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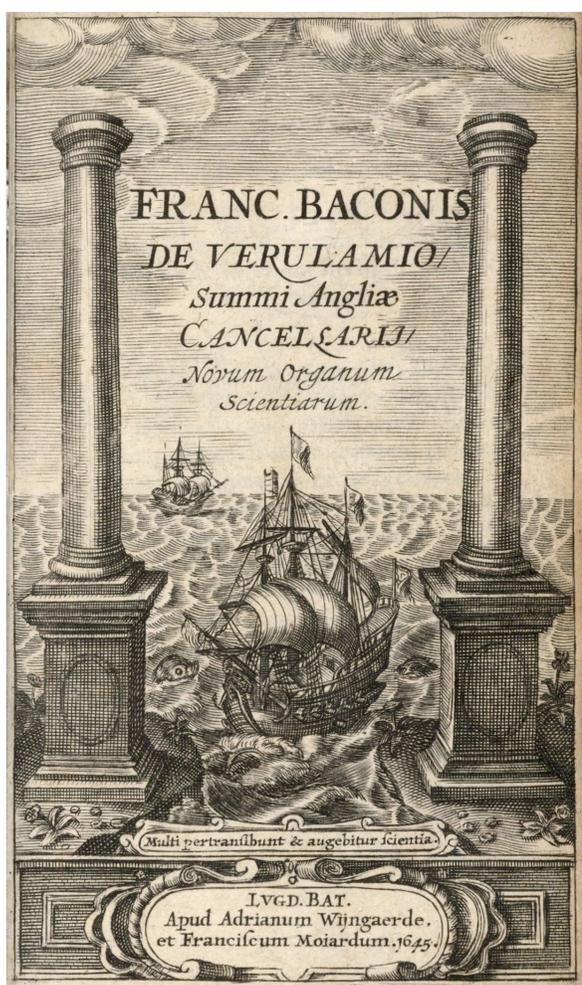
Knowledge & power in the age of Captain Cook

24th August — 13th October 2018

August 2018 marks 250 years since James Cook set sail on a voyage of exploration considered by many to be the most significant in world history. Inspired by some of The Portico Library's most fascinating items — including first editions of Cook's illustrated journals and accompanying publications — we present some of the motivating ideologies and streams of thought held in the Library that connect us to the events of the Cook era.

Cook's voyages benefitted from the explosion of new learning in the period known as the Enlightenment and he profited from the new technologies and expanded imaginations of the time. Following earlier seafarers — Columbus, Magellan, Frézier — Cook sailed beyond Europe's known world to come upon new ways of thinking in places such as Tahiti, Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Tierra del Fuego, expanding the scope of European knowledge as he went.

It was during the Enlightenment that Britain sought new territories and trade routes, tightly controlling trade from the New World colonies for its political and economic benefit. Through these and other imperial projects of expansion, the same ideas were used to overwrite long-established local knowledges and extend European power across the globe. The connected books give a sense of the ongoing and changeable nature of knowledge and power in the age of Captain Cook, and alert us to their legacy in today's world.

