Introduction

This book originated in a question about the popularity of the first Pacific Islander to visit Britain. Mai of Raiatea arrived in 1774 with the return of James Cook's second voyage to the Pacific and stayed for two years.[1] As many writers have shown, the Islander proved a sensation while in Britain: he impressed the king, charmed the *bon ton*, intrigued provincial grandees, delighted the writers of Grub Street, inspired artists, and drew crowds of onlookers wherever he went in villages, towns, and city streets, respectively.[2] He occasioned an eight-foot portrait by Joshua Reynolds, a blockbuster pantomime by John O'Keeffe, meditations by Frances Burney, poetry by William Cowper, and scores of broadside articles, cheap woodcuts, penny ballads, and other ephemeral printed matter. But why was he so popular? The existing literature on Mai, though much of it erudite and intriguing, has surprisingly little to say about this seemingly basic question. Most commentators have offered one or a combination of two brief explanations: Mai answered perfectly the current vogue for "natural man" or "noble savagery" and/or he had a special individual and cultural ability to create his own celebrity.

While both explanations are reasonable, each raises immediate counter-questions. Why didn't other "natural men" visiting in the same period—say, the Inuit who arrived just one year before Mai—generate the same fascination? Why didn't other "noble savages" who were also deemed "knowing and strategic" attain equal fame?[3] Bennelong from the Port Jackson colony, for example, was often said to be both amiable and unnervingly politic, but his reception in Britain in the 1790s was negligible. Clearly, to address these objections we need to know more about the appeal of whatever it was that Mai embodied for Britons in the eighteenth century (if not also the mysterious quality of early-modern charisma). We need,

in other words, to situate the sensation of Mai within a larger historical tradition. Previous histories have tended not to do this because they have been so captive to the notion of Mai as *the first*. The "first Pacific Islander to visit Britain" is a description that we easily accept, but what did such a label mean in Mai's period?

The category "Pacific Islander" turns out to have been far less interesting, or even coherent, than "New World person" to Britons of the 1770s. During his stay, Mai was seen less as Britain's first Pacific Islander visitor and more as the latest version of visitor from the New World. In the eighteenth-century British imaginary, Mai's corner of the New World was connected to older-known parts through a variety of mechanisms—history, geography, genealogy—but mostly through the epithet of "savage" given all its inhabitants. New World people had been traveling to the British Isles from at least as early as 1501. They came in a range of guises—from fishermen to diplomats, trophies, slaves, interpreters, and sailors—but they were always received under the general category of "savage." As a savage visitor in the eighteenth century, Mai was indeed part of a long tradition.

As a *popular* savage visitor, however, Mai's pedigree was considerably shorter. It was not until the early 1700s that New World peoples started to attract serious attention in Britain. Only when four supposed Iroquois kings turned up in 1710 did Britons evince a deep and widespread fascination: from the court to the street, they now clamored to greet the arrivals and from every level of society generated a large corpus of writings and images about them. Once begun, the fascination became entrenched. The same pitch of excitement greeted every significant indigenous envoy from America for the next fifty years—including the seven Cherokee of 1730, the Creek Tomochichi in 1734, and the entourage surrounding Ostenaco in 1762, to name just the better known. From the 1760s, when Oceania began to replace America as the center of the New World in British minds, attention shifted accordingly to indigenous Oceanian visitors. Mai's visit was in many ways the greatest sensation of all, inspiring crowds and communications of a variety and volume never before approached.

Yet Mai's visit also proved to be the zenith of eighteenth-century fascination for New World savages. While Oceanians from places as far-flung as Palau and Hawaii continued to arrive in Britain at regular intervals after Mai, they did so each time to markedly lessening effect. By the time the first Aboriginal Australian disembarked in 1793—as the latest version again of a New World savage—the reaction was minuscule. No officials attended, no mobs materialized, no publications appeared. After nearly

seventy years of sustained engagement, Britons seemed suddenly to have tired of the phenomenon of the savage visitor.

