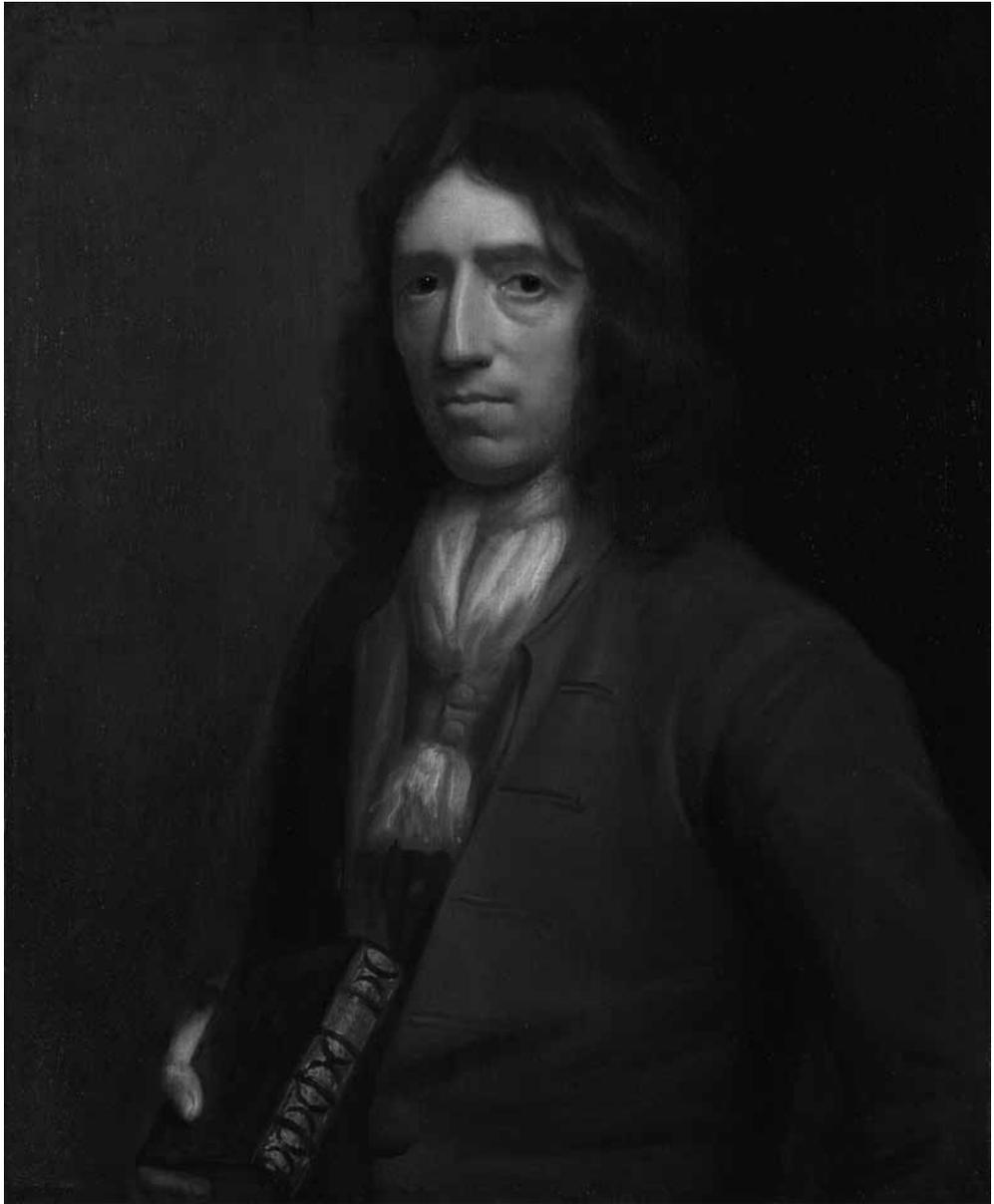


## *Dampier's Monkey*

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*'William Dampier' by Thomas Murray, c. 1697-1698*  
[oil on canvas, 74.9 x 62.9 cm, transferred from the British Museum, 1879,  
National Portrait Gallery, London]

# *Dampier's Monkey*

THE SOUTH SEAS VOYAGES  
OF WILLIAM DAMPIER



INCLUDING  
WILLIAM DAMPIER'S UNPUBLISHED JOURNAL

**ADRIAN MITCHELL**

Wakefield Press  
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# Preface

William Dampier, the ‘devil’s mariner’ as he has been called, a far voyager and traveller extraordinaire, lived in an era when, more truly than in other periods of history, the past was being put behind the present, and everything was new – a new world discovered by the first stirrings of the new science, under a new political and economic formation. New ideas were abroad, and a new understanding of language in which to record them, and a newly popular press by which to promote and distribute them.

