3. Global Civility and Shipwreck
George Keate's *Account of the Pelew Islands* (1788)

The last chapter has traced both the inception and representation of global civility in Henry Blount's *Voyage into the Levant* (1636) and explored the complex relationship between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. The present chapter will broaden the representational and geographical range of global civility by contextualising George Keate's *Account of the Pelew Islands* (1788) in eighteenth century discourses of travel, sensibility and commerce.[1] The readiness to be favourably impressed, to cooperate across cultural divides and to study foreign civilisations comparatively was not confined to Oriental travellers. Despite their geo-physical and cultural differences both the Ottoman Empire and the South Pacific gave rise to beneficial exchanges, whose history complicates the relationship between civil self and barbarous other considerably. In contrast to oriental travellers, however, explorers crisscrossing the vastness of the Pacific hardly ever knew what they were about to find or endure. Their journeys to exotic island communities were, though enticing, frequently tantamount to encounters with the unknown. Maritime long distance travel confined them for months, or even years, to the socially strictly regulated space of the ship and often subjected them to bodily deprivations or diseases (scurvy, for example). Once on shore, Europeans did not have to be civil, since they encountered peoples who were technologically less advanced than themselves. But the exigencies of extreme travel, such as appealing to the natives' knowledge of local resources, helped to bridge the divide between European sailors and Pacific natives on the beach. As Carl Thompson has shown, these shipwrecked sailors 'were perfectly capable, once they had

1 George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, ed. by Karen L. Nero & Nicholas Thomas (London & New York: Leicester University Press, 2001). (All references are to this edition).

discarded the hierarchies of rank and class that pertained on board ship, of establishing peaceful, egalitarian communities, either amongst themselves or in conjunction with the natives amongst which they found themselves.'[2]

George Keate's *Account*, in particular, opens new gateways for reflecting on European representations of the South Pacific along these lines. It differs decisively from Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, the eighteenth century's most iconic text of shipwreck on a desert island. A solitary castaway, Defoe's hero is forced back upon himself and his ties with European society seem irreversibly severed. Yet Crusoe unexpectedly finds company by rescuing a native from a tribe of cannibals. But the rescued native becomes a subject and companion only through Crusoe's interpellation, by being endowed with the European word Friday as his name. This relationship has received much critical attention at the same time as Defoe's novel seems to have established the master narrative for the literary representation of shipwreck by concentrating on the fate of a single individual.[3] According to Jonathan Lamb, this individual is free to experience 'the excitements and pleasures arising from the dissolution of contracts and social ties'[4] in the largely unexplored waters of the Pacific Ocean.

By contrast, Keate's *Account* tells a very different story and brings into focus both the renewal of the social contract and a collectively organised self-preservation in the face of adversity. Commanded by Captain Wilson, the East India ship *Antelope* ran on a reef off the Palau archipelago east of the Philippines in 1783.[5] Subsequently, the English seamen established friendly relations with the natives and were given the permission to build a new vessel, but the Palauans required them to lend armed support to a number of expeditions against hostile tribes and rival communities. This mutually beneficial exchange was based on cross-cultural cooperation rather than competition and illustrates how complicated transactions across cultural divides need not result in inimical relations, open hostilities or the rapid disintegration of native societies. In this regard, the Palauan shore seems to have been a notable

2 Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 120.

3 Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 178.

4 Ibid., 195-6.

5 Karen L. Nero & Nicholas Thomas, 'Introduction: Bridging Worlds,' in George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, ed. by Karen L. Nero & Nicholas Thomas (London & New York: Leicester University Press, 2001), 1-5, here 1.

exception: 'This beach is a very different one to that described by Cook, George Forster, and others in Queen Charlotte Sound, where novel appetites for European goods prompt Maori men to coercively prostitute their women.'[6] On Tahiti, too, native traditions started to disappear under European influence as 'trinkets, baubles and venereal disease seemed in free circulation.'[7]

The Anglo-Palauan exchange, on the other hand, neither represents the natives as corruptible nor as noble savages. They are rather 'highly deserving recipients of British gratitude'[8] and act as reliable partners with whom the English crew could establish mutually improving relations. Framed in eighteenth century idioms of sensibility, the *Account* extends sentimentalism's inclusiveness to a hitherto unknown island community and thus transposes it to a global level. In so doing, Keate, 'a literary gentleman, not a participant in the adventure, [who] prepared the book on the basis of information provided by Wilson and other members of his crew,'[9] familiarises English readers with the hardships experienced by seamen in far-flung and little known territory. Following them into the unknown, this chapter explores their remarkable story of shipwreck, salvage and return by first situating their collectively organised survival under the auspices of Captain Wilson in eighteenth century theories of the civil self and its preservation in extreme situations. Given their fate, the seamen evince a remarkable degree of social cohesion, illustrating the impossibility of shaking off one's civil self in the face of paradise. The second section examines the unscripted adventures of the *Antelope*'s crew and demonstrates how the book's sentimental register facilitates the cultural and commercial traffic between the landward and seaward sides of the beach. Despite the language barrier between these two sides, the encounter does not go awry and both favours and exchanges are grounded in reciprocation. The third section will plumb the depths of the material as well symbolic flows across cultural divides and question received and one-sided conceptualisations of cross-cultural encounters in the Pacific Ocean. The final section in this chapter scrutinises modes of discursive exclusion in Keate's travelogue. Supported by six-

6 Nicholas Thomas, 'George Keate: Benevolence on the Beach,' in Jonathan Lamb, Vanessa Smith & Nicholas Thomas, eds., *Exploration & Exchange: A South Seas Anthology, 1680–1900* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 112-13, here 113.

7 Nicholas Thomas, '"The Pelew Islands" in British Culture,' in Nero & Thomas, eds., 27-39, here 34.

8 Thomas, 'Benevolence on the Beach,' 113.

9 Ibid., 112

teen Chinese seamen, the English crew take their manpower for granted but do not admit them to the actively lived cosmopolitan vision on the Palauan beach. Just as Blount represents the Jews as a malicious and despicable people, the *Account* silences the Chinese in similar and comparable ways. There are thus limits to the Pacific version of global civility, which demand critical attention at the same time as they invite a historically specific analysis of the relationship between self and other in potentially life-threatening situations.

1. Self-Preservation and the Rhetoric of Sensibility

Unlike Middle Eastern travel, journeys to the Pacific 'were, from the start, unaccountable and ungovernable.'[10] Travellers in the old and familiar lands of the Ottoman Empire had a plethora of published sources at their disposal whilst explorers setting out to the South Pacific had little idea of what its archipelagos and peoples had in store for them. Their perilous, and often disturbing, adventures in unexplored waters revealed 'the uncertainty of the bond between the self and society,'[11] causing an experiential split between the seamen's time aboard ship and their audiences at home. Indeed, maritime eyewitnesses were frequently met with scepticism when they tried to share their stories with a reading public reluctant to believe in either the truth claims of travellers' tales or wondrously different peoples at the other end of the world. Divergent in interest, experience and first-hand knowledge, the seamen and their potential audiences lacked a basis for negotiating what one side had seen and what the other expected to hear:

> [Narratives of voyages] tell of paradises, monsters, outrageous sufferings, and miracles. They handle the scarcely expressible intensity of sensations experienced by the single voyager alone in the presence of things utterly new and unparalleled. [...] Often these narratives emphasize the unbridgeable gulf between the experience of the single self and the history of civil society, not simply by describing remarkable and incomparable things, but also by including accounts of castaways and mutineers, people whose links with the

10 Donna Landry, 'Saddle Time,' *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts* 46: 3 (2004), 441-58, here 447.

11 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 19.

> social world were decisively severed, and who had chosen (or been forced) to subsist in a precontractual state of nature.[12]

This split of, and conflict between, the private and public side of the self is inextricably intertwined with the emergence of the public sphere, in which the European middle classes accomplished their political emancipation. The sense of a single undivided self is thus called into question by increased social differentiation as well as the resultant spaces dedicated to the articulation of specific thematic concerns. Transposed to the global level of maritime long distance travel, this development challenged both the unity of the traveller's civil self and the possibility of credibly sharing his experiences.