THE SAVAGE VISIT

From a question about the appeal of one particular arrival in the 1770s, then, my project quickly became an investigation into the broad rise and then relatively rapid decline in popularity of all New World visitors throughout the eighteenth century. Its chief focus is the nature of the attraction surrounding such people in Britain at this time. Why did ordinary Britons become so fascinated with so-called savages for most of the eighteenth century but then lose their interest from the 1780s? What, in other words, were the specifics of everyday appeal and neglect? Evidently, any gesture here to the perennial or universal appeal of savagery as a mirror to the supposedly "not-savage" will be inadequate. Although a dominant assumption, savagery did *not* always intrigue the self-appointed civilized; it did *not* always compel as a means of reflecting back the good or the ill of a society. Like any form of exotica, savagery has a history, functioning in different ways when figured in different places or in different periods.

The Savage Visit analyzes a selection of visits by different New World people to Britain, sketching in episodic fashion the main contours of the phenomenon during the eighteenth century. It finds that for the bulk of the period, savage visitors proved particularly popular because they were then particularly "good to think."[4] More than simple conduits for favorable or pejorative commentaries on contemporary British civilization, they served also to enable or enhance a specific debate about British civilization at this time. That debate centered on the question of expansion, and included a greater range and a fiercer heat of opinion than is often realized. Although this period witnessed the emergence of a "cult of commerce" and with it the consolidation of a "nascent imperial sensibility," it did not enjoy full consensus on these matters.[5] The classical case against trade, growth, militarization, and eventual empire was livelier, commoner, and fresher then usually credited by cultural, social, and economic historians. The visiting savage provided a rare forum in which Britons of all shades could discuss this issue. It appealed equally to various positions, and in equally diverse ways, as a powerful metaphor for what British expansion might or might not bring. That Britons became increasingly indifferent to so-called savages at century's end reflected not only a major shift in the understanding of "the problem of British civilization" but also a major shift in the relations between opposing discourses.

. . .

The historiography on New World travelers to early-modern Britain is patchy at best. Few scholars have focused especially on the question of impact and none have combined analysis of all those who fell under the rubric of "New World" at the time. Native American travelers have been secluded from Oceanian travelers because historians have tended to work within later notions of nationality rather than contemporary group definitions. Of the former, some excellent work now exists. Michael Oberg on the Croatan Manteo of 1584, Kathleen Brown on Pocahontas's sojourn in 1616, and Eric Hinderaker on the "Four Iroquois Kings" of 1710, for examples, have all advanced the micro-study of individual travelers, while Alden Vaughan in 2006 published what is certainly the best overview of Native Americans in Britain from first arrival to 1776.[6] Perhaps because of their lack of a larger context, however, none of these studies make any particularly exceptional claim about reception. Vaughan's otherwise meticulous book, *Transatlantic Encounters,* ends with the blanket statement that Native Americans were "endlessly fascinating" to Britons; as travelers they constituted a "semicontiguous and immensely popular parade that lasted nearly three centuries before 1776."[7]

The literature on Oceanian travelers is much thinner than its counterpart and suffers even more from an absence of grand context. Mai is the only figure to have generated a substantial scholarship, though as mentioned this corpus has rarely attended to the issue of appeal and has even less frequently considered the relationship between Mai and earlier envoys from the New World. Later Oceanian travelers have inspired negligible attention.[8]

This book owes a great deal to earlier work on its subject but places a determinedly new emphasis on discovering why, in effect, that subject came to exist in the first place. It reviews the subject of New World travelers in its eighteenth-century entirety, including peoples who are now properly studied apart but who nevertheless shared a significant common assignation at one time.

THE IDEA OF SAVAGERY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

What exactly did this key unifying notion of savagery mean in the eighteenth century? Savagery is, of course, a well-traversed topic in intellectual history. Most formal accounts provide a long lineage, beginning with the idea's origins in ancient thought, tracing its survival in medieval

theology, noting its increasing distinction by the Renaissance, and then ending with its status as chief synonym for the Enlightenment's potent category of "the state of nature."[9] It is generally conceded that savagery lost much of its historical texture into the nineteenth century, coming to indicate plain, negative qualities such as cruelty or ferocity.[10] Few of these histories, however, pay much heed to the relationship between the philosophical realm of most of their sources and the everyday life of their subject. Though hardly a simple task, its pervasive neglect means that the more generic sense of the idea of savagery is little iterated.