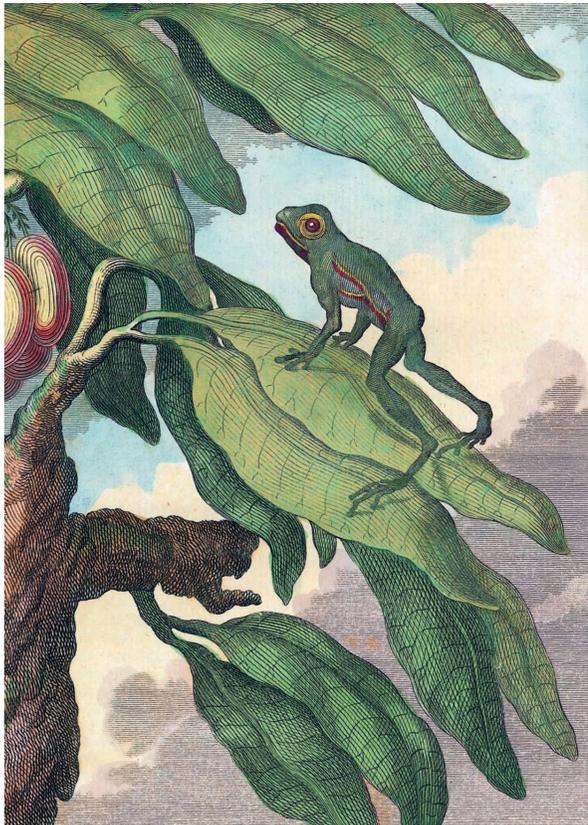


This image is the frontispiece of Bacon's *Instauratio Magna (The Great Instauration)*, his plan to classify all human knowledges. It depicts a ship returning through the Pillars of Hercules, which delineate the limits of the Ancients' known world at the Straits of Gibraltar. The ship brings ideas and discoveries from the New World to the Old World. Bacon quotes Daniel 12:4 'Multi pertransibunt & augebitur scientia' 'Many shall pass to and fro and science shall be increased'.

The expansion of knowledge and travel was inextricably linked in this period with British imperialism. The inevitable encounters with different cultures, ideas and languages would in time bring fresh challenges to the power and authority of the European known world.

Explosion of knowledge

The Enlightenment saw an unprecedented change in how people thought in Europe. Accepted Classical Greek thought and religious ideas were challenged by scientific reasoning, observation and classification of the world. The voyages and scientific enquiries into the unknown, recorded as written journals and illustrations, were groundbreaking and radically innovative — much like the changes brought by the World Wide Web today.



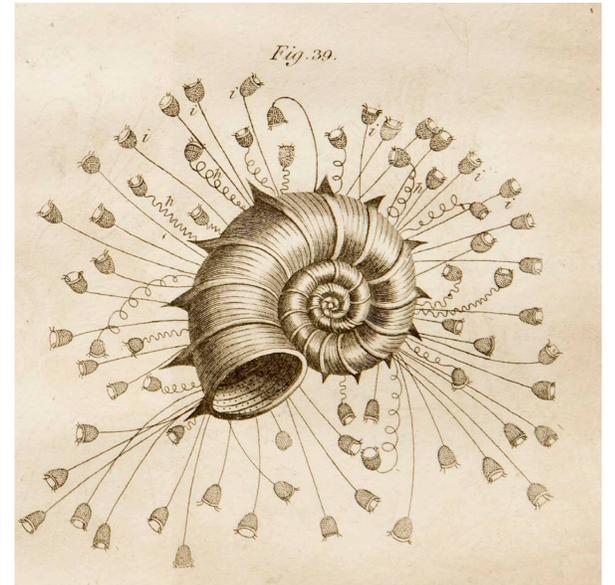
Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière: servant de suite a l'histoire des animaux quadrupèdes
Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1799
The Portico Library collection (cat. Ch 5)

“rais[ing] ourselves to something greater and still more worthy of our efforts, namely: the combination of observations, the generalisation of facts, linking them together by the power of analogies, and the effort to arrive at high degree of knowledge”

Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon



Essays on the Microscope
George Adams, 1798
The Portico Library collection (cat. Di 3)



The frontispiece to The Portico Library's 1798 copy of George Adams' *Essays on the Microscope* depicts the allegory 'Truth Discovering to Time, Science'. The image embodies the sense of wonder with which technological innovations were received, and the idealism of the time.



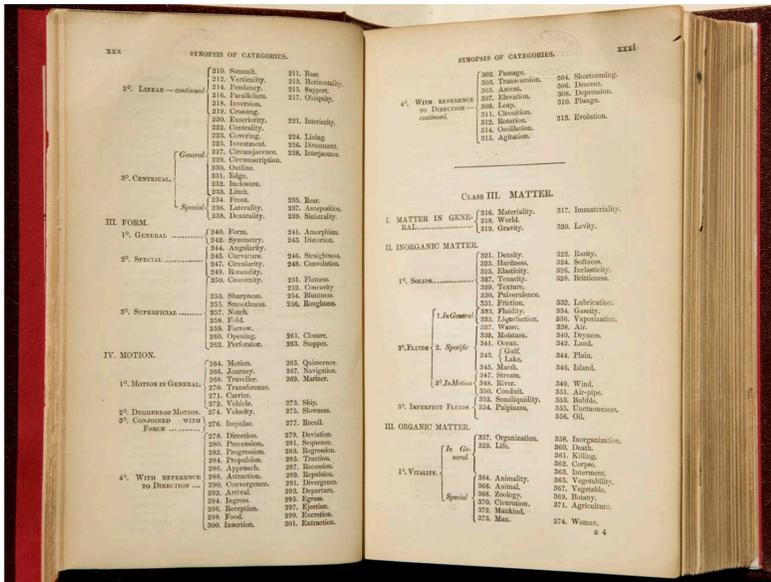
Charles Townley & Friends in his Library
Johann Zoffany, 1782