However, the discussion surrounding the non-identity of the private and public selves is not confined to travel and travel-writing. In what was a major philosophical debate of the eighteenth century, the positions established by Bernard Mandeville and Lord Shaftesbury 'remained alive and influential, not only in Britain but on the Continent and in the American colonies as well.'[13] Egoism, moral flexibility and a split self stood vis-à-vis altruism, benevolence and an undivided self, representing the two seemingly irreconcilable points of departure for any discussion of human nature and civil society:

> Lord Shaftesbury identified the unity of the self as the continuity of its natural and civil sides, while Mandeville, following Hobbes, understood the civil self as an equilibrium of two selves. According to the one, the self is lost when it ceases to act like itself; according to the other, this occurs only when the self assumes that it is undivided from itself.[14]

The inexpressibility of wondrous episodes experienced on long sea voyages seems to favour the Mandevillian position of a split self. In this perspective, the seamen's adventures are inherently private and need not match the public's expectations of objective results and scientific findings. James Cook, the eighteenth century's most famous Pacific explorer, for example, was acutely 'aware of the appalling risks he had to take to test [the scientific community's] ideas'[15] and the difficulties involved in adequately conveying his ordeals. He

12 Ibid., 23.

13 Irwin Primer, 'Mandeville and Shaftesbury: Some Facts and Problems,' in Primer, ed., *Mandeville Studies: New Explorations in the Art and Thought of Dr. Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 126-141, here 127.

14 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 30.

15 Ibid., 92.

and his contemporaries obviously lacked a suitable means for sharing singular adventures with their contemporaries at home, a dilemma exacerbated by the opacity of the je ne sais quoi.[16] 'This riddling phrase denoting the value of an incommunicable feeling covered the most painful as well as the most pleasurable interludes of navigation, as indeed it did of all travel.'[17] It seems, then, that the contested intellectual terrain surrounding the two sides of the split self is mirrored on the global level by a larger, and putatively unbridgeable, gulf between the familiar terrains of the Euro-Islamic worlds on the one hand and the unknown, and apparently unknowable, Pacific Ocean on the other.

Written 'in resolutely optimistic and sentimental terms,'[18] Keate's *Account of the Pelew Islands* provides an alternative perspective by both reconciling the two sides of the self and bridging the great distance between European civil society and Pacific exploration. In so doing, it allows for the crew's collective self-preservation and challenges the Robinsonade's literary pre-eminence in the realm of survival and adventure stories. The lonely protagonists of these stories may or may not have experienced the pleasures of roaming paradisiacal islands and establishing themselves, even if only temporarily, in the state of nature; but their time as castaways is not a 'purgation of the social self, a refitting and careening of its fundamental values prior to its return to civic duty.'[19] This view underestimates the hardships experienced at the same time as it reductively objectifies the Pacific as site for a mere redefinition of the European civil self. Already difficult to represent, native voices, traditions and cultural practices have no place in such a perspective, except through their relationality to European patterns of thought. Keate's sentimental rhetoric, by contrast, makes possible the incorporation of cultural difference and favourably represents the mutually improving relations between the Palauans and the English seamen. But what is more, by extending sentimentalism's representational range to include the sandy contact zone of the beach, it defies the je ne sais quoi of extreme maritime travel and replaces medial opacity with legibility, silence with vocal multiplicity, and domestication of the native with representational inclusiveness.

Keate's text is, of course, still a European representation of Pacific islanders and as such intrinsically tied to European perceptions, assumptions

16 Ibid., 22.

17 Ibid., 12.

18 Thomas, 'Benevolence on the Beach,' 112.

19 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 179.

and values. But 'the attempt to describe another culture is never simply an act of appropriation, nor are images of the other merely versions of the self-image of the observer.'[20] These dichotomously structured and clear-cut power differentials inherited from the age of high imperialism tend to obscure the improvisational early phases of European exploration, especially in the Pacific arena where encounters were largely unscripted in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[21] Most importantly, however, whilst Crusoe's fate tells a story of severed bonds in peripheral territories, Keate's account establishes and re-establishes connections by representing the Palauan beach as enlightened and cosmopolitan locus of cooperation and successful cross-fertilisation. As such, it is a key text in complicating simplistic histories of colonialism, in which symbolic and material power emanate in unilateral fashion from metropolitan centres. Far from depicting the Palauan case as a lucky accident, the *Account* is pivotal to the history of global civility, and opens gateways for geographically and historically specific analyses of cross-cultural encounters at odds with the sweeping generalisations of much literary and historical scholarship.[22]

If we follow the *Antelope*'s route, we can see that immediately after hitting the reef, an event causing a 'distressed situation' accompanied by 'horror and dismay' (70), both the maritime esprit de corps and the civil selves of the seamen aim at collective self-preservation. Instead of anticipating the pleasures derived from the dissolution of social bonds, the crew appeal to the authority of Captain Wilson when 'the rocks made their appearance' and the ship 'filled with water as high as the lower deck hatchways' (71). In this life-threatening situation, naval procedure and standard sequences of operation quickly take effect:

> During this tremendous interval, the people thronged round the Captain, and earnestly requested to be directed what to do, beseeching him to give orders, and they would immediately execute them.

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20 Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 21.

21 Jonathan Lamb, Vanessa Smith & Nicholas Thomas, 'Introduction,' in Lamb, Smith, & Thomas, eds., xiii-xxv, here xx.

22 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), 8.

> Every thing that could be thought expedient in so distressful and trying an occasion, was executed with a readiness and obedience hardly ever exceeded. (70)

These two passages describe collective efforts aimed at survival rather than visions of self-indulgence in paradise. And Captain Wilson emerges as the crew's centrepiece by taking responsibility, giving orders and caring 'for the general good' right from the beginning:

> The people all now assembled aft, the quarter-deck laying highest out of the water, the quarter-boards afforded some little shelter from the sea and rain; here, after contemplating a few moments their wretched situation, the Captain endeavoured to revive their drooping spirits, which began to sink through anxiety and fatigue, by reminding them that shipwreck was a misfortune to which those who navigate the ocean were always liable; that their situation indeed was more difficult, from happening in an unknown and unfrequented sea, but that this consideration should rouse their most active attention, as much must depend on themselves to be extricated from their distress; that when these misfortunes happened, they were often rendered more dreadful than they otherwise would be by the despair and disagreement of the crew; to avoid which, it was strongly recommended to every individual not to drink any spirituous liquor. A ready consent was given to this advice. (70-1)

The Captain is both a father figure and commanding authority, whose orders and experience rationalise the dangers of seafaring as unpleasant, but unavoidable, part of a seaman's profession. Confronted with adverse conditions outside the domestic, structured and regulated space of the ship, Wilson tries to curb the dissociative social consequences of the storm by comparing the crew's fate to that of other seamen. The *Antelope*'s case is, however, somewhat special as it is set in an 'in-between space of transformation and change where nothing is ever fixed but everything always in flux,'[23] an impression amplified by Wilson's reference to 'an unknown and unfrequented sea.' But his quick response to both the crew and the situation's demands adjusts the 'remarkably *landed* quality' of Western 'knowledge and reason'[24] to a new and

23 Bernhard Klein & Gesa Mackenthun, 'Introduction: The Sea is History,' in Klein & Mackenthun, eds., *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 1-12, here 3.

24 Ibid., 2.

unknown maritime setting, which is going a long way towards bridging the gulf between home and abroad, known and unknown, metropolitan centre and Pacific periphery.

Yet Wilson's nimble reaction aboard the sinking vessel is not merely indicative of his aptitude in seamanship. It reflects the rationalist tenets of Enlightenment and coincides with a sea change in the representation of oceans, extending the drive towards secularisation and demystification to natural entities:

> The negative image of the evil sea and its many associated dangers is traditionally seen to be replaced in the 18th century with an emerging conception of the ocean – in the contexts of colonization, economic modernization and global trade – as a technically manageable but socially sensitive space.[25]

Wilson's clear and pragmatic directions, as well as his efforts to bolster the crew's spirits, leave no space for elements of the supernatural, 'traditionally supposed to congregate at the ends of the earth.'[26] This representation of 'realistic elements of life and work at sea'[27] in Keate's text not only suspends the maritime je ne sais quoi, it also adds to the change of literary and cultural perspectives on the sea by familiarising English readers with their countrymen's plight in remote waters. Their emotions, in turn, become comprehensible, and reproducible, for metropolitan audiences otherwise separated and cut off from the oceanic deprivations of their travelling contemporaries. The men aboard the sinking *Antelope*, then, are not 'collectors of singular things and connoisseurs of solitude'[28] by virtue of their esprit de corps both encouraged and maintained by their captain. But what is more, this episode explodes narrowly defined notions of the age of Enlightenment as a specifically European intellectual practice by allowing rationality and pragmatism to prevail over panic and distress. In this perspective, the period in question redefines itself

25 Bernhard Klein, 'Introduction: Britain and the Sea,' in Klein, ed., *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 1-12, here: 4.