In order to get at the common notion of savagery in our period, it may be better to start at an alternate point in the foregoing sweep, when the term was first used with relative regularity in several European languages to describe humans.[11] The etymology of the word reveals that savagery was associated with humanity only from the fifteenth century.[12] Derived from the Latin *silvaticus* for forest, the word was previously employed with respect to the plants or animals of wooded environments. Since wooded environments were generally defined by their absence of human life, any connection made between the two now immediately registered an important dissonance. Like "Ishmaell the Sauage" from the fifteenth-century romance *Generydes*, who was "*oddely* wild in all his demeaning," savage people from early-modern times were first and foremost different because they lived in places that were not normally or familiarly occupied.[13]

The difference of savagery is no doubt its most central tenet. If the savage does cast back before the fifteenth century, it is usually to see himself in his cousin, the barbarian. Ancient and medieval barbarians were also primarily defined by their otherness. In Aristotelian thought, the *barbaros* was fundamentally different because he lacked the fundamental characteristic of reason. In medieval thought, the barbarian was he who failed to fulfill God's first article for men, which is to till the earth and subdue the animals (Gen 1: 26–28). The savage of the general early-modern era, then, contained within him traces of both the dissonance of unreason and that of unproductivity.[14]

The second key tenet of savagery as it came to be used by sixteenth-century Europeans was the way it asserted difference through dearth or simplicity. Mostly this was a dearth or simplicity of social practices, or of what Margaret Hodgen has called "cultural facts."[15] The godless and "gabbling" Caliban of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, for example, was savage because he lacked language and religion. Columbus called the Caribs savage because they lacked clothing, defenses, God, and a cooked diet.

Vespucci found the Brazilians savage because they lacked shame, government, laws, and a merchant class.[16]

In earlier times, the barbarian's lack was codified within varying versions of the *scala natura*. The Great Chain of Being, either ancient or medieval, placed the barbarian above the animals but below fully attained or fully acquitted humanity. Though each being in the chain was in a constant progress toward a purer nature or a purer salvation, it was also always stuck beneath or below or behind a higher state. This strangely mobile fixity is what survived into savagery. The general early-modern notion was marked by what it did not yet have, or did not yet have enough of.[17]

This is not to say that dearth or simplicity was necessarily reviled. The third major feature of savagery was its constant ambivalence in value. Before the nineteenth century, it is as easy to find positive accounts of savagery as it is to find negative ones (although, as many scholars have pointed out, the negative probably still outweighed the positive overall).[18] For every diatribe against "beastly," "horrible," "filthy," or "hideous" savages, that is, there were frequent praises for "gentle," "loving," "faithful," or "harmless" versions of the same.[19] Such dualism, of course, has a clear heritage in the primitivism and anti-primitivism that Arthur Lovejoy and others long ago identified throughout most Western thought. Beginning with the split in estimate between the loathsome, feral Cyclopes and the happy, sated Hyperboreans, this ambivalence about simple others continued through most classical literature, bowed before a greater tendency to see only ignobility in the Middle Ages, but then re-emerged by the Renaissance.[20]

A working definition of early-modern savagery, then, includes first a sense of radical otherness; second, a lack or simplicity of social practices; and third, an ambivalent valuation. Other attributes commonly added to definitions of savagery for this time, such as cannibalism, naturalism, and even nonhumanity, are not as ubiquitous as these three principles. Two contemporaneous events, however, were additionally important in shaping the early-modern understanding of savagery. The first was the discovery of the New World. Its coincidence with the rise of the use of savagery as a descriptor for humans formed the basis of an overriding association that held for at least three centuries. "From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries," writes Ter Ellingson, New World people "constituted the paradigmatic case for the 'savage,' and the term was most widely applied to them."[21] The second, vaguer event was the reinvention of barbarism. When the concept of the savage human emerged in the fif-

teenth century, the barbarian somehow simultaneously lost much of his millennia-old history to it. If savagery now incorporated the unreasonable and the unproductive, the barbarian became instead someone who exercised *poor* reason or had a *poor* impact upon the world—his impertinent will in these matters highlighted in contrast the savage's inherent innocence.[22] Far from an association with the most newly discovered peoples of the earth, barbarians became rather aligned with the "old new world"—those yet-shadowy regions of the vast Orient, which clearly could no longer be accused of lacking civilization but which apparently had still to acquit themselves on the question of quality.