He lived a colourful life in colourful times, but strangely, he himself does not appear to have been a particularly colourful figure. He was one of those countless numbers of young men determined to go away to sea, in his case to the warmer waters of the Caribbean, and then the more exciting and relatively unknown bowl of the Pacific – the Central Americas, the Spice Islands and the Far East. He travelled to parts of the world not overly familiar to the English in the late seventeenth century. Dampier’s accomplishment was not just in sailing to exotic places, but in bringing them to the public’s attention through a number of published and very well-received volumes of his voyages.

He encountered the Aborigines of northwestern Australia well before Captain Cook, and what he wrote of them, ‘the miserablest people in the world’, influenced the attitudes of Joseph Banks, Matthew Flinders and the early European settlers a century later; and over the years his reservations found their way into school texts and informed the attitudes of generations here. Yet with the widespread assumption that Cook was the discoverer of Australia – meaning the part of Australia worth discovering – Dampier’s priority has been largely ignored.

In his published *Voyages*, Dampier did not tell everything. He sailed with crews of reckless desperadoes, who might have thought of themselves as buccaneers but who in fact were at times involved in criminal acts of piracy. Dampier was certainly critical of various acts of wanton cruelty and murder; yet like many of his kind, he was not overly concerned with the Indians whose villages and crops were burned down, and he was blind to the miseries of slavery, more persuaded by the profit in that inhumane

## *Dampier's Monkey*

trade. There are any number of brisk gun battles and the taking of ships at sea, but there is nothing to suggest that he was one to swing off the end of a rope from one ship to another, Errol Flynn-like, with a sabre between his teeth. Though he wrote about his part in attacking Spanish towns along the coast of the Americas, mostly he seems to have been one of those who guarded the boats while those affrays were going on, and his real value to the buccaneers was as a navigator, an 'artist' who could work out where they all were, and how to get to the place of the next likely rich pickings. Sensibly, he avoided letting on about his more questionable activities.

Which is to say there is more to tell about Dampier than he intended. What he did, and where he did it, has been written about in the few full-length studies of him that do exist. These are in fact histories of the man and his activities, biographies, though only in a limited sense. They tell us little of what Dampier was like, what sort of man it was who could choose to sail with buccaneers for twelve years, and yet who had observed the world accurately enough, and organised his thoughts well enough to be invited to present them to the Royal Society; who was given an audience with the monarch just after he had been court-martialled, but who was all but forgotten by the end of his life, even though what he did was significant, as was what he wrote, and how he wrote it.

Dampier has not been helpful to would-be biographers. There is hardly any personal correspondence; a scattering of formal correspondence to the Admiralty, of course, which is of special interest when it comes to his court-martial. The chief source of information about him is in the published *Voyages*; and that becomes more revealing when, for example, we read what he wrote against the record of the ship's log, in the instance of Dampier's encounter with the Aborigines of northwest Australia, and later his discovery of New Britannia. *Dampier's Monkey* is directed towards the written evidence that Dampier left behind, interpreting what he said and what he chose to leave unsaid, and looking at the undercurrents that weave through that record. The old navigators used to refer to sailing under the line, the Equator; that is where this study of Dampier goes too, to winkle out what we can about an individual who was consciously avoiding intruding himself into his narrative, writing objectively not subjectively, and who in any case was writing before the practice of subjective reflection had become commonplace. When Dampier wrote, he wrote in his capacity as a navigator, or a field scientist, or a discoverer, or a frustrated sea-captain; just briefly, in his unpublished journal, we see him as a self-styled oldtime privateer, disapproving of his rumbustious crewmates. All the various narratives lead us towards a complicated and interesting man.

## PREFACE

His own manuscript journal, the foundation for the first (and most famous) narrative of his voyages, is one place where we find rather more of him than at first thought. At some stage, on his return to London after those long years at sea (1679–91), he recruited a scribe, a quill-driver, someone with a better hand than his, to make a clean copy of his crabbed and compressed narrative. At times we can see the copyist accidentally writing in Dampier's speech ('I say') when he corrects a phrase, as though his scribe were writing from dictation. That might also account for some of the curious spelling of unfamiliar names and places. But after all that, Dampier set to work to correct and enlarge the whole with an elaborate machinery of insertions and marginal notes, and it is in the margins, appropriately, that he starts to let slip some of the colourful detail, mostly by way of his disapproval of his shipmates' behaviour.