26 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 81.

27 Klein, 'Britain and the Sea,' 4.

28 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 12.

as 'long *and* wide eighteenth century,'[29] opening vistas for critical reflections on unscripted encounters, unexpected convergences and global connections.

But many of the philosophical figureheads of the eighteenth century were quite impatient with the ramifications of England's increasing global reach and the bi-directional traffic concomitant with it. When the explorer's public self tried to divulge remarkable stories experienced by his private self, he aroused suspicion by returning with material perceived as incommensurate with the cultural fabric of European societies. Preoccupied with novelty, reading and taste, Lord Shaftesbury, for example, was convinced that '[m]onsters and monster-lands were never more in request' than 'at this present time.'[30] For him, travel and travel-writing posed a threat to the world he was conversant with: 'Our relish or taste must of necessity grow barbarous, whilst barbarian customs, savage manners, Indian wars, and wonders of the terra incognita, employ our leisure and are the chief material to furnish out a library.' In a similarly conjectural vein, Adam Smith draws a sharp distinction between polite society and the barbarians outside it: 'Hardiness is the character most suitable to the circumstances of a savage; sensibility to those of one who lives in a very civilized society.'[31] Ironically, however, it is Smith himself who theorised the sensory means that can be brought to bridge this essentialised gap. Describing the relationship between the sufferer and an 'attentive spectator,' he chooses 'sympathy' as the appropriate term 'to denote our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever:'[32]

> By the imagination we place ourselves in this situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them.[33]

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29 Felicity Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10 [my emphasis].

30 Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, 2 Vols. (Indianapolis & New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), Vol. I, 225.

31 Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. by Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 245.

32 Ibid., 13

33 Ibid., 12

This sufferer-spectator constellation in Smith's moral philosophy is aesthetically replicated by literary representations of distress in the sentimental novel where it establishes a connection between character and reader. As part of the private self's pleasures, this relationship is frequently played out in scenes depicting charity, reformed prostitutes or family reunions, eliciting emotional and bodily responses in the reader. Most importantly, however, both relationships conjoin an outsider with an insider, or alternatively an observer with an affected person, and engender social, cultural and aesthetic bonds between strangers at the same time as they bridge spatio-temporal disjunctures. In so doing, the private act of reading acquires public significance, since the 'sentimental novel, although entertainment, was a recognised agent for the dissemination of argument and advice.'[34] Sentimental fiction thus stands at the confluence of the private self's pleasures on the one hand and the public self's social responsibilities and political investments on the other.

Keate adroitly transposes this relationship to the South Pacific and uses it to make comprehensible the incomprehensible of extreme maritime travel. The seriousness of the seamen's situation after hitting the reef, as well as the unchartered territory in which they find themselves, becomes reproducible for English readers in a literary medium they are intimately acquainted with. Of course, aestheticising adverse conditions through the language of feeling does not lessen the seriousness of the seamen's ordeal, but it brings home, and makes accessible, for English readers the life-threatening circumstances under which they laboured to secure their survival.

Earlier in the century, Shaftesbury had already been aware of the popular appeal of such stories: '[S]o enchanted we are with the travelling memoirs of any casual adventurer, that be his character or genius what it will, we have no sooner turned over a page or two, than we begin to interest ourselves highly in his affairs.'[35] But Locke's pupil was weary of travel literature, since the sky seemed to be the limit in this genre: 'From monstrous brutes he [the author] proceeds to yet more monstrous men. For in this race of authors he is ever completest and of the first rank who is able to speak of things the most unnatural and monstrous.'[36] Such stories neither advanced knowledge nor contributed to a reconciliation of the conflictual relationship between the private

34 Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16.

35 Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, 223.

36 Ibid.

and public sides of the self. In other words, they did not fit in with the secular and rationalist drive inherent in Enlightenment thought because they 'are useless for a history of the world or a biography of the self.'[37]

In Keate's *Account*, however, readers do not find monsters, cannibals or other such wondrous things. His book instead textualises the Pacific terra incognita for English readers and demonstrates that self-preservation and the history of civil society need not be antithetical. Couched in sentimental language, the adventures of the *Antelope*'s crew transform the 'extended and uncontrolled je ne sais quoi'[38] of long distance voyaging into an adventure story, which paradoxically borrows from Shaftesbury's philosophy of benevolence and moral sense whilst practising its key points in unchartered territory far removed from the 'lives of the wisest and most polished people.'[39] On the Palauan beach, then, we become witnesses of an act of collective self-preservation expressly confirming the fabric of English society rather than threatening or undoing it:

> Circumstanced as these poor fellows were, nothing but a long and well-trained discipline, and the real affection they bore their commander, could have produced the fortitude and steady firmness which they testified on this occasion; and certainly nothing could more exhilarate the spirits of their officers, or more endear the men to them, than this conquest they shewed over themselves – What indeed was there not to be hoped from such a band of brave fellows, whom unanimity, affections, and mutual confidence, had united in one unremitting plan of exertion, for the preservation of the whole! (85)

Even though Captain Wilson ordered to 'stave every vessel of liquor' (85) in order to avoid disarray, the emphasis in this passage is clearly on emotional manifestations of social cohesion and the confirmation of a naval order predating the shipwreck. Keate here draws on the rhetoric of sensibility and applies the sufferer-spectator constellation to an unscripted situation in a transcultural context. Appealing to the sympathy of his readers, he opens a window into hitherto unknown territory for them at the same time as he stages an all-encompassing, if not familial, unity. In so doing, he demonstrates how

37 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 39.

38 Ibid., 23

39 Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, 222.

even in situations rife with danger and distress 'human behaviour may be motivated primarily by impulses of benevolence or sympathy rather than by those of acquisitiveness or mere self-preservation.'[40] The convergence of sentimental rhetoric, shipwreck and survival thus breeds global civility in a setting where it is least expected.

Like Robinson Crusoe, Captain Wilson's men are shipwrecked in unknown territory. But unlike Defoe's hero, they are not forced back upon themselves, nor do they regress into a pre-contractual state of nature. In lieu of abandoning their social ties, they renew them and dedicate their energies to 'the preservation of the whole,' demonstrating that 'no conflict existed between the propensity for self-preservation and the principles of civil society.'[41] Though practiced in the Pacific realm, however, civility in this context is only global insofar as geographical parameters are concerned; in terms of its representational range, it remains *intra*-cultural until the Palauan natives appear for the first time. Yet as soon as they turn up, Keate's account represents them as both benevolent and sentimental subjects, extending global civility to the *inter*-cultural setting on the Palauan beach. Captain Wilson and the crew's linguist Tom Rose are the first seamen to meet representatives of their host culture. And after the tentative exchange of a few words 'in the Malay tongue,' the natives

> stepped out of the canoes into the water, and came towards the shore, on which Captain WILSON waded into the water to meet them, and embracing them in a friendly manner, conducted them to the shore, and introduced them to his officers and unfortunate companions. (76)

Both sides find themselves 'suddenly in a space in which all action is provisional.'[42] This challenge notwithstanding, the Anglo-Palauan encounter does not go awry and demonstrates how meetings of strangers in liminal spaces can lead to mutually improving and egalitarian exchanges. In this regard, it differs decisively from nineteenth century representations of Pacific life, since 'two social orders intersect and neither is sovereign.'[43] If anything, the traffic transacted on the Palauan beach is even-handed and governed by mutual

40 Stephen Bending & Stephen Bygrave, 'Introduction,' in Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed. by Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), vii-xxiv, here xi.

41 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 30.

42 Lamb et al, 'Introduction,' xix.

43 Ibid.

interest: 'But if the uncommon appearance of the natives of Pelew excited surprise in the English, their appearance, in return, awakened in their visitors a far greater degree of astonishment' (79).

Such reciprocity informs all levels of exchange – symbolic, material and personal – in Keate's text. Both sides offer insights into their cultural practices, return favours and negotiate peacefully in the event of either unexpected occurrences or misunderstandings. In order to deepen the tentative contacts initially established on the beach, for example, they decide to exchange embassies: 'They [the natives] wished that one of our people might be sent in their canoes to the Rupack, or king, that he might see what sort of people they were; which was agreed to by Captain WILSON' (77). The Captain's brother, Matthias Wilson, is sent to the native chief, who resides elsewhere in the archipelago. His task is to secure 'the means of alleviating their forlorn situation' and ask the king's 'permission to build a vessel to carry them back to their own country' (81), a proposition indicating the crew's determination to achieve collective self-preservation. In return, 'three men remained with our people, as did one of the king's brothers, called Raa Kook, commander in chief of the king's forces' (81). There were no apprehensions and the Palauans 'passed the night with our people, and appeared to be perfectly easy and contented with their reception' (81). The only thing that did not meet their approval that night was the salty, and for them unknown, taste of English ham.