The Royal Society

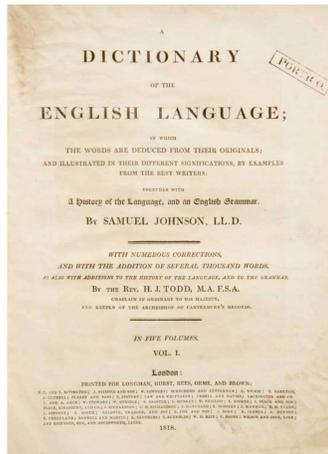
The Royal Society commissioned Cook's scientific expedition to track the transit of Venus. The Society, an icon of the Enlightenment, was established to promote scientific enquiry with the motto *Nullius in verba*, 'take nobody's word for it'. It set the standard for gathering empirical evidence about the world through observation and the collection of objects.

Charles Townley was a keen collector and Fellow of the Royal Society. Born in Lancashire, he travelled extensively in Italy where he collected many significant antiques that are now housed in the British Museum. He is shown here surrounded by his collection, practicing observational drawing — a valued skill in the era of the Enlightenment. The artist, Johan Zoffany, was himself a founding member of the Royal Academy which was established in the same year as Cook's first voyage, 1768.

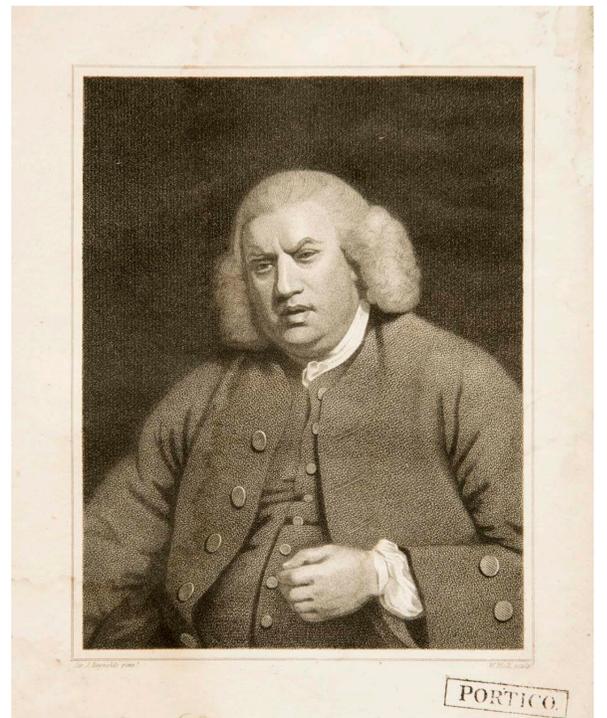
The impulse to organise the new knowledges of the 18th century inspired the rise of cataloguing, classifying and categorising. Everything from insects to words to ideas were organised and itemised. Samuel Johnson collated the English dictionary, and Baron Cuvier classified the animal kingdom. Denis Diderot began the task of arranging all knowledge into one compendium, an *Encyclopaedia* – a radical move made possible by new print technologies and the growth of a reading public. Later in the century, and into the next, The Portico Library's first Secretary, Peter Mark Roget, devised the first system to classify the English language – Roget's Thesaurus.



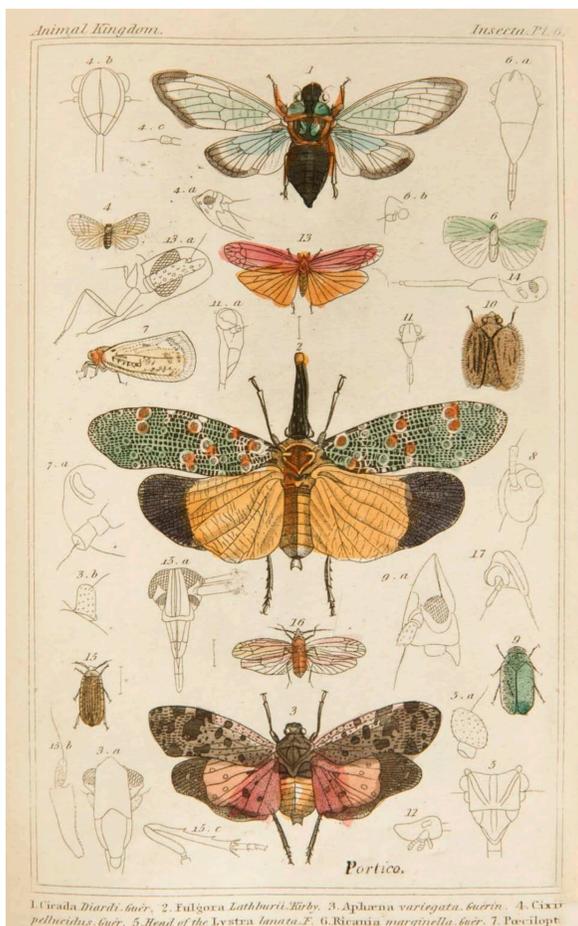
Thesaurus of English Words & Phrases
Peter Mark Roget, 1857
The Portico Library collection (cat. Y supp Roge)