That annotated journal has been lodged in the British Library for the last two-hundred-and-fifty years. It has recently become available online, not always as legibly as one might like; and it takes an excruciatingly long time to download, as such large documents do. Hence the inclusion here of that fascinating and revealing document in this volume. There has been a little editorial cleaning up, and some editorial defeat in trying to decipher Dampier's spiky handwriting, but on the whole the reader can now get a fairly comprehensive sense of what the original looks like, in a much more readable version. Dampier, I'd like to think, now stands more clearly before us than he has done in the past.

# Time Line

- 1600 East India Company charter; first trading voyage, to Sumatra, 1601
- 1651 William Dampier baptised 5 September, St Michael's, East Coker, Somerset
- 1654 Cromwell's Western Design – to attack Spanish possessions in the West Indies
- 1655 Cromwell's forces capture Jamaica
- 1662 Charter of the Royal Society of London for Promoting Natural Knowledge
- 1666 Great Fire of London
- 1667 Treaty of Breda, in which New York is ceded to England
- 1669 Dampier apprenticed to Weymouth shipmaster
- 1670/1 Dampier sails as foremast hand on East Indiaman, *John and Martha*, to Bantam (but keeps no journal)
- 1671 Henry Morgan sacks Panama City
- 1672 Dampier returns to England, stays with brother in Somersetshire. Third Dutch War
- 1673 Dampier enlists on the *Royal Prince*, serving under Sir Edward Spragge. Hospitalised, and recuperates on brother's farm
- 1674 Dampier arrives in Jamaica, at Sir William Helyar's plantation; fights with the manager, leaves
- 1675 Trading voyages in a small ketch, trading rum for logwood (for dye) along the Bay of Campeche
- 1676 Joins the logwood cutters at Terminos Lagoon, Yucatan peninsula
- 1678 Returns to England; marries Judith
- 1679 Returns to Jamaica, sails on a short trading trip and falls in with the buccaneers assembling under Coxon
- 1680 The buccaneers sack Portobello, march across the Isthmus of Darien

## TIME LINE

- 1681 Cruising with the buccaneers along the Pacific coast of the central Americas. Joins dissident group who re-cross the Isthmus, under the leadership of John Cook. Lionel Wafer's knee damaged; he is left to survive among the Indians
- 1682 Dampier lands in Virginia
- 1683 Cook, with Wafer and Davis, pick up Dampier in Chesapeake Bay, piratically seize a Danish slave-ship, re-name it the *Bachelor's Delight*
- 1684 Round Cape Horn and cruise along the South and Central American coast. Meets up with Captain Swan and the *Cygnets*
- 1685 Charles II dies, James II accedes to the throne. The Monmouth rebellion
- 1686 The *Cygnets*, with Dampier as navigator, sails across the Pacific to the Philippines
- 1687 James II's proclamation against piracy. Those who thought themselves safe as privateers (Wafer, for example) no longer have legal sanction
- 1688 William of Orange accedes to the throne, with Mary. The *Cygnets* touches briefly on the New Holland coast. Later, Dampier makes a desperate voyage in a small open boat, from the Nicobar Islands to Achin. Travels to Tonquin
- 1689 Dampier hears of the Glorious Revolution. Runs opium across the Malacca Straits. Sails to Madras
- 1690 Absconds from an English trading fort at Bencouli (Bengkulu), Sumatra, with Jeoly
- 1691 Finds way back to England, Jeoly dies in Oxford
- 1692 Earthquake destroys Port Royal, Jamaica
- 1694 Bank of England incorporated. Dampier present at Avery's mutiny off Corunna
- 1695 Avery seizes the pilgrim ship the *Gunswey* (i.e. the Grand Mughal Aurungzebe's *Ganj-i-Sowai*) in the Red Sea
- 1696 Six of Avery's crew tried at the Old Bailey
- 1697 Publication of *New Voyage Round the World*. Dampier appears before the Board of Trade. Given a minor post in Customs
- 1698 Dampier again appears before Board of Trade. Dinner at Pepys's house. Takes command of the *Roebuck*

