I firmly believe Mr. Quirós’s zeal and warmth for his own favorite projects has carried him too far in the qualities he has attributed to this country; for fine and fertile as it certainly is, I’m afraid he’s there given it too prolific a soil and luxuriant a clime.”225

Cook applied the same rigorous method of charting to Espiritu Santo that he had perfected in New Zealand. He began with a reconnaissance survey of the island, established the latitude and longitude of Port Vera Cruz and its capes, measured the depth

224. Ibid., 643.

225. Ibid., 516-17n.
of the water in Big Bay, measured the length of the coastline, and listed the useful commodities visible on land. He did not tarry there, but uttered the following words: “Having made the circuit of the isle and with it finished the survey of the whole archipelago, I had no more business there.”

Constant measurement characterized the Cook voyages, and is the most obvious difference between the two eras under consideration. Whereas Quirós guessed at his longitude, and missed it by more than a thousand miles, Cook refined his measurements to a higher degree than any earlier explorers. He took multiple measurements of every aspect of his position, to calculate an average value. In one such case on his second voyage, Cook mentions in passing that, to compute the declination of the compass needle, he used two separate compasses, and took nine azimuths with each.

In addition to the increased navigational precision evident on the Cook voyages, religion played an entirely different role for Cook than it did for Quirós. Cook never invoked a divine mandate to justify his work as a navigator, and he sought naturalistic explanations of unknown phenomena. Quirós sought and expected divine intervention on nearly a daily basis. When Quirós saw Saint Elmo’s fire hovering over his ship he attributed it to a divine presence. When Cook witnessed the nighttime waters of Table

226. Ibid.
227. Ibid., 519.
228. Cook, A Voyage, 1:80.
229. Markham, The Voyages, 1:245.
Bay glowing with algae, he surmised that insects caused the sea to be “on fire,” though he admitted to not knowing the cause.²³⁰ Quirós instructed his men to “put the ships heads where they like, for God will guide them as may be right.”²³¹ One cannot imagine Cook uttering such an order.

Because Cook rarely mentioned God in his writings, it is impossible to know his religious leanings with certainty. He offered rather a dim view of human nature when describing cannibals at New Zealand: “Few consider what a savage man is in his natural state, and even after he is, in some degree, civilized.” He waxed biblical, noting that these natives treated others as they expected to be treated rather than as they wished to be treated, falling short of Christianity’s Golden Rule.²³² He did not prescribe a spiritual remedy for their defects, however, but cited the need for education and improvement, better government, and commerce: “An intercourse with foreigners would reform their manners, and polish their savage minds. Or, were they more united under a settled form of government, they would have fewer enemies, consequently this custom [cannibalism] would be less in use, and might in time be in a manner forgotten.”²³³ In fine Enlightenment fashion, Cook made gifts of European crops and livestock.

²³¹. Markham, The Voyages, 1:234.
²³³. Ibid., 1:242-3.
Cook’s unwavering commitment to accuracy represented a new spirit among navigators that J.C. Beaglehole described as “precise, scientific, severe.” This spirit infused not just his navigation, but also the accounts he gave of native populations. Bernard Smith credits the Cook voyages with finally creating a realistic visual record of the South Seas, and dispelling many myths. As Smith stated it: “Serious belief in the terrestrial existence of Eden or Arcady, and in the original sin or natural virtue of southern natives, declined with the extension of the empirical methods of observation championed by the Royal Society.” The journey that Europe made from fictive to literal was expressed in Cook as stark, critical, and sometimes negative views toward humanity.

After reducing the terrestrial paradise of Quirós to distances, directions, and coordinates, Cook penned a withering description of the Melanesian natives: “they are the most ugly, ill-proportioned people I ever saw, and in every respect different from any we had met with in this sea...with long heads, flat faces, and monkey countenances.” He had earlier described the natives of the Marquesas as the most beautiful people in the Pacific, so it was not prejudice of all foreigners that jaundiced his eye. Cook gave an unvarnished account of what he saw without the softening agent of Christian humanism. As a Renaissance romantic, Quirós embellished his experiences far beyond reality, but his Christianity precluded overly negative descriptions of humanity. Quirós saw the same

natives as beings made in the image of God, and in need of the Catholic gospel that he
brought. By Cook’s time these sensibilities appear to have died, at least among European
explorers.