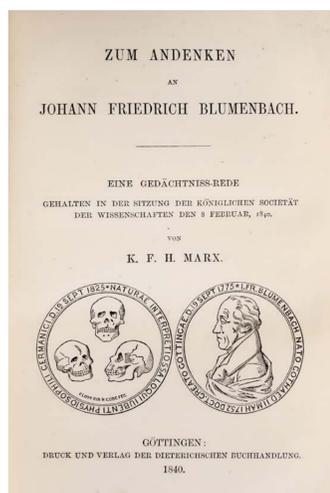
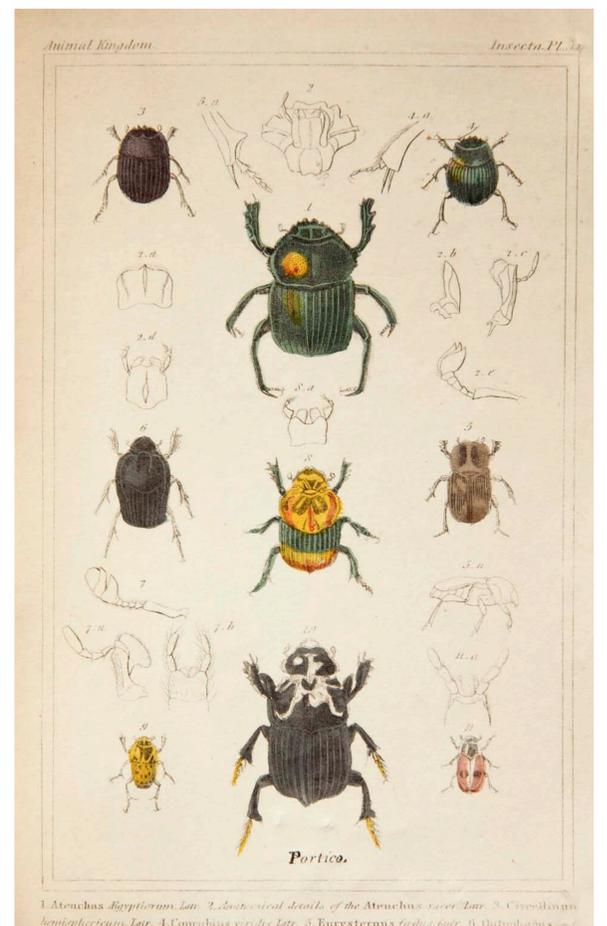
A Dictionary of the English Language
Samuel Johnson, 1818 (originally published 1755)
The Portico Library collection (cat. Yc 44)



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The Animal Kingdom
Georges Cuvier, 1837
The Portico Library collection (cat. Ce 2)



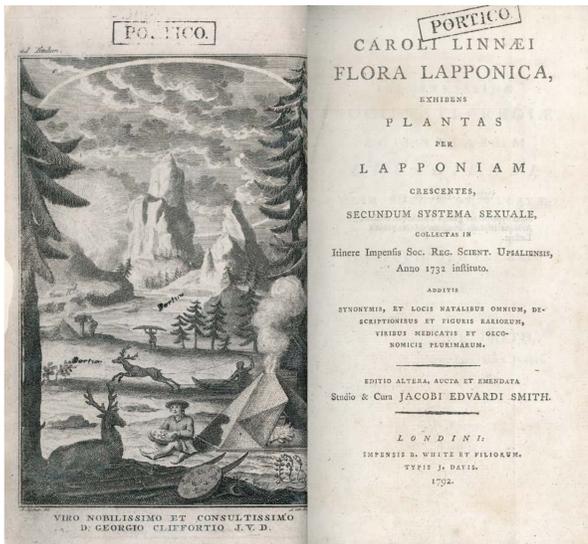
The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach
Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, 1865
The Portico Library collection (cat. Cl 26)