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- 1699 *Roebuck* reaches NW Australia. Publication of *Voyages and Discoveries*: Part 1, *Supplement of the Voyage Round the World*; Part 2, *The Campeachy Voyages*; Part 3, *The Discourse of Winds*
- 1700 Dampier discovers and names New Britannia
- 1701 *Roebuck* sinks at Ascension Island. Trial and execution of Captain Kidd. Inquiry into the sinking of the *Roebuck*
- 1702 Dampier is court-martialled for mistreatment ('very hard and cruel usage') of Lt Fisher, Sir George Rooke presiding. Queen Anne accedes to the throne. Spanish War of Succession
- 1703 Dampier presented to the Queen. Publication of *Voyage to New Holland* (Part 1). Captain of the *St George*
- 1704 Alexander Selkirk left on Juan Fernandez Island. Failed attempt to seize a Spanish prize, a treasure ship from Manila, December
- 1705 Mutiny against Dampier on the *St George*
- 1706 Imprisoned in Batavia by the Dutch on suspicion of unlawfulness, as he could not produce his commission
- 1707 Released, returns to Britain. *Captain Dampier's Vindication of his Voyage to the South Seas in the Ship St. George*
- 1708 Dampier appointed pilot to the Woodes Rogers expedition; aboard the *Duke*
- 1709 Selkirk rescued. Publication of *Voyage to New Holland* (Part 2)
- 1711 South Sea Company formed. Woodes Rogers expedition returns
- 1713 Board of Longitude offers prize for a means of accurate determination of longitude
- 1714 Queen Anne dies. Dampier makes his will
- 1715 Dampier dies in London



# The Lead Line

*We continued thus Rambling about to little purpose, sometimes at Sea, and sometimes ashore; till having spent much time, and visited many Places, were got again to the Gallapago's under the Liene; and were then resolve'd to make the best of our Way out of these Seas.*

Lionel Wafer, *New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699)

**WILLIAM DAMPIER** was the first Englishman to describe Australia and its Indigenous people, the best part of a century before Captain Cook. He touched on and was threatened with marooning on the north-west coast of Western Australia in 1688, and made another more extended visit to the same coastline in 1700 – and he was no more impressed the second time round. A far-voyager in the last generation before it was possible to determine latitude exactly, he was an expert navigator, as is demonstrated by his extraordinary achievement in sailing clear around the world three times. How he acquired his skills is not known; in his journals we learn very little of this side of his accomplishment. We know from the detailed log he provides of a long voyage across the Pacific from Mexico to the Philippines just how carefully he measured his ship's progress; and the accuracy of his course setting was, as the record shows, precisely vindicated. But we also learn from just one passing remark that the captain kept the navigational instruments in his cabin.<sup>1</sup> Dampier did not have his own; nor does he refer subsequently to owning any such tools of the trade, though it would be a puzzle how he subsequently found his way through the Spice Islands and round the world without them. We know he had a pocket compass with him on a desperate voyage in a small boat from the Nicobar Islands to Aceh. That seems to have been the extent of the technology available to him, at least on that voyage. The

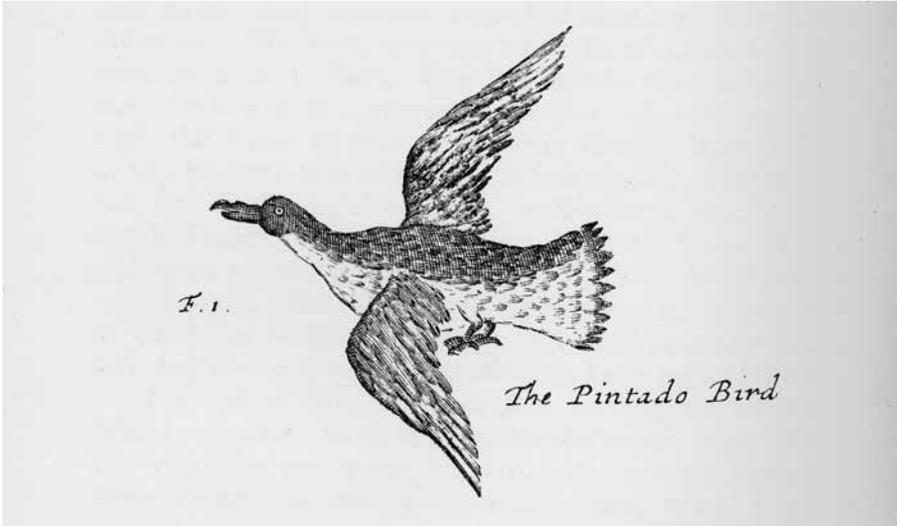
*Dampier's Monkey*



*'Mariner's callipers traditionally thought to have belonged to William Dampier'*  
National Library of Australia, Canberra. [National Library of Australia, Canberra]

National Library of Australia holds in its collection a pair of callipers supposed to have belonged to him.