Chapter Summary

It is a surprising fact that European explorers sought an additional continent in the
South Seas until 1775. The survival of this chimera required that the accurate
determination of longitude yet remain elusive, and that the continent be ardently
promoted by a man of influence such as Alexander Dalrymple during the eighteenth
century. Other men of science such as Joseph Banks yearned for additional and unspoiled
land, and hoped against hope that the continent still awaited discovery. The final death of
Terra Australis Incognita required the unwavering hand of a man like James Cook,
although had he not done it, it would have been done eventually. Cook possessed a
deftness beyond that of other navigators, and with cutting-edge technology that allowed
the easy measurement of longitude, he shortened the life span of the mythical continent.
His critical mind set insisted upon geographical fact above all else. His work stripped
away the romantic geography of the Renaissance, and produced a realistic visual and
written record of what he saw, perhaps for the first time in history. This realism judged
some natives beautiful and noble, and others ugly and savage, in a departure from the
Christian humanism of Quirós. In place of the religious mandate to evangelize the
natives of Terra Australis, Cook carried the eighteenth-century urge for human
improvement through education, agriculture, and commerce. And though he produced a
more accurate picture of the world that he encountered, he also introduced a severity of world view unknown among earlier navigators.
CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

The legendary continent of Terra Australis Incognita existed as European intellectual construct from Antiquity. It served the physical function of stabilizing the earth, and the psychological function of providing an “other” and better place, or an additional earthly frontier to be explored. This mythical landmass gained additional prominence during the late Renaissance after the Portugese navigator, Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, claimed to have found it in 1606. In 1775 Captain James Cook finally proved that this land did not exist. This study used these men as bookends during the Age of Exploration, both temporally and philosophically. By the time of Cook’s second voyage in 1775, only a few prominent individuals yet believed that Terra Australis still lay in the South Seas.

The question that guided this history was, how did the European vision of and for Terra Australis change during the time period considered? A second and closely related question is, how did the world view of European explorers change over the same period? The writings Pedro Ferdinand de Quirós, James Cook, and a few men in between, provided some of these answers, as did seventeenth-century fiction inspired by Quirós and set in Terra Australis. From these sources, one can carefully draw parallels to the changing world view in Europe, as the changing vision of Terra Australis matched the broad philosophical shift in Europe from Rationalism to Empiricism.

Different goals, beliefs, and expectations drove Quirós and Cook, and for that matter, these two periods of history. Renaissance explorers like Quirós carried the myths
that survived from Antiquity, such as the presence of grotesque Antipodal beings in the South Seas, and the existence of a terrestrial paradise. Adding to the uncertainty of what lay in the world at large was the primitive state of navigation. Humankind simply could not ascertain location with certainty, and would peer through foggy geographical lenses for another century and a half.

Along with his myths and geographical challenges, Quirós carried a divine calling and Counter-Reformational zeal not found among explorers of the Enlightenment. With his Catholic faith he embraced the Christian humanism and Utopianism exemplified by Thomas More. As in More’s *Utopia*, Quirós sought to form a Christian agrarian settlement on the terrestrial paradise that he described as a new fifth continent of the world. In reality Quirós found Espiritu Santo in the present day Vanuatu island group. He offered the world idyllic images of this land that did not square with reality. This fact may mark him a prevaricator, but his desire to save souls appears to have been genuine, as he made extreme sacrifices toward this end, content to earn intangible spiritual rewards rather than worldly wealth.

In the intervening years between Quirós and Cook the southern continent claimed a prominent space in the European consciousness through works of fiction set in Terra Australis, several of which claimed to be shipwreck survivor accounts. These writers used the idealized land of Quirós to explore the boundary between Utopian and Dystopian societies. Sexual mores took center stage in several of these works, likely because many voyager accounts described native sexual behavior frowned upon in Europe. Though each author had different purposes, each emphasized the need for an additional frontier to
maintain the intellectual equilibrium of Europe. All of these works challenged the notion of an earthly paradise and the idealism of More’s *Utopia* and thereby diminished intellectual space available for mythical lands.