When Matthias Wilson returns from the main island three days later with one of the king's brothers, Arra Kooker, he brings some good news for the English crew. The king informs them that

> they had his full leave and permission to build a vessel on the island on which they then were, or that they might remove to, and build it on the island where he lived himself, and be under his own more immediate protection. (86)

This message provides the English with existential security in adverse conditions and endows their efforts at return with both meaning and a common cause. Their story leads from shipwreck, survival and salvage over insecurity to the establishment of friendly relations with the Palauans, contractually codified, as it were, by the local sovereign's leave to remain. Of course, their decision to decline the king's offer to move to the main island aims at securing a maximum degree of liberty and action. However, the obvious self-interest behind this decision does not void the reciprocal and open dialogue between both parties. It is rather the result of the complex negotiations aimed

at reconciling the demands of self-preservation with the sovereign rights of the locals. And what is more, after the loss of their ship the English know that their resources are limited and cooperation with, and respect towards, representatives of their host culture emerge as crucial survival strategies. But these exigencies of extreme travel do *not* shift the emphasis to the Mandevillian end of the spectrum in the debate surrounding the self and its preservation; instead they illustrate the unprecedented complexities and negotiations necessitated by the crew's fate, as well as the ways in which a civil, benevolent and undivided (collective) self is best equipped to deal with this challenge.

Appealing to his audience's fellow-feeling, Keate invites his readers to follow Captain Wilson and his men as they forge such a self. He presents the crew's concerted effort at survival as a fully-fledged avowal of familial sentimentality under the paternal guidance of their captain, in which the South Pacific serves as the stage on which English selves jovially merge into a collective, almost egalitarian, entity. As such, the English seamen do not redefine themselves in the face of paradise but work incredibly hard to achieve their goal. In so doing, they corroborate the social fabric of their nation at the same time as they improvisingly transpose it to the Palauan beach, where it becomes the vehicle for the actively lived ideal of global civility:

> The plan [of building a ship] was shown to every body, and approved by all. The petty officers and common men considering, that to pursue this interesting business, every individual must do his part, and all concur in becoming obedient to the command of one superior, who should conduct and regulate the whole operation, the affection each had borne to their Captain, and still bore him, though misfortune had severed the tie between them, made them unanimously request Captain WILSON to be that one superior, and that he would take the command upon him, faithfully promising that they would, in all things, implicitly obey his orders, equally as when the ANTELOPE was on float; that she now being a wreck, they would consider Captain WILSON (whose former conduct they said they should ever remember with the warmest affection) as the master or manager of the yard, and submit to such laws and regulations as usually govern places of that kind. Nothing could more affect the sensibility of such a character as Captain WILSON's, than to see all those who had served under him voluntarily again seek him as their commander, to share still far severer toil. With a degree of joy, only exceeded by his gratitude, he accepted the flattering distinction their generosity offered him, expressing at the same time an earnest wish, that in

> case any censure or punishment should hereafter be found necessary to be passed on any individual, that this unpleasant office might not rest with him, but be decided by the majority of voices. (105-6)

Electing Captain Wilson leader on the beach, the seamen transcend individual pursuits and idiosyncracies for the sake of collective self-preservation. This process is reminiscent of a family reunion, a theme central to the concerns of sentimental fiction, and re-evaluates paternalistic traditions in a cross-cultural setting. Though inherently conservative, the ideal of the nuclear family organised around the authority of a father-figure is crucial to reinforcing the crew's esprit de corps in this particular case. Whilst this seems to be at odds with the emancipatory drives of Sentimentalism and Enlightenment thought, Keate's orchestration of family-like bonds and sentiments provides the social cement on which the seamen organise both their relationship with the Palauans and their return to England. In the crew's situation, 'reason' alone is, of course, limited, but it can enter into a productive relationship with 'sentiment,'[44] in which the plan to build a vessel is emotionally buttressed by even-handed gestures of sociality across cultural divides.

If Mandevillian conceptualisations had governed the self's relationship to itself, adventurers and soldiers of fortune among the crew would have enjoyed their new-found liberty on the beach without participating in collective efforts at self-preservation. But instead of anarchic or egoistic indulgence in paradise, Keate presents his readers with a transcultural variation on Shaftesbury's altruism, in which the reinforcement of social bonds overrides their potential dissolution. Elaborating on contemporary 'maritime proceedings,' (106) Keate addresses his audience's landed frame of reference and clarifies the situation of the seamen in order to emphasise the exceptional quality of the *Antelope*'s case. '[I]t will not be improper to remark,' he continues, 'that when a merchant-ship is wrecked, all authority immediately ceases, and every individual is at full liberty to shift for himself' (106). Whilst the single castaway may have been tempted to relinquish his civil self, the determination and perseverance of Captain Wilson's men offer alternative perspectives on the literary Robisonade by opening gateways for collective action and benevolent impulses. The captain's re-election, then, was by no means a given but could be secured by the crew's affection for their paternal superior, demonstrating the benefit of benevolence and fellow-feeling in adverse conditions.

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44 Bending & Bygrave, 'Introduction,' xi.

This scene of contractual renewal on the Palauan beach is indeed the pivotal point in Keate's *Account*. It leaves hierarchies existing prior to the shipwreck intact for its readers and creates a point of departure from which the English could approach their native hosts safely and even-handedly. Socially re-established on the Palauan beach, and existentially safeguarded by the king's authority, the seamen commence building their vessel as community bonded by sentimental benevolence, extending civility to hitherto unknown and unexplored territory. As the exchanges between both sides intensify, the Palauans become part of global civility's discursive universe, since Keate neither resorts to exoticisation nor applies Eurocentric benchmarks in his description of them. Instead the *Account*'s register remains unchanged when the Palauans are the focus of attention:

> From the general character of these people, the reader, I should conceive, will be disposed to allow, that their lives do credit to human nature; and that, however untutored, however uninformed, their manners present an interesting picture to mankind. – We see a despotic government without one shade of tyranny, and power only exercised for general happiness, the subjects looking up with filial reverence to their king. – And, whilst a mild government, and an affectionate confidence, linked their little state in bonds of harmony, gentleness of manners was the natural result, and fixed a brotherly and disinterested intercourse among one another.[45] (252-3)

Describing social organisation and codes of conduct among the Palauans, Keate's emphasis here is on civility, a behavioural feature expressly not confined to the English. His representation of life in the archipelago thus embraces the natives without accentuating discriminative qualities between Europeans and Pacific islanders. Whilst he alludes to differences that undoubtedly exist by characterising the natives as both 'untutored' and 'uninformed,' they nonetheless do 'credit to human nature' and present themselves as an interesting case worthy to be included in an enlightened map of mankind. But most importantly, they somewhat resemble the seamen and their affection for Captain Wilson, since the Palauans seem to have had similar feelings for their sovereign. In Keate's text, we might say, the English as well as the natives

45 This excerpt is taken from chapter xxvi and the corresponding note no. 13 reads: 'It appears that the meaning of "despotic" has shifted in the past two hundred years; here it is used in the sense apparently that there is a king or, more properly, paramount chief, in a position of power, rather than reflecting the way this power is wielded.'

are represented as communities in their own right as (a) and (b) rather than (a) and the converse of (a).[46]

But Keate not merely represents the Palauans collectively as a polite people, he individualises them as sentimental subjects. As such, they possess a moral compass overlapping with the social norms of his readers, a feature that potentially levels the distinctions between benevolent, but 'untutored,' Pacific islanders and the moral high ground of enlightened Europeans. When, for example, one of the seamen 'endeavour[ed] to make himself agreeable to a lady belonging to one of the rupacks [chiefs]' Arra Kooker told him 'with the greatest civility' that 'it was not right to do so' (245). Moral integrity is a Palauan characteristic in this situation but does not result in European anxieties of authority, nor do the English seamen conceive of themselves 'as civilized men in an uncivilized world.'[47] Even though they are stranded in unknown territory, they move 'in a roughly equivalent kind of world'[48] in which civility is global rather than exclusively European.