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) applied classification systems to humanity, arranging people into “racial” categories based on physical attributes and geographical distribution. His model was clearly hierarchical, reflecting and informing the imperial thinking and practice of his time and feeding into the developing pseudo-science of “race” in the 19th century, sometimes referred to as “scientific racism”. Such models represent a clear coming together of knowledge and power and have informed colonial policies and racist ideologies around the world.

Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778), Swedish naturalist, developed a method of classifying and naming all living things. He created a two-part Latin naming system that was widely adopted by naturalists. The library holds a 1792 edition of his *Flora Lapponica* (Plants of Lapland), the first publication to demonstrate his new system in action.

Linnaeus encouraged one of his favourite students, Daniel Solander (1736–1782), to join Banks and Cook on the *Endeavour* voyage. It was not uncommon for the naturalists to attach their names to specimens they were collecting: for example, an Australian bird, the red-tailed black cockatoo, bears Banks's name *Calyptorhynchus banksii*. In this, the local names were occluded.

The process of capturing empirical evidence through observation, naming, illustrating and recording the natural world was also an exercise of authority and power. Renaming plants in Latin, for example, overwrote local names, knowledges and classifications, giving priority to the scientific method.



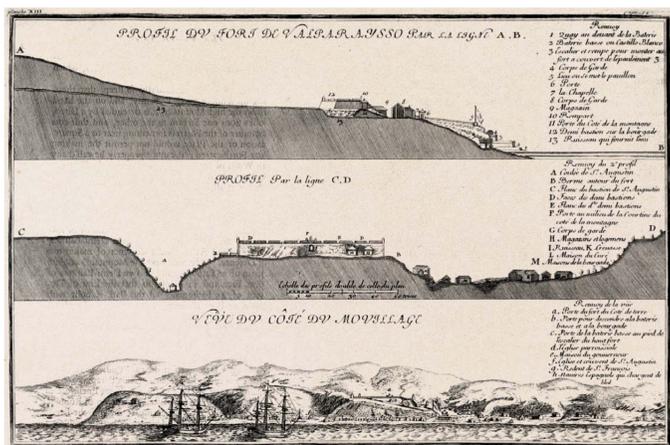
Flora Lapponica
Carl Linnaeus, 1792
The Portico Library collection (cat. Cd 16)



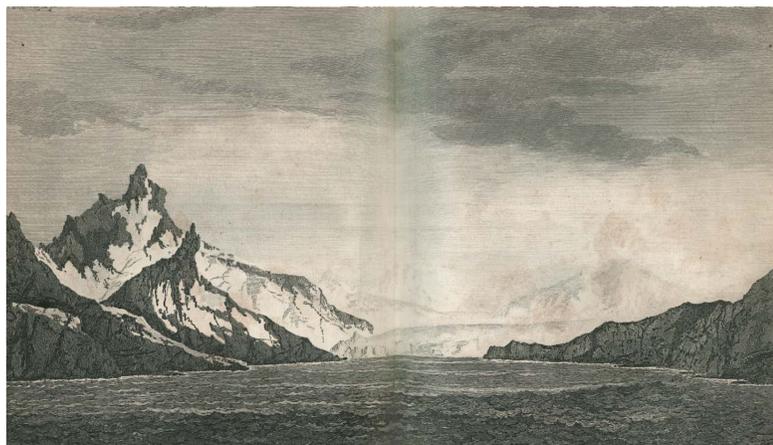
A General History of Birds
John Latham, 1822
The Portico Library collection (cat. Cg 7)

Drawing observations and power

Gentleman botanist Joseph Banks, fellow of the Royal Society, accompanied Cook on the *Endeavour* to observe and record uncharted lands for scientific, economic and political purposes. Banks' team of observers and artists (Dr Solander, naturalist; artists Sydney Parkinson, Alexander Buchan, John Reynolds; and astronomer Charles Green) expanded the maritime tradition of cartography to include careful observation of plants, animals, geography and peoples met along the way. Banks quotes the earlier voyages of Frézier and Anson in his journals where they used skilled draughtsmen to ensure useful records were made for the future exploitation of these new territories.