The century and a half between Quirós and Cook also saw a shift toward greater international commerce, with the Dutch East India Company leading the way. Commercial success depended upon more accurate navigation than that possessed by Quirós. Organizations such as the DEIC did not seek to better the whole of humankind, nor to save souls, but to monopolize trade. Nonetheless, these commercial organizations improved the world map by sponsoring voyages of discovery, such Abel Tasman’s in the 1640's. Tasman nearly circumnavigated Australia in two voyages, and passed within sight of Espiritu Santo, but did not land there. The geographical territory available to contain an additional continent shrank alongside of the intellectual one.

These in-between years also saw the beginning stages of the Enlightenment pursuit of knowledge toward the betterment of humankind. An important milestone on this journey was the founding of the Royal Society in 1660, and the voyages of William Dampier, and the Royal Society-sponsored voyages of Edmond Halley in the late seventeenth century. Both men sought Terra Australis, and Dampier twice landed on Australia. Dampier rejected Australia’s land and people because it did not match his vision of Terra Australis. If it cleaved to Terra Australis, and he was not sure if it did, it was the poor and undesirable part. He produced a scathing account in his popular travel narrative.
Renaissance cosmology reappeared briefly during the eighteenth century. Taking up the lost cause of Quirós, and the last important man to do so, was Alexander Dalrymple, the British Hydrographer and Royal Society Fellow. He firmly believed, despite all contrary evidence, that Captain Cook had missed a southern landmass on his first voyage that covered 100 degrees of longitude. Though Dalrymple held imperial rather than religious motives to discover this land, he equaled Quirós in his geographical optimism. His prolific writings on the subject fueled interest in finding the vast continent, and learned men caught the same fever, though in a less virulent form. Joseph Banks, the Enlightenment icon and famous naturalist on Cook’s first voyage, expanded the frontiers of natural knowledge while hoping to survey yet another exotic landmass. He would be forced to settle for Australia, which pleased him a good deal, but did not eliminate his lust for Terra Australis.

In contrast to Dalrymple, and to a greater degree than Joseph Banks, Captain James Cook embodied the Enlightenment virtue of empiricism. He began the continent search with a skeptical mind, not acknowledging the earth’s need for counterpoise, and not finding any comfort from the idea of an additional continent. On each of his three voyages he carried the most up-to-date navigation tools, including the only functional shipboard chronometer in the world, which he carried on his second voyage. He had the means and the mind set to finally prove whether or not the earth held another continent. He succeeded in relegating the continent to the southern pole, although he did not know if land lay beneath the ice that he bumped up against. Cook dispelled much fictional geography during his voyages, but the jewel in his crown was disproving the existence of
Terra Australis Incognita. In an exhaustive search that crossed the Antarctic Circle three times, he eliminated the continent that had tantalized Europe for two millennia. He also clarified the world map like no navigator before or since.

Cook’s preoccupation with the gathering of data betrayed a new mind set that emerged among men of science in Europe. Embodying the Royal Society’s ethos of accurate measurement, Cook produced stellar charts of the land masses that he surveyed. In a similar way, he surveyed humanity without the lense of Christian humanism. He produced stark and sometimes negative descriptions of native people he encountered, praising or criticizing them on the basis of their physical appearance. Cook’s shipboard artists produced what has been described as the first realistic visual record of the South Seas because these images did not hearken back to classical or archetypal ideals.

The world view of Europe, as represented by James Cook, prized accurate measurement, offered unromantic descriptions of humanity, and produced realistic written and visual images. With these philosophical attributes Cook stripped away what remained of Renaissance geography. With the loss of Terra Australis Incognita, Europe had completed the march from the fictive to the literal, and surrendered the cosmology that allowed it to exist for as long as it had.

Today the world lauds Cook for his negative discoveries--proving that things long believed in did not exist. These negative discoveries deprived the world of geographical possibility that had been anticipated for two millennia. A question worthy of further research is, how did Europe at large respond to the loss of Terra Australis following Cook’s second voyage? Did the loss of all geographical unknowns, and therefore all
terrestrial utopias, push Utopianism into the realm of ideology? The philosophies of the
French Revolution and Marxism are two forms of ideological Utopianism not confined to
a specific geography. These ideologies served as safety valves of their own. Perhaps
something more ideal exists in the world, but like Terra Australis Incognita, it exists just
beyond the grasp of humankind.
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