It is, of course, the language of sentiment and sensibility, aided by the demands of self-preservation, which establishes such connections across cultural divides. Yet Keate's representation of them is not confined to transactions on the beach or cross-cultural negotiations of morality. After the crew have completed the vessel, for example, he employs the literary aesthetics of sensibility for his description of the farewell scene. The 'General' Raa Kook, a Palauan who 'had great expression of sensibility in his countenance' (212), emerges as a man of feeling in the South Pacific. Whilst the English feel 'the pain of quitting these friendly people,' too, Keate places the emphasis on the native general who 'was so affected that he was at first unable to speak' (212). But he takes the seamen 'cordially by the hand, and pointing with the other to his heart, said, *it was there he felt the pain* of bidding them farewell; nor were there any on board who saw his departure without sharing nearly the same distress' (212). Keate's depiction of Raa Kook in this situation is similar to a scene in Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), in which Mr. Atkins's feelings on being reunited with his daughter are not simply narrated but rather commemorated: 'He turned [his eyes] up to heaven – then on his daughter.

46 Francois Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, transl. by Janet Lloyd (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 212-13.

47 Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 155.

48 Ibid.

– He laid his left hand on his heart – the sword dropped from his right – he burst into tears.'[49] Such scenes are part and parcel of sentimentalism and pointing to one's heart or shedding tears are legible signs of being emotionally moved at something overwhelmingly touching that evades expression. Although he does not cry, Raa Kook 'gave our people a last affectionate look – then dropped astern' (212). This scene emerges as the yardstick for culturally unifying, and mutually improving, relations between 'peoples [hitherto] geographically and historically separated'[50] by demonstrating that Pacific islanders, who did not share social, cultural or geographical bonds with England, could embrace – and be embraced by – a potentially philanthropic European export that treated them as equals rather than as 'Savages in the Tropical Seas.'[51] The *Account*'s representational inclusiveness may thus serve as point of departure for a literary history of the eighteenth century, which is both long *and* wide.

2. From Sentimental Content to Fragmentary Form

Despite their cultural differences and the language barrier between them, the English and the Palauans established mutually improving relations on the beach and beyond. As we have seen, Keate represents the cultural traffic between both communities in sentimental terms, reconciling the seemingly incommensurate impulses of self-preservation on the one hand and polite sociability on the other. He uses the reformist and inclusive impulses of sentimental fiction and marries them to the travel writing genre in order to achieve culturally interlacing effects. In this respect, both content *and* form are vital to understanding Keate's hybridising transposition of the sentimental novel to the South Pacific. Since sentimental novels often consist of only loosely connected chapters – Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling*, for example, is a collection of elaborate sentimental scenes, whereas Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* is tied together by Yorick's trip to France-, they leave behind an impression of

49 Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling*, ed. by Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 50.

50 Pratt, *Imperial* Eyes, 8.

51 Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit*, ed. by Harvey Peter Sucksmith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 201.

fragmentariness, calling for the active coproduction of the reader. However, these discursive fractures may very well be gateways to political reflection:

> Absence is one of the major tropes of sentimental fiction. A text such as The Man of Feeling repeatedly offers us gaps, silences, and inaction or inadequate action in the face of suffering, injustice, and large-scale social ills. [...] The form allows for the inclusion of politically controversial material.[52]

By way of such discursive fractures, the sentimental novel is opened up and offers an aesthetically created space for political reflection, with the possibility of connecting 'the most domestic-seeming texts to broader transcultural and global elements.'[53] Indeed, sentimentalism's 'themes are plastic, bending to the particular exigencies of the narrative pressures of individual novels.'[54] This thematic flexibility turned sentimental novels into agents of reform, commenting on a wide range of socially and culturally pressing issues, such as prostitution, virtue or inequality. Slavery and the slave trade were the most radical form of inequality in the eighteenth century and frequently represented in the period's fiction.[55] But by virtue of its emphasis on emotions and the language of feeling, sensibility hardly ever moved beyond the representation, albeit an elaborate one, of suffering to the social and economic foundations of 'slavery proper.'[56] Doing so would have endangered the very fabric of the nation and shattered both the symbolic and material orders at the heart of Britain's emerging global reach.

Keate, by contrast, goes further than most of his contemporaries by fully incorporating the Palauans into his vision of sentimental inclusiveness. He uses sentimentalism's discursive fractures in order to present a coherent story of collective self-preservation and cultural cross-fertilisation without taking the entire formation beyond its potential breaking point. By meticulously interweaving cultural difference, travelling hazards and the language of feeling, he adapts sentimentalism's flexibility to respond to multiple thematic concerns and manages to leave the socio-cultural fabric of the metropolis intact.

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52 Bending & Bygrave. 'Introduction,' xvi.

53 Jyotsna G. Singh, 'Introduction,' in Singh, ed., *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion* (Wiley-Blackwell: Chichester, 2009),1-27, here 9.

54 Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, 49.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 86.

Though bold, his move is a skilful one, perfectly consistent with a 'principle which was central to the ideology of the Enlightenment: man's natural goodness.'[57] In this perspective, both the English and the Palauans emerge as enlightened and fully-fledged sentimental subjects, capable of improving themselves and distinguishing moral right from wrong.

The resolutely optimistic Shaftesbury, too, was preoccupied with questions of morality and goes to great lengths to demonstrate that human beings are naturally good and just. According to him, 'we call any creature worthy or virtuous' when it can distinguish 'what is morally good or ill, admirable or blamable, right or wrong.'[58] And although 'virtue or merit' is 'allowed to man only,' he can never change 'the eternal measures and immutable independent nature of worth and virtue.'[59] Writing primarily for and about polite society, he was rigidly opposed to travellers' tales, but Keate's *Account* demonstrates that his enlightened optimism could equally apply to extra-European peoples:

> One of the natives having stolen a small hatchet, that was carried in the boat to the wreck, was getting off with it in his canoe; but a musket being fired, charged only with powder, in order to frighten him, one of the people, whom the King left, went in the jolly-boat, and made him restore it. (108)

The Palauans themselves watch out for potential perpetrators among their countrymen, since iron in all shapes and forms was a much-wanted resource. The authorities among them, especially the King and his two brothers, are anxious not to let the good relationships with the English go awry. They accordingly demonstrate their susceptibility to the cross-cultural dynamics on the Palauan beach by holding members of their community to account. In so doing, they evince their very own moral sense, which is akin to Shaftesbury's characterisation of human virtue. Morality and civility are cross-cultural as well as global in this regard and render the je ne sais quoi of maritime long distance voyaging obsolete. The actions of the Palauans are both legible and understandable, familiarising English readers not only with differential social patterns and life on the beach but also illustrating that moral integrity is not

57 Maurice Cranston, 'Introduction,' in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Discourse on Inequality*, transl. with an Introduction by Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin, 1984) 9-53, here 47.

58 Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Vol. I, 252.

59 Ibid., 251 & 255.

an exclusively European property. Keate thus manages to use sentimentalism's discursive fractures for a representation of island life that complicates the relationship between European self and Pacific other at the same time as it draws attention to the pressures of self-preservation and the complex exchanges in transcultural contact zones.

3. Cultural Traffic on the Beach

The contact zone in which Captain Wilson and his men found themselves was, of course, the beach. In the event of shipwreck, its landward and seaward sides harbour peoples whose cultural trajectories accidentally and unexpectedly intersect so that 'regulation is at a minimum, and improvisation and initiative at a premium.'[60] Both sides are governed by differential social codes, belief systems and traditions, which are not necessarily similar to, or compatible with, one another: 'In comparing developments on one side of the beach with those on the other is to blend two events that are, no matter how physically proximate and materially entangled, utterly different in their historical profiles and cultural valences.'[61] Whilst the indeterminacy of such unexpected intersections seems to pose a threat to peaceful interaction, it also comprises the potential for mutually improving cross-fertilisation by virtue of its subversion or levelling of European hierarchies. In Keate's *Account*, for example, the English seamen and the Palauan natives transform tentative beginnings into ongoing consolidated friendships, with exchange, curiosity and improvisation remaining integral constituents throughout the encounter. In this interactional context, the beach explodes restrictive notions of sentimentalism's representational and geographical reach, thus becoming the arena in which European discursive formations acquire global significance.

Journeys to these arenas, especially in the South Pacific, were predicated upon the epistemological claim of discovering 'new worlds – the discovery of cultures and continents formerly unknown to the West, at least.'[62] In the case of the *Antelope*'s crew, this novelty became a sudden and radical reality as a result of the shipwreck, but it also added, albeit unintentionally, to Europe's growing archive of knowledge about the diversity of Pacific worlds.