Relation du Voyage de la Mer du Sud aux Cotes du Chili, du Perou, et du Bresil
Amédée-François Frézier, 1717
The Portico Library collection (cat. Ml 22)

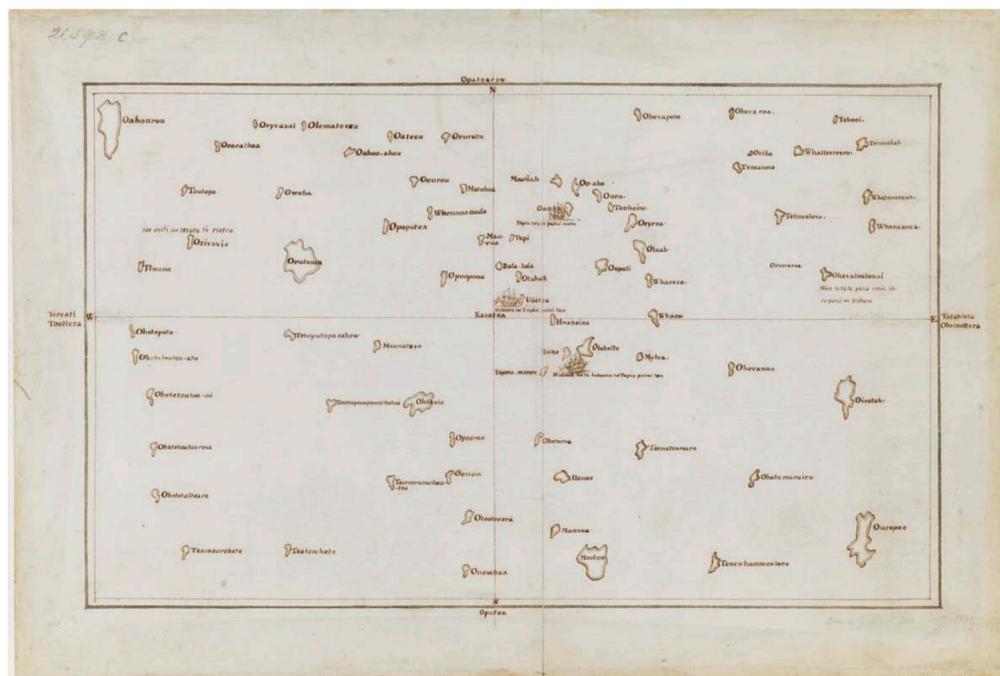


A Voyage Towards the South Pole, and Around the World
James Cook and Tobias Furneaux, 1777
The Portico Library collection (cat. M supp Cook)

Pacific knowledges

Tupaia's map

When Cook reached Tahiti in 1769 he was joined by local arioi priest, advisor and navigator, Tupaia, who guided the *Endeavour* through the Society Islands and beyond. Tupaia, from Ra'ia'atea in the Leeward Society Islands, recorded his extensive local knowledge of the topography and navigation of the Islands for Cook. A copy of the map was found in Banks' private papers and is believed to have been made by Tupaia in collaboration with Cook. It is an icon of cross-cultural exchange and a testament to Tupaia's sophisticated translation of his navigational, cultural and geographical knowledge into a language the Europeans could understand.



Map of the Society Islands
Tupaia, James Cook, 1769
British Library Board, Add MS21593C



A Scene in Tahiti
Tupaia, 1769
British Library Board, Add MS15508

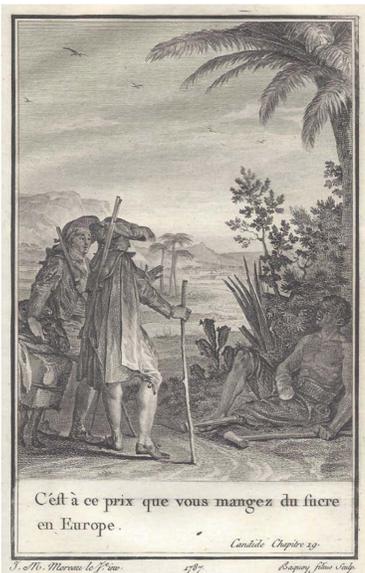


An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order
of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the
Southern Hemisphere
John Hawkesworth, 1773
The Portico Library collection (cat. Mz 32)

Tupaia's drawing depicts his everyday environment and a variety of plants: pandanus, breadfruit, banana, coconut and taro. Sydney Parkinson, artist on the *Endeavour*, illustrated these same plants as they were classified by the naturalists Banks and Solander. Joseph Banks further proposed the productive breadfruit be transplanted to the Caribbean for use as food on the plantations.