But there are other hints that Dampier did have the practical skills and arcane knowledge of the navigators, the 'observers', if not their machinery and mathematics. On his commissioned voyage to New Holland and thence to Terra Australis,<sup>2</sup> the approach of the *Roebuck* to the shelving coast of the mainland is recorded not just in soundings, but with a steady digest of what was on the seabed. He evidently maintained the practice of greasing the sounding lead with tallow – inspecting it when the line was raised for such information as could be divined from what was stuck



*The Pintado Bird*, from *Dampier's Voyages*, edited by John Masefield, 1906  
 [State Library of South Australia; SLSA: 910.4, v.2, opp. p. 407]

to it, whether sand or mud ('ooze') or clay or shell grit and so forth – as additional significant information to a navigator skilled in traditional lore.<sup>3</sup> Navigation was an art, its practices beyond the ken of the ordinary seaman, and utterly mysterious to the landlubber. Yet it was well on the way to becoming a true science. Dampier's own observations of currents, tides and winds complemented the work of his exact contemporary, Edmond Halley, who had published (while Dampier was still at sea) a map of the prevailing winds over the oceans, but with no accurate knowledge of the Pacific or Southern Oceans, and only indirect knowledge of the Indian Ocean. Dampier had observed the same phenomenon of magnetic variation as teased Halley. Curiously, and especially given his years in the South Seas, Dampier seems to have had very little interest in the stars, though he used them to steer by on a desperate life-or-death venture to Sumatra. Unlike those of his shipmates who also kept journals, he showed no interest in comets. Clouds and waterspouts were more his thing.

On the other hand, he evidently carried with him a functional reference library. He consulted charts and draughts (different kinds of maps) made by the Dutch and purloined from the Spanish. He referred, as did all sailors, to his waggoner, a generic term for a mariner's *vade mecum*, full of maps and details of harbours and tables of new moons, deriving from the manual first compiled by Lucas Waghenaer, or Wagenaar, and translated into English on the commission of Sir Christopher Hatton in 1588.<sup>4</sup> Other terms for comparable, more precisely navigational, aids were rutter or ruttier,

pilot (book) and portolan.<sup>5</sup> These gave details about anchorages, star charts, tables of declination, sailing directions to the major ports, and information about seasonal winds. Ships, even those crammed with buccaneers and privateers, carried books such as Samuel Sturmey's *Mariner's Magazine* (from which Dampier remembered the chemical base of gunpowder on one occasion). And when he was writing up his own journal of his first voyage in the South Seas, it seems he initially thought of it as a kind of pilot book, with the design of providing a guide for new waves of English sailors up the Pacific coast of the Americas.

How he found the space to write up his account tests the imagination. At an early stage in what he called his rambling, when Dampier with a bevy of fellow buccaneers was splashing through the rainforests of Panama, he tells us he kept his journal rolled up and sealed in a length of bamboo. Later, his journal is a kind of book, which got wet when his sea-chest was upset in the surf. When he first set out for Jamaica as a young man in 1674, he ensured that he had with him a sufficiency of paper, ink and quills. (He also ensured he had the essential ingredients for making punch; and an easing pan.<sup>6</sup>) Aboard most of the ships Dampier sailed on in the next two decades, men were writing their journals, and from time to time consulting each other's accounts – with drastic consequences at Mindanao, in the South Philippines. One of Dampier's shipmates, John Read ('a pretty Ingenious young Man ... also accounted a good Artist, and kept a Journal, and was now prompted by his Curiosity, to peep into Captain *Swan's* Journal, to see how it agreed with his own; a thing very usual among the Seamen that keep Journals'<sup>7</sup>), discovered what Captain Swan really thought about his crew, and the embarrassment of having to associate with that kind of villainy. That led directly to mutiny, the abandoning of Swan to whatever might befall him, and the election of Read as the new captain.