60 Lamb, *Preserving the* Self, 54.

61 Ibid., 133.

62 Landry, 'Saddle Time,' 447.

Keate himself 'feel[s] some satisfaction in being the instrument of introducing to the world a *new people*,' adding that he takes great pride in 'vindicating their injured characters from the imputation of those savage manners which ignorance alone had ascribed to them' (51; emphasis in original). Knowledge is key in this respect and demonstrates how literary gentlemen such as Keate were crucially involved in both its production and dissemination, two major concerns in Enlightenment's endeavour to dispel myths and question received wisdom. And given the profoundly hierarchical way in which Britain has ordered its maritime history in later centuries, the adventures of Captain Wilson's men on the Palauan beach provide a point of departure from which we can start rereading eighteenth century literature and culture 'not univocally but *contrapuntally*, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts.'[63]

On the Palauan beach, these histories were not antithetical to one another, nor was there an 'ongoing contest between north and south, metropolis and periphery, white and native.'[64] Keate instead represents the sandy interface as giving rise to mutually improving relationships, reciprocity and dialogue, emphasising both the sudden proximity and interconnectedness of social practices caused by an accidental cultural convergence. Pregnant with opportunity, this contact familiarises two entirely different, yet spatially contiguous, peoples and demonstrates how cooperation rather than competition is capable of facilitating self-preservation and beneficial exchanges. When, for instance, the crew need fresh water immediately after the loss of their ship, the natives not only share their knowledge of local resources, but actively assist in procuring the much-needed fluid:

> The natives conducted our people to a well of fresh water; the path leading to this well lying across steep and rugged rocks rendered the track hazardous and difficult. RICHARD SHARP, a midshipman, a lad about fifteen, being on this duty, the natives took him in their arms when the path was rugged, and they were very careful in these places to assist the men, who returned with two jars filled. (81)

In this passage, global civility is not merely a discursive formation bending to situational exigencies; it emerges as the material equivalent to, and pro-

63 Edward W., Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 59.

64 Ibid.

longation of, the first appearance of the natives. From its inception, then, this 'friendly alliance does not unravel, but is extended'[65] and raises questions about the interactional dynamics and spatial configurations of cross-cultural encounters during pre-imperial times, especially in the eighteenth century.

Washed up on unknown shores, Captain Wilson and his men needed Palauan support for their intended return to England and experienced first-hand the levelling tendencies of encounters on the beach. As in-between space, it encourages 'forms of sociality that might be understood as less hierarchical and more egalitarian than those bred by other localities.'[66] In this respect, the beach is intimately related to both the sea and the desert as transnational contact zones, in which travellers, explorers or shipwrecked sailors find themselves either modifying hierarchies and authorities or reinstating them in the interests of self-preservation. We can conceptualise both strategies as coping mechanisms necessitated by the prevalent insecurity of Europeans in these spaces, in which extreme weather conditions, unknown ecosystems and alien lifeways erode their supposed authority. But what is more, the hospitality of the Palauans creates a 'virtual space of sentimentalism' on the beach, which is 'reformative, morally instructive and virtuous.'[67] As such, it questions Eurocentric assumptions of moral or intellectual superiority at the same time as it qualifies the traveller, often a 'white male subject'[68] on a scientific or commercial mission, and transforms him into 'an object of indigenous knowledge and even appropriation.'[69] This reversal of the native gaze, however, contains the harmonising potential that is so central to global civility in general, and the Anglo-Palauan encounter in particular, since '[h]ere beside the sea, there is harmony amongst humankind, from whichever corner of the globe – north, east, south, west – the subalterns come. The sea, like death, is a great leveller, but a leveller in a desire for the horizonless horizons of life.'[70] Coupled with Enlightenment's emancipatory impetus, the spatial dynamics of the beach seem to make possible an existence without

65 Thomas, '"The Pelew Islands" in British Culture,' 31.

66 Donna Landry, 'Rewriting the Sea from the Desert Shore: Equine and Equestrian Perspectives on a New Maritime History,' in Maria Fusaro, Colin Heywood & Mohamed-Salah Omri, eds., *Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Braudel's Maritime Legacy* (London & New York: Tauris, 2010), 253-277, her 253.

67 Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, 42.

68 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 9.

69 Lamb et al, 'Introduction,' xx.

70 Caroline Rooney, 'What is the Oceanic?' *Angelaki* 12:2 (August 2007), 19–32, here 28.

artificially sustained power-relations, peaceful interaction and traffic across cultural divides, epitomising the period's central struggle to liberate man as 'he is everywhere in chains.'[71] In this perspective, the temporary integration of the English seamen into the archipelago's community is not an exception to the rule of European metropolitan superiority but both an enrichment of eighteenth century canonical inventories and a revaluation of reductive notions of agency and subjectivity.

Indeed, the Palauans showcase their agency 'in the face of novel devices and habits' which is 'evidence of a propensity for self-improvement.'[72] This feature places them right at the centre of Enlightenment's intellectual universe, for which improvement, and especially self-improvement, was a central axiom. Among the goods, commodities and tools retrieved from the wreck of the *Antelope* the natives found a plethora of incentives, prompting them to scrutinise the unknown material practices that had so suddenly arrived on their beach. On the King's first visit to the English camp, his brother Raa Kook, who is particularly fond of the seamen's company, is eager to familiarise him with the seamen's tools:

> He put [the grindstone] in motion, which (having been shown the method) he had frequently done before; the King remained fixed in astonishment at the rapidity of its motion, and at the explanation of the General, that it would immediately sharpen and polish iron. Captain WILSON ordered a hatchet to be brought, and ground, that they might more readily perceive its operation. Raa Kook eagerly laid hold of the handle of the stone, and began turning it, appearing highly delighted himself to let his brother see how well he understood it; he having the preceding day amused himself for some hours with this novelty, and had sharpened several pieces of iron, which he had picked up about the tents. (96-7)

Iron, though extremely rare in the archipelago, was no unknown commodity, for the King 'bore a hatchet on his shoulder, the head of which was made of iron' (94). The Palauans would naturally attach great importance to the maintenance of these rare and valuable tools, given that 'all the other hatchets [the English] had seen were of shell' (94). Hence, the immediate response of the Palauans to the new cultural technique, as well as their eagerness to emulate

71 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, transl. and introduced by Maurice Cranston (London: Penguin, 1968), 49.

72 Thomas, '"The Pelew Islands" in British Culture,' 33.

it, not only signifies curiosity but also, and more importantly, openness and exchange in a cross-cultural setting.

Such exchanges were crucial to eighteenth century thought and inextricably intertwined with contemporary notions of improvement. Adam Smith, for example, conceptualised 'the propensity to truck, barter, and exchange one thing for another' as lying 'in human nature' and being 'common to all men.'[73] And since 'man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren,' it is 'by treaty, by barter, and by purchase, that we obtain from one another the greater part of those mutual good offices which we stand in need of.'[74] But whereas Smith's economic philosophy relied on a restrictive concept of 'civilized society,'[75] the anonymous *History of Inland Navigations* (1766) had already envisioned the benefits of global commerce, stating that 'navigation joins, as it were, the whole world in a social intercourse of benefits.'[76] This is the case in the Anglo-Palauan encounter, which temporarily conjoins members of 'civilized society' with a native community, initiating cultural traffic in a place 'where little or no commercial circulation existed.'[77] In so doing, it transposes both European cultural practices and their theorisations onto a global level at the same time as it opens new vistas and opportunities for British scientists, merchants and explorers. However, the resultant traffic on the Palauan beach is bi-directional, even-handed and mutually beneficial rather than emanating in unilateral fashion from the shipwrecked representatives of metropolitan culture.

According to the *History of Inland Navigations*, 'every pen has celebrated those great and adventurous men, who by their discoveries in this art [navigation], have spread knowledge, humanity and improvement over every part of the globe.'[78] Yet Keate's pen broadens this Eurocentric perspective by not only celebrating British perseverance in the face of adversity, but also by including the Palauans as sentimental subjects capable of improving themselves. Their responsiveness to incentives and imports from outside the archipelago

73 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 2 Vols., ed. by A. S. Skinner, R. H. Campbell & W.B. Todd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), Vol. I, 25.

74 Ibid., 26 & 27.

75 Ibid., 26.

76 *The History of Inland Navigations* (London: T. Lowndes, 1766), 1; see also: Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, 143.