This generic notion of savagery, formed through the sixteenth century with its strong ties to the New World and noted distinction from a reconfigured barbarism, was still mostly current by the Age of Enlightenment. The period's signature "meaning compendiums" attest most tidily to the continuation: most dictionaries and encyclopedias of the eighteenth century include the three basic tenets outlined above, as well as frequent references both to the New World and to a fundamental naïveté. Samuel Johnson's famous *Dictionary* from the middle of the era scattered synonyms for savagery throughout its pages, which can be roughly ordered into first those that indicated profound difference—"immane"; second, those that indicated social deficiency—"rude," "rustical," "nomadick," "uncivilised," "pagan," "not tamed"; and third, those that indicated a negative quality—"brutal," "cruel," "churlish," "fierce," "bloody," "rapacious," "outrageous," "truculent" (Johnson himself was never ambivalent about the value of savagery). Before Johnson's *Dictionary*, the best-known English arbiter on meanings was probably Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia* (1728). It defined savagery as a state of wildness "without any fix'd Habitation, Religion, Law, or Policy" and noted too that "A great Part of *America* is peopled with *Savages*." Johnson's great rival, John Ash, brought out his *New and Complete Dictionary* in 1775, which mostly agreed with its predecessors but added an emphasis on the "untaught" essence of savagery.[23]

Broad claims by intellectual historians that savagery in the Enlightenment simply "equated" to the state of nature, or the "purely natural," thus overlook some of the nuances evident in everyday understandings of the word by our period (and in its broadness can as well imply limitless nuances under the umbrella of "nature").[24] They miss, that is, the way in which ordinary uses of the word at this time worked within set, if yet capacious, parameters. An anonymous squib entitled *The Savage*

demonstrates how savagery in this era was both larger and more precise than usually retailed. Published to commemorate the discovery of a supposed "wild child" on the European continent in 1726, the piece described savages as "unform'd, untaught, / From solitary Desarts brought"; they are strangers to guile, envy, pride, and avarice but they are also lustful, lawless, and "slavish to . . . each imperious Passion's Sway."[25] The ditty writer in this instance outlined a certain type of otherness that lacked in a very certain way. He also incidentally evoked distinguished intellectual traditions about particular outsiders in his usage even if he himself did not have a "philosophical cast of mind."[26]

. . .

Recently some historians have questioned the extended study of savagery. Instead of giving more attention to a demeaning stereotype, they encourage investigations into how people so called were on occasion seen as real rather than idealized figures.[27] Along with some good evidence, such scholars have probably been inspired by two main prompts—a modern reluctance to add to the burden of a victim's past (which may also threaten to smother the story of hidden resistances) and pronouncements such as Hayden White's in 1976 that "there is nothing more to say" about the theme of savagery.[28]

The work of Troy Bickham and Stephanie Pratt, for example, has uncovered some compelling instances of a more realist approach to Native Americans in eighteenth-century Britain. But as I discuss later in this book, neither author demonstrates a waning of the *predominant* attachment of the stereotype of savagery. To the problem of studying oppressive epithets, I can only offer the well-worn though sincere opinion that analysis of how a stereotype germinated, thrived, and later hybridized in the past underscores its radical contingency and always the existence somewhere of trenchant refusers. As for White, his own later essays are examples of how pertinent discourse can continue even for the best-rehearsed topics, mainly because the wider scholarly fields around them constantly alter shape. For White on savagery in the 1970s, the key alteration was the introduction of psychoanalysis. For this book today, the critical shift is rather in the picture we have now of eighteenth-century Britain. In the light of a veritable boom in studies over the last three decades, eighteenth-century Britain looks a lot more divided, dependent, anxious, curious, and dynamic than it once did. Does the behavior or purchase of the supposedly overstudied notion of savagery also look different in this reconfigured terrain?

THE PECULIAR MODERNITY OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Despite the revitalization of the field of eighteenth-century British history, few have ventured to offer a synthesis of the recent literature. Who, after all, wants to rationalize a corpus that delineates both a burgeoning consumer society and a predominantly agrarian economy? Both an empire of global reach and a culture of notable xenophobia? Both an expanding fiscal-military state and a persistent horror of debt and war? Both patronage and individualism? Commercialism and landed authority. Politeness and slavery. These are the key paradoxes retailed in current histories of the era and together they constitute what Paul Langford has called its "peculiar modernity".[29] For many, this amounts to a vision of eighteenth-century Britain as an *ancien régime* with an oddly familiar dynamism.[30]