When Dampier negotiated with the Admiralty about his requirements for the *Roebuck* voyage (1699–1702), he requested a ship's master who 'should be a good Artist',<sup>8</sup> meaning a skilled navigator. At the court martial that followed that voyage, Dampier's bitter adversary, Lieutenant Fisher, deposed that Dampier proved 'a very mean artist'<sup>9</sup>, and the notes on Dampier's own 'information' include his umbrage at Fisher's provocative and very public assertion that Dampier 'was no artist that he knew nothing but was a mere cheat'.<sup>10</sup> On his final voyage (1708–1711), when he served Captain Woodes Rogers as pilot, Dampier's capability was clearly in question. He misjudged his mark: the Juan Fernandez Islands were not quite where he thought they were. And he was a long way out in his reckoning on where the Galapagos were. In the captain's subsequently published journal, Dampier's presence is conspicuously diminished. Yet he did navigate the expedition safely through the difficult but

relatively familiar waters of the Spice Islands. On that voyage his experience was worth something more than the dread evocation of his name along the Central American coast. In quite another sense, he was ready to acknowledge his limitations as an artist, or the disappointment of the still-life mode. Describing the pintado bird, he goes on to recount that a water spaniel they had with them retrieved a shot specimen and explains that he has given a picture of the bird, ‘but it was so damaged, that the Picture doth not show it to Advantage’.<sup>11</sup>

As a writer, Dampier claimed no great competence, though it is immediately apparent that he delivers something more than the ramblings of an old salt. In the introduction to his two published books of travel, he was not just observing the modest niceties in disclaiming pretensions to narrative artistry, or disowning a polite style. ‘I have not so much of the vanity of a Traveller, as to be fond of telling stories’, he wrote in dedicating his *New Voyage Round the World* to Sir Charles Montague. His care was to present useful and detailed information, of observables rather than marvels. ‘I am perswaded, that if what I say be intelligible, it matters not greatly in what words it is express’d’<sup>12</sup>, he insisted. Not for him a ‘polite and rhetorical narrative’; rather ‘a Plain Just Account of the true Nature and State of the Things described’.<sup>13</sup> The plainness of his style is offered – even, one might think, protested – as a guarantee of the seriousness of his purpose.<sup>14</sup>

But even as he insisted on his honest yeoman virtue, his writing was already leading him into a process of complicity. Although his course may have been by intention designedly undesigned, at every turn he faced the accommodations a writer must make. He had to decide whether he wrote for a polite audience or an interested but not so knowledgeable readership. He had to decide between the terminology of seamen and landmen. He had to determine how to organise his material, whether as a strict chronicle (the ‘order of time’ as he expressed it at the commencement of *Voyages and Discoveries*<sup>15</sup>), or according to geography, and whether to concentrate on the description of things or the relation of events. Some of the events were not what he would want brought to official attention; the truth had frequently to be varnished. At the time of his first book, he was an unknown, a former buccaneer returned to England after many years in a roving and not always strictly legal way of life. He fashioned a new image for himself as celebrated author, an image he was unable to maintain at the appearance of the book of his second major voyage, given he had just been court-martialled for excessive cruelty to his lieutenant, Fisher, and in the process his questionable earlier career had been recalled. The narrative pose is of the respectable and responsible captain; which severely contradicted the judgement of the court that he was indeed guilty.

## *Dampier's Monkey*

Each of the books – *A New Voyage Round the World*, *A Voyage to New Holland*, and *Voyages and Discoveries* – allows us to discover threads of narrative which Dampier neither troubled to fully articulate, nor to carefully conceal. Each carries a grand narrative theme: either the quest for trade as dominant over an equally persistent concern to make a fortune, or the passion to explain a system of the winds and currents, or a Columbus-like ambition to find some brave new place in the world. That is, none of Dampier's narratives is simple, in spite of his disclaimers. And the circumstances and events within which they occurred, the historical inflections, further enrich our appreciation of his work, leading us again and again to re-consider his texts, to read under the line. Like the old navigators, we too have to run down the latitude to find just where we will haul up. Like Dampier, we too have to learn to recognise the landmarks, take our own soundings, allow for the deflection of undercurrents.

By virtue of Dampier's long experience – virtue being an odd word in a context that was variously buccaneering, privateering and piratical, depending on just what the crew were up to – he became something of a savant of the South Seas, 'brilliant but disreputable'<sup>16</sup>, an observant, enigmatic and inordinately inquisitive man. The work that follows is neither history nor biography. Yet undoubtedly it is a little of both, for it does aim to read something of the man and his times through his writing. This is an attempt to see how his context informs that writing; to come to some further appreciation of just how complex apparently plain prose can be. The old navigators were acknowledged artists in their reading of the seas; we in our turn are challenged to find our way with more exactitude.