77 Felicity A. Nussbaum, 'Introduction,' in Nussbaum, ed., *The Global Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 1-18, here 9.

78 *The History of Inland Navigations*, 1; see also: Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility*, 143.

emerges as critical characteristic within eighteenth century intellectual culture and is by no means confined to material practices, such as sharpening tools and weapons. On a visit to the main island, Mr Devis, the crew's draughtsman, sketches a group of native women and upon seeing the result the King 'readily entered into a true idea of the art' (121):

> The King then desired Mr. Devis to lend him a piece of paper, and his pencil, on which he attempted to delineate three or four figures, very rudely, without the least proportion; their heads, instead of an oval, being, in a pointed form, like a sugar-loaf. Nor let any one conclude from this circumstance, that the King was ostentatious to exhibit the little knowledge he possessed of the art; I rather mention it as proof of his openness of temper, to let Mr. Devis see that he was not totally ignorant of what was meant by it; nor was it less a mark of his condescension, in shewing he could very imperfectly trace what the artist was able more happily to delineate. He approved in the stranger those talents he would himself have been ambitious to possess, and in his manner of testifying his approbation, exhibited in captivating colours that which no pencil could display – the urbanity of a noble mind. (122)

We should read this episode 'neither as an instance of primitive ineptitude nor as one of barbaric vanity,'[79] since Keate takes great care to depict the local chief as curious and receptive subject, who is able to learn from example and eager to master this new representational practice. But he is not the only one among the Palauans intrigued by what Mr Devis does; 'two of his women' are ordered to pose for the artist and an attendant 'rupack looking over Mr. DEVIS's shoulder, seemed pleased at the representation, or likeness' (121). Although they are at first the objects of the artist's gaze, the natives quickly reverse this constellation by both attentively watching the entire procedure and their attempts to follow suit. Interestingly, there is no rivalry in this moment of mimetic emulation and the king's intentions are more important than the resultant drawings. This 'openness of temper' among the natives engenders a reformative cosmopolitan space on the beach, and stitches together the Palauan and English communities by differential, but complementary, cultural practices.

Yet unlike these insouciant exchanges of manual and artistic skills, the material transactions on the beach take centre stage in the course of the Anglo-Palauan encounter and acquire vital significance, especially for the English. Whilst Captain Wilson and his officers were given the permission to

79 Thomas, '"The Pelew Islands" in British Culture,' 33.

build a new vessel by the king, they nevertheless have 'to find enough carbohydrate and protein to keep the crew working.'[80] Without solving this nutritional problem, they cannot hope to return to England, a challenge aggravated by their inability to catch fish. Unfortunately, however, this failure is salient throughout the *Account*:

> They saw a great quantity of fish swimming about the ship, but could not catch any, as they would not take the baits. (68)
>
> The morning being fine, the jolly-boat was dispatched to the watering-place to fetch some timbers for futtocks, and to haul the seine [a special kind of fishing net]; but no fish could be caught. (115)
>
> The jolly-boat was sent to fish, but without success. It was singular that this was always the case; whether our countrymen knew not the proper places to go to, or the proper bait, but every attempt of this kind proved fruitless. (147)

The crew's failure to add seafood to the provisions retrieved from the wreck demonstrates how unknown territories can turn out to be intricate ecosystems, in which travellers needed 'specific kinds of knowledge for survival.'[81] These were, of course, only accessible through contact with the locals and Europeans had to cooperate with, and learn from, them when they criss-crossed the sea, the desert or similarly extreme spaces. Calling into question the centrality of European knowledge, as well as challenging simplistic conceptualisations of centre-periphery models, this reversal of epistemological authority paves the way for a comprehensive process of 'self-criticism and unlearning'[82] of privilege. Europeans in the South Pacific were accordingly in for a potentially unsettling experience, bringing home to them in vivid colours Smith's assertion that man 'stands at all times in need of the cooperation and assistance'[83] of his fellow men, European or otherwise.

From their earliest meetings on the beach, both the natives and the seamen put this cooperative principle at the heart of Smith's economic philosophy into practice, albeit probably obliviously and, of course, outside its in-

80 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 277.

81 Landry, 'Rewriting the Sea from the Desert Shore,' 251.

82 Landry, 'Saddle Time,' 443.

83 Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, I, 26.

tellectual home ground. Clearly, the crew's failed attempts at fishing in the Pacific, as well as the peculiarity of the Palauan 'method of doing it' (180), meant that 'their diet could only be supplied by their hosts, chiefly in the form of yams and fish.'[84] But the unilateral shipments of food do not result in asymmetrical dependency because the natives seek access to European weaponry. Following a demonstration of firearms on one of the king's visits, which prompts his brother Arra Kooker into pondering the benefits of this unknown, but very efficient, technology, he 'wished [that] Captain WILSON would permit four or five of his men to accompany him to war with their muskets' (104). Keate takes great pains to frame this instance in sentimental terms and provides an elaborate explanation both of the encounter's reciprocal fashion and of the king's request:

> They conceived that what they wished to ask, as it might prove a temporary inconvenience, would look ungenerous; and that which most checked their speaking was, that, circumstanced as the English were with respect to them, a request would have the appearance of a command; an idea this, which shocked their sensibility. (103)

It seems that even tricky borderline situations such as this one can neither disrupt the cross-cultural bonds on the Palauan beach nor cause Keate's resolutely sentimental rhetoric to disintegrate. Quite the contrary is the case when 'Captain WILSON instantly replied, that the English were as his own people, and that the enemies of the King were their enemies' (104). But the author goes even further and emphasises the global character of the Anglo-Palauan encounter, celebrating 'that extreme delicacy of sentiment which no one would have expected in regions so disjoined from the rest of the world' (104).

As this survey of cultural traffic suggests, Keate's transposition of the rhetoric of sensibility to the South Pacific conjoins the landward and seaward sides of the Palauan beach in a relationship governed by mutual interest, reciprocity and even handed exchange. It facilitates the negotiation of mutually beneficial arrangements, maintains multiple channels of transaction and allows for cross-cultural troubleshooting.[85] The people with whom the English

84 Lamb, *Preserving the Self*, 277.

85 Compare the following situations: When one of 'the natives having stolen a small hatchet' tries to escape, 'one of the people, whom the King left, went in the jolly-boat, and made him restore it' (108). In chapter xvi Wilson complains about 'the loss of a

seamen deal in this environment of pragmatic improvisation are neither savages nor barbarians. Although they are only 'tutored in the school of Nature' (204), Keate is 'confident that every Reader, when he has gone through the present account of them with attention, will be convinced that these unknown natives of Pelew, so far from *disgracing*, live an *ornament* to human nature' (51). In keeping with Enlightenment's emancipatory impetus, notions of human nature are inclusive and all-encopmassing in this respect, illustrating the universal claims of the period's knowledge production. And what is more, instead of the sensationalist monster-tales censured by Shaftesbury, Keate presents his readers with a legible, though radically different, community of intelligent men of feeling in the South Pacific. As such, they are able to comprehend the practices of those suddenly washed up on their shores and actively participate in the material exchanges that Smith theorised in *The Wealth of Nations*. In so doing, the natives challenge restrictive notions of 'civilized society'[86] and actively embrace European discursive formations at the same time as these formations embrace them.

Ironically, the Palauans differ decisively from the savages and barbarians conjured up by Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in order to emphasise the moral, intellectual and cultural refinement of both 'polished people' and 'civilized nations.'[87] According to him, extra-European peoples are 'obliged to smother and conceal the appearance of every passion' and 'necessarily acquire the habits of falsehood and dissimulation.'[88] Keate's *Account*, however, leaves no room for such conjectural representations of alterity and instead familiarises his metropolitan audience with the civil and sentimental natives of Palau.

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caulking-iron and an adze' to the king, who promises to look for them. On the next day 'Arra Kooker came to speak about the things that had been purloined. He had recovered the caulking-iron, but the adze had been carried to Pelew' (171). On another occasion, the Captain raises several issues which seem to be important to him and his officers and discusses them with Raa Kook (148–150), who listens to what Wilson has to say and affirms that 'he would make him and his people perfectly easy in every particular circumstance' (148).

86 Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, I, 26.

87 Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 244.