Challenging power: revolutions

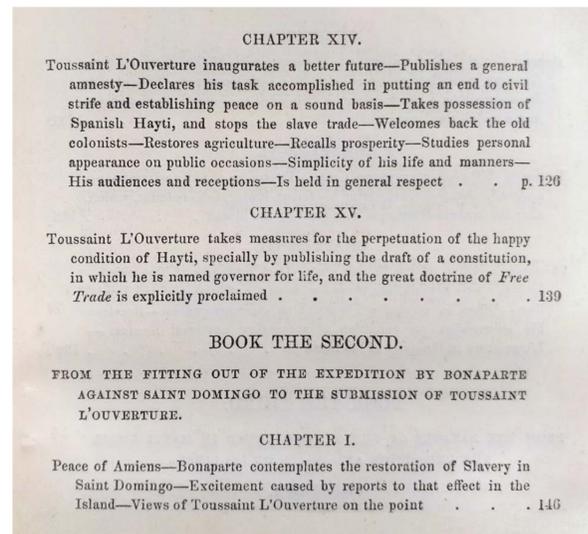
The new ideas and sciences of the Enlightenment were put into the service of political powers and used to justify the ongoing transatlantic slave trade, and new forms of colonisation. These ideas also circulated within the growing reading public through the rapid expansion of innovative technologies: print, the book, libraries and coffee houses. People's contact with and understanding of the wider world expanded beyond their locale. In the years following Cook's voyage, local people organised to challenge and overthrow the political powers of colonial and oppressive regimes in North America (1765–1791), France (1789–1799), and Haiti (1791–1804). 'People power' began to influence lawmaking.



Freethinking French Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire criticised the brutality of European colonialism in his influential 1759 satire *Candide*. This 1787 engraving by Jean-Michel Moreau illustrates the title character's surprise at meeting an enslaved man, mutilated by his captives, who says of his injuries "It is at this price that you eat sugar in Europe".

The first successful revolution by enslaved people to overthrow their captors began in Haiti in 1791, led by Georges Biassou and Toussaint Louverture. Fifty years later, Portico Library member John Relly Beard produced the definitive English biography of Louverture. Beard said his motivation was to challenge the racism in previous European stories of the Haitian independence struggle. His book was republished in the USA at the height of the American Civil War.

Illustration from Voltaire's *Candide, or the Optimist*
Jean-Michel Moreau le Jeune, 1787



The Life of Toussaint Louverture
John Relly Beard, 1853
The Portico Library collection (cat. Fh 4)

Toussaint Louverture
Anonymous, 19th century



Following the revolutions in America, France and Haiti, workers in Britain began to call for voting rights. In August 1819, government soldiers charged a rally of pro-democracy campaigners in Manchester. The event, which resulted in many deaths and injuries, became known as Peterloo, and was witnessed by members of The Portico Library. An upcoming film and programme of public events will commemorate the victims of the massacre throughout 2019.

Voyages & Travels: imagined

Descriptions and scientific records from encounters beyond Britain's shores sparked the imagination of many artists, poets, and writers. They imagined worlds which were in part inspired by the voyages of Cook and others.