## In Medias Res

IN LONDON, at the end of June 1697, the most recent circumnavigator of the world, William Dampier, was summoned to appear before the Honourable Council of Lords of Trade and Plantations. His celebrated predecessors, Magellan, Drake, Cavendish, Schouten, Narborough, whose travels had only just been released (1694)<sup>17</sup>, were all captains of their famous voyages. Dampier differs from them in that he did not hold command on the sequence of voyages that had taken him around the world. He further differed from them in that he would eventually circle the globe three times. He had previously sailed on an East Indiaman to the Spice Islands, to Bantam in Java (1671). He captained the *Roebuck* in 1699–1701 halfway round the world, as far as New Guinea and New Britain, and then turned back; he led an unsuccessful privateering expedition in 1703–1705 (when he crossed both the equatorial and the legal line into something closer to buccaneering if not piratical activity, and his ship the *St George* rotted away beneath him as the *Roebuck* had done); and he was pilot on Woodes Rogers' successful privateering cruise 1708–1711. He was of particular interest to the Council of Trade and Plantations (also sometimes known as a Board) in 1697 because his recently published *A New Voyage Round the World* had caught the attention of some of the leading members of the Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge – the pre-eminent forum for presenting, testing and assessing new kinds of scientific knowledge – and through them the British Admiralty. The Council had connections with both. Dampier had also caught the attention of Charles Hatton, grandson of the Christopher Hatton whom Francis Drake had flattered by changing his ship's name to the *Golden Hind*, the Hatton family emblem; in a letter dated 27 May 1697, Charles Hatton mentions speaking with Dampier, finding him 'a blunt fellow, but of better understanding than wou'd be expected from one of his education'.<sup>18</sup> What Dampier had put into print in *A New Voyage* was of remarkable public interest in itself. But additionally, what he had written was a demonstration of

the guidelines drafted by the scientific pioneer Robert Boyle, endorsed by the Royal Society. These recommended the sorts of investigation in the field which would be of assistance in enlarging and systematising scientific enquiry, and were published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* in 1666 in a series of three papers, 'General Heads for a Natural History of a Country'.<sup>19</sup> Dampier's work was of course gratifying to those committed to promoting the cause of natural knowledge.

The function of the Council was something like a combination of the Ministry for Trade and the Colonial Office. It was instrumental in developing and monitoring England's burgeoning offshore commerce as well as supervising the regulatory arrangements in its various colonies and settlements. The combination of activities clearly points to the nexus between commercial benefit and incipient imperialism. Its presiding genius was the eminent philosopher John Locke, whose interest in monetary matters was no less well-developed than his concern with politics, education and religion, all the topics which genteel society would subsequently agree to avoid in conversation.<sup>20</sup> The Council noticed the comprehensive detail in Dampier's *New Voyage*, with its argument that England would do well to develop a base of trade on the Darien peninsula, now more correctly known as the Isthmus of Panama, as the key to the South Seas trade.

*I came into those seas this second time more to Endulge my cureosity then to gett wealth though I must confess at that time I did think the trade Lawfull yet had neuer followed it but in hopes to mak such descoueryes as might in time conduce to the benifit of my nation,*

he wrote in the margin of his manuscript<sup>21</sup>, affirming, on the face of it, a commendable visionary patriotism but simultaneously conceding a murkier past than was altogether politic, which is perhaps why the remark did not survive into the printed text. Evidently his narrative had touched on a raw nerve for the Council too, as the commissioners particularly sought from Dampier anything he knew 'as to the design of the Scotch East India Company to make a settlement on the Isthmus of Darien'. That specific directive intimates the Council had become acquainted with Scottish plans to enter into some kind of project in that very interesting quarter of the world; and not without good reason, as the Scots were garnering whatever information they could. King William was incensed at the threatened competition, and the hazard of destabilising a very delicate balance with Spain at the time. The disastrous outcome of the secret Scottish attempt which followed (1698–1700), devastating to Scottish investors and the Scottish economy,<sup>22</sup> would turn out to have a direct bearing upon the Act of Union (1707). Scotland's imperilled economic security would have to

be guaranteed through a negotiated settlement with England, by which the two countries formed the United Kingdom.