88 Ibid.

4. Limited Inclusiveness and the Intricacies of Knowledge Production

There are, however, limits to global civility's representational inclusiveness on the Palauan beach. Just as Henry Blount's *A Voyage into the Levant* (1636) celebrates the brilliantly managed Ottoman Empire at the same time as it pours scorn and contempt over the Jews, Keate refuses to incorporate the sixteen Chinese seamen, who were hired in Macao, into his comprehensive sentimental vision. If we juxtapose these two texts, we discover their many features of cross-cultural receptivity and curiosity but also their refusal to incorporate, or favourably depict, one more or less clearly defined group of outsiders. It seems that both Blount's comparative method and Keate's beneficial reciprocity depend on a textually created, but deliberately excluded, 'other' against which the respective encounters can be measured and defined. Whilst exposing various strategies of textual othering may shed more light on Blount's anti-Semitism or Keate's Sinophobia, such a 'reification of otherness reproduces the sharp "us and them" opposition of colonial discourse itself, and simplifies the complex transactions and migrations of the history of colonialism.'[89] Thus, considering both texts in conjunction with the dynamics of representation, as well as the economics of publication, will do more justice to the multi-layered complexity of cross-cultural encounters.

In eighteenth century Britain, there was a thriving book market and travellers' tales were among the best-selling titles, as we can infer from Shaftesbury's harsh criticism of monsters and monster-tales in his *Charateristicks* (1713). But, of course, it is important 'to ground these representations in the home cultures from which they derived, to read them back into the sponsoring institutions, publishing history and other cultural contexts in which, and for which, they were produced.'[90] In this perspective, they tell us more about sensation-hungry readers or business-minded, but not necessarily truthful, publishers than the animals, peoples and territories they describe. Implicitly and indirectly, however, they also raise questions as to what the English reading public did and could know about far-flung empires or oceans, such as the Ottomans or the Pacific, respectively. Although representations of foreign lands attracted widespread criticism, eyewitness accounts and travel books

89 Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 21.

90 Ibid., 20

had nonetheless a monopoly of information in this respect and were thus crucial to the global circulation of knowledge in general and the Enlightenment project in particular. Some of its most important protagonists must have perused travel accounts in order to season their writings with references to noble or ignoble savages, barbarous peoples and practices, or unknown countries and their cultures. According to Kant, for example, who never left his native Königsberg, '[t]he Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the ridiculous;'[91] and Hegel, in a similarly dismissive vein, famously consigns the very same continent to a place outside history, a position that practically amounts to meaninglessness.

Yet despite these controversies over veracity or the arrogance of philosophical figureheads, the extra-European other seems to have been a de rigueur constituent of European intellectual life of the period, albeit mostly in the form of representations. And these representations, biased and positional though they may be, 'do tell us something about indigenous lifeways and points of view.'[92] Unfortunately, however, native points of view were often out of reach for eighteenth century English readers, especially when it comes to societies in which oral modes of story-telling were predominant.[93] But Keate's text nevertheless bridges the gulf not only between the landward and seaward sides of the beach, but also between orality and literacy. When, for instance, the Palauan king sends his son Lee Boo to England with Captain Wilson he wants to provide him with the opportunity 'of improving himself by accompanying the English, and of learning many things, that might at his return greatly benefit his country' (199). Once in England, Lee Boo's eagerness to acquire knowledge resembles that of his father, and, more importantly, his 'temper' seems to have been consistent with contemporary English etiquette:

> After he had been awhile settled, and a little habituated to the manners of this country [Lee Boo] was sent every day to an Academy at Rotherhithe, to be instructed in reading and writing, which he was himself eager to attain, and most assiduous in learning; his whole deportment, whilst there, was so engaging, that it not only gained him the esteem of the gentleman under

91 Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*, ed. by Patrick Frierson & Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58.

92 Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 21.

93 Ibid., and Keate, *Account*, 257 & 260.

> whose tuition he was placed, but also the affection of his young companions [...]. (260)
>
> Lee Boo's temper was very mild and compassionate, discovering, in various instances, that he had brought from his father's territories that spirit of philanthropy, which we have seen reigned there; yet he at all times governed it by discretion and judgment. (262)

Keate here reiterates the Palauans' propensity for self-improvement by incorporating Lee Boo's story into the *Account*, emphasising both his intellectual capabilities and flawless conduct in a radically different environment. The young man's experiences in England accordingly resemble what the crew had to go through in Palau. This feature of the text illustrates the complexity of cross-cultural encounters through its representation of unsettling experiences on both sides of the cultural divide and bears witness to the even-handed reciprocity that governed Anglo-Palauan interaction in the South Pacific as well as in the British Isles.

Although Lee Boo and his fellow Palauans were represented through the cultural grid of an English writer writing for an English target audience, they emerge as enlightened and sentimental subjects in their own right. And since the natives did not possess written records, some aspects of their habits, conventions and traditions would have been lost without Keate's book, which textualises, and thus preserves, them for posterity.[94] This constellation is, however, rife with various problems whose ramifications potentially cancel global civility's inclusiveness. Keate effectively speaks about and for the Palauans, and in so doing occupies a position of discursive authority. European colonial endeavours of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries rested on such dichotomously structured patterns of representation, depriving natives of their voices and fixing them in positions that were meaningful only in relation to the coloniser's culture. But solely concentrating 'on the conventions through which a culture was textualized while ignoring the actuality of what was represented is to risk a second-order repetition of the images, typologies and projections under scrutiny.'[95] Of course, Captain Wilson and his men carried their cultural baggage with them when they moved about the beach and it is

94 Keate dedicates chapters xxiii to xxvii to a wide range of anthropological and background information on both the archipelago and its inhabitants.

95 Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 20-1.

very likely that they misread several aspects of Palauan life. For example, describing the local sovereign as 'king' is a cross-cultural transplantation of the titles and hierarchies the seamen were acquainted with and does not do justice to the intricacies of Palauan social organisation.[96] And given that Keate wrote the *Account* on the basis of interviews with crew-members and journals kept during the voyage, we have to add yet another layer of mediation to the complex history of his text. Scrutinising the power-structures in this history and trying to expose them will accordingly tell us very much about English literature and culture in the eighteenth century, but it will hardly yield any insights into Palauan life because it brushes away the *Account*'s value as document of successful contact phenomena. Such a reductive approach to transnational contact zones thus replicates the biases and underlying assumptions of the metropolitan cultures it aims to expose and leads to what Rod Edmond has called second-order repetitions.

However, readers who are 'wary of being stifled by the rituals of language fetishism'[97] will discover a wealth of indispensable knowledge about cross-cultural interaction in Keate's *Account*. The very fact that he set out to write up the journals of the shipwrecked seamen indicates that the parties involved thought their adventures worthy of dissemination. Not only did their story lead from shipwreck over salvage to return, it also involved the crucial cooperation, support and hospitality of the natives, who neither fit in with Rousse auesque idealisations of natural men nor conform to contortive stereotypes of 'Savages in the Tropical Seas.'[98] Keate's depiction of the Palauans as both sentimental and civil is thus his way of assigning them agency and subjectivity. Yet this is not synonymous with comprehensive representational generosity, for the author's inclusiveness has its limits. He elides the Chinese seamen and they figure in much the same ways as the Jews do in Blount's *Voyage*. As such, they represent a blind spot in Keate's text and occupy a marginal position on the Palauan beach. Very early on Mr. Benger, 'the first mate' (95/96), describes the main island and

> [a] China-man also added, 'that this have very poor place, and very poor people; no got clothes, no got rice, no got hog, no got nothing, only yam, little

96 Keate, *Account*, 227.

97 Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press), 3-4.

98 Dickens, *Little Dorrit*, 201.

> fish, and cocoa-nut; no got nothing make trade, very little make eat.' (117; emphasis in original)

Whilst the Palauans represent the landward equivalent of the shipwrecked Europeans who came from the seaward side of the beach the Chinese seamen hardly ever surface in the text. And if they do, they appear as clumsy, devious and essentially different. The China-man in this passage struggles with his English and cannot make himself properly understood whereas the language barrier does not pose a problem in the farewell scene, for instance, in which Raa Kook shares his pain through the non-verbal language of feeling by pointing to his heart. Keate accordingly confines the *Account*'s representational civility to the English and the Palauans, but it is global nonetheless by virtue of its lively joining together of the British and Pacific worlds. By exploring this triadic structure, and the cultural confluence it gave rise to, we can plumb both the depth and complexity of cross-cultural encounters. We have, of course, inherited them as textual representations, but this is 'not to reduce history to textuality but, rather, to insist on the textuality of history.'[99] With this central axiom in mind, we can explore mutually improving encounters in the South Pacific at the same time as we follow in the footsteps of those who traversed the ethno-religiously diverse worlds of Islam.

99 Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific*, 51.