Elizabeth Gaskell

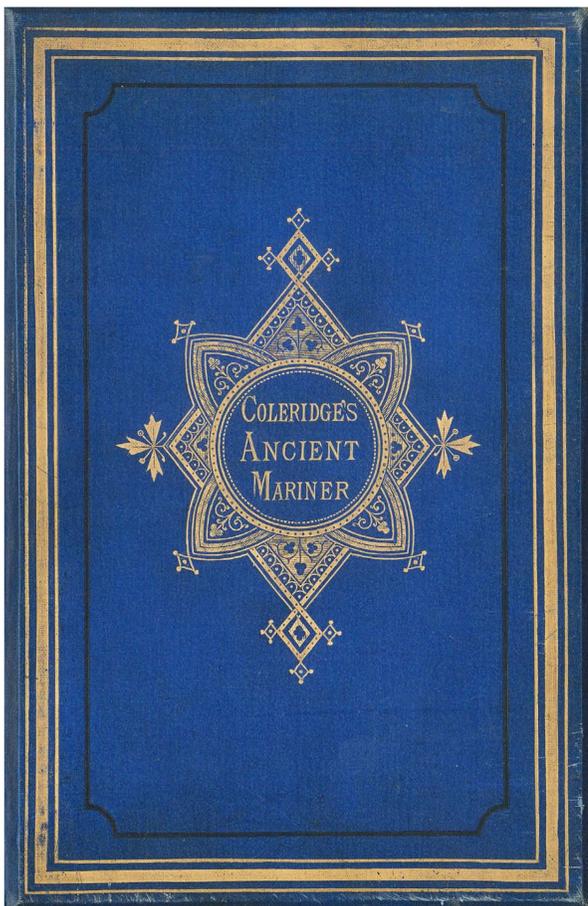
As a woman in the 19th century, Victorian novelist Elizabeth Gaskell was excluded from membership of The Portico Library, but gained access to the books through her husband William, a prominent member. Current Library Chair Lynne Allan has written of how sailors play important roles in Gaskell's novels, reflecting both Victorian fascination with the sea and the Gaskell family's marine connections. The Library still holds borrowing records for the Gaskells showing that they read several books on travel, exploration and global affairs.



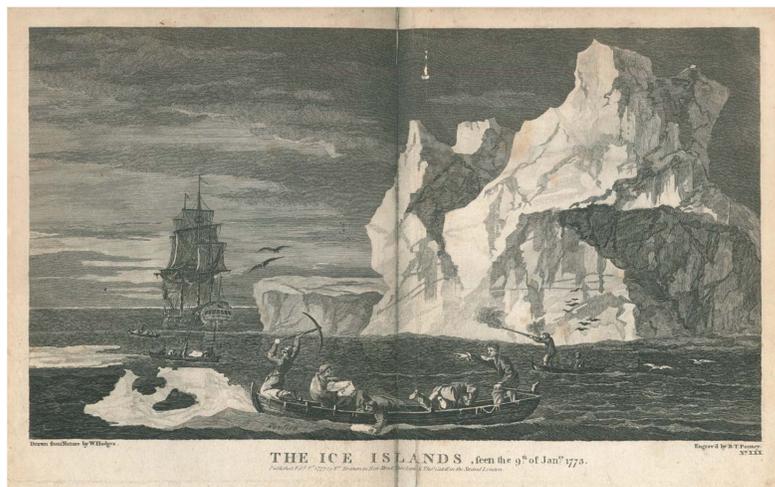
Elizabeth Gaskell

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is believed to have been inspired in part by James Cook's voyages. Coleridge's tutor, William Wales, was the astronomer on Cook's flagship and had a strong relationship with Cook. On his second voyage, Cook crossed three times into the Antarctic Circle to try to determine whether the fabled great southern continent existed.



The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1858
The Portico Library collection (cat. A supp Cole)



A Voyage Towards the South Pole, and Around the World
James Cook and Tobias Furneaux, 1777
The Portico Library collection (cat. M supp Cook)

*And I have done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow !
(Part the Second, stanza 3)*

Making connections

Cook sailed to places unknown to him in a radical intellectual and political climate, fuelled by scientific reasoning and an imperial quest to expand territory and wealth. Voyagers and explorers the world over encountered people and cultures previously unmet, and their exchange of ideas brought unanticipated results that still resonate today.

In the Library we see a tangible example of how knowledges interconnect. The wind dial on the southeast wall is attached to the weather vane on the roof of the building — we could imagine that it brings the natural world into the Library through its indication of the wind's direction, which is affected by changes in temperature and atmospheric pressure (see the barometer inside the entrance to your right). The Library holds important early books on meteorology which researchers still study today, examining the same weather patterns that were crucial for ships such as the *Endeavour* as they set sail 250 years ago.

Your journey, your knowledges

How did you get here today?

Do you have local knowledge of the area?

Did you look up the weather so you could be prepared?

Could you log the observations you made along your route?

Can you name the birds, the clouds, the vehicles?

Could you map your way here and back again?

While you think about these questions you will be drawing on your personal knowledge systems and thoughts that are, in part, formed by the ideas shown in this exhibition. These ideas have been repeatedly exchanged between people worldwide, and new knowledges formed — as the example of Cook and Tupaia in the South Pacific shows. The legacies of these exchanges help us navigate the world today.