That summer meeting in 1697 is a poignant encounter. Locke, son of a Somerset parliamentary soldier, had returned to England from the Netherlands in 1689 to take an increasingly public role under the new king, William of Orange. Dampier was likewise from Somerset; his patron there, Sir William Helyar, was one of the Royalists especially singled out by the Cromwellians for his part in the Royalist cause, and had been both imprisoned at Exeter and fined.<sup>23</sup> Dampier's own political allegiances are not transparent, but his fellow buccaneers were imbued as often as not with leveller notions<sup>24</sup>, and the fading russet coats of the New Model Army were in evidence<sup>25</sup>, remnants from the Western Design, Cromwell's strategy for establishing an English presence and English trade in the West Indies. Locke had long argued for the Protestant succession and for a limited monarchy; he was much better off out of the way and out of the country during the reign of the Catholic James II. Dampier seems to have been less than interested in politics and government, to the extent that his long sequence of voyages around the world with privateers and buccaneers had led him into the shoal waters of piracy, pillaging, unlicensed slave-trading and drug-running. He had worked among the logwood cutters on the Yucatan peninsula, mainly buccaneers temporarily in dry dock; marched with a large force of hard cases across the Isthmus of Panama to attack Panama City, with the intention of emulating Henry Morgan; sailed more or less 'on the account' up and down the South American and Central American coasts, and out to the Galapagos and Juan Fernandez islands, crossed the Pacific to the Philippines and jogged about the East Indies under a variety of captains, some of them popularly elected, some made to stand down. He was marooned in the Bay of Bengal and threatened with being left behind on the inhospitable northwest coast of New Holland, where he had been largely disenchanted by what he observed of the natives there. He had seen at close quarter volcanoes and waterspouts and hurricanes and typhoons and strange ripples at sea, had come across a boy with a double set of teeth, witnessed circumcision ceremonies and funeral practices and execution by live burial. His experiences had been the very antithesis of Locke's. He reported on all that he had seen, without arriving at any synthesis of all this. Locke, though no less fascinated with the divers curiosities of the enlarging world – from white ants to black swans – contrived carefully wrought arguments, applied reason and system to his comprehension of civil society and social order, and reflected on the nature and extent of human knowledge, whereas Dampier seems to have applied the more immediate test of taste to his order of experience. He seems to have sampled just about everything he came across.

Dampier had returned from his twelve years of travel around the world at about the time Locke published his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which a theory of knowledge was elaborated, based on experience as opposed to innate ideas. Dampier's eclectic report on the state of affairs in the new world and in the East Indies is attuned to that materialist and empirical philosophy. Just as Dampier's obsessiveness in satisfying his own curiosity had led him on to ever-receding horizons, so Locke, reciprocally, sustained an enduring fascination with curiosities. Locke loved reading travel literature; Dampier discovered that he was rather good at writing it. At some time close to Dampier's appearing before the Council, Sir Hans Sloane, whose comprehensive cabinet of curiosities would become the foundation of the British Museum, commissioned Thomas Murray to paint Dampier's portrait. Locke had just recovered from an acrimonious exchange with an erstwhile friend, Thomas Stringer, in which he had attempted, unsuccessfully, to retrieve a copy of his own portrait, to be published with his essay on *Human Understanding*. Dampier appears in his portrait with his book; Locke's book appeared without his portrait. A drawing of a somewhat haughty and severe Locke by his secretary was the basis of the portrait in the second and then subsequent editions (1694).<sup>26</sup>

Locke and Dampier were manifestly on opposite sides of the table, both actually and biographically. Dampier had dirtied his hands in all sorts of nefarious activities whereas Locke was somewhat of an ascetic. Each, of course, valued his privacy. Locke had removed himself to Holland, following his patron the Earl of Shaftesbury, Dryden's 'false Achitophel', though Shaftesbury died within a few months of exile. Dampier made a career of removing himself from one hot spot to the next, as far away as to New Holland. In the 1690s, each was in process of re-establishing himself – as was England. Under William of Orange, this was the age of the Protestant ascendancy, and Locke by his association with Shaftesbury was aligned against the Stuarts. He was committed to tolerance in religious matters, but that can be thought of in simple terms as the non-conformist end of the doctrinal spectrum. Dampier allowed himself enough passing anti-Catholicism in his reflections on Spanish colonialism both to gratify the newly predominant (Whig) political sway, and to confirm himself as continuing the patriotic Protestantism of the Elizabethan privateers and freebooters, and especially that of his role model Francis Drake. Though coming from such different stations in life, and holding such radically different social roles – one at the very nerve centre of national affairs, the other all but an outsider – there is, in their writing at least, a curious similarity of attitude in their tendency to distance themselves from their engagement with life. They were both at a far cry from the bustling enthusiasms of a Samuel Pepys. They were both inclined to keep life at a distance; or rather, to hold