As Norma Landau remarked near the beginning of the revisionist impetus, recent historians wish to "capture [the] seeming paradoxes [of] eighteenth-century society" rather than explain them away as awkward steps toward either progressive liberalism or the proletarian state.[31] But this does not mean that they always wish to account for contradiction—to analyze the extent to which "seeming paradoxes" actually threatened historical cohesion. Most scholars indeed paint pictures of a fairly functional society. Even those interested primarily in studying minorities, marginals, and otherwise resistant types still often point to the overall dominance, rather than failure, of hegemony in this era.[32]

Some historians, however, see a less stable entity. They argue, as one of the more idiosyncratic of their number has put it, that eighteenth-century Britain was marked most of all by a "fermenting and ungovernable debate over itself."[33] For more than three decades, J.G.A. Pocock has made the case for conflict in eighteenth-century Britain, though—granted—he has been less interested in conflict between social groups than between discursive positions.[34] Far from being an engagement in mere surfaces, however, his analyses of the antagonistic ways in which Britons discussed the paradoxes of their age suggest that it was precisely these disagreements that posed the greatest threat to overall unity.

Pocock's two chief "opposing paradigms" for eighteenth-century Britain have been referred to in shorthand as classical republicanism and modern commercialism, or in longhand as "the Old Whig, Tory, Commonwealth and Country reaction against the financial, oligarchic, and imperial regime that came into being after 1688" and the latter's apologists.[35] In our context, the main thrust of the republican case was less

about a true adherence to neo-roman or even antimonarchical ideas of active citizenship and more about a critique of the perceived shift in the economic bases of political power. At the turn of the seventeenth century it was felt that the emergence of a commercial economy spelled a government newly reliant on the "monied interest" and thus newly exposed to the threat of corruption. Since monied men themselves were reliant on unpredictable relations of exchange—unlike their historic counterpart in real property owners, who maintained a glorious autonomy—this added to concerns about instability. Moreover, a government tied to commercial interests would necessarily have to institute two of the greatest bugbears of classical political theory—a standing army to protect new global trading posts and a massive national debt to pay for so much new warmongering. Since most observers agreed that it was the Revolution Settlement of 1688 which formalized these changes in Britain, republican critique in the eighteenth century was peculiarly characterized by negative interpretations of Revolutionary issues. It was marked, in other words, by an antipathy to parliament, a defense of monarchical right, a fear of the degradation of Anglican centrality, and a general hostility to the sociable and tolerant culture necessary for commercial practice—together with more typical anxieties about war and money.

What is most significant for Pocock in the identification of discursive division at this time is that it was the republican model that dictated initial terms. The case for commerce was "hammered out with difficulty in the face of [republican ideals]"; its proponents "had to fight [their] way to . . . recognition in the teeth of the [republican ideal]."[36] It followed, thus, that apologists for commerce were also preoccupied, to perhaps an otherwise baffling extent, with issues from 1688: the good governance of the court, the containment of the sovereign, the continued health of the Church, and the wonderment of an ever-elaborating social manner—as well as, of course, with war and money. Though commerce came later to command fresh terms—based on wealth over stability and politeness over virtue—Pocock reiterates that its ultimate vindication was not the result of a "unidirectional transformation of thought in favour of the acceptance of 'liberal' or 'market' man, but [rather of] a bitter, conscious and ambivalent dialogue."[37]

Unfortunately, Pocock has rarely ventured outside of the realm of the "unrepresentative elite" when investigating this conflict, and few of his readers have wandered where he has declined to go.[38] But in many ways, the popular reaction to New World visitors until the 1780s shows that this division over commercialization was a comprehensive fault line. The

content of the myriad productions on the visitors revolved consistently around the changing roles of Britain's parliament, churchmen, armed forces, financiers, and the new "culture" peddlers. Significantly, too, these popular works were marked by intense discord rather than consensus. If the conflict manifested in the response to New World arrivals was not always articulated as one between classical republicanism and modern commercialism, it nonetheless shared similar groupings of concern as well as a similar whiff of incommensurability. In the fuzzy world of the general urban literate, this conflict is perhaps better defined as a fluid tussle over the question of expansion.[39]

Expansion is of course both the motor and reason for all commercial enterprise, but in our context it also captures the sense of endless proliferation that commercialization was believed to wreak on contemporary society—new forms of governance, new needs for guns and credit, new insistences on sociable behavior, and so on. Moreover, expansion invokes, or brings to the fore, the literal move into new worlds that contemporaries commonly noted as the means by which such newness was afforded. Expansion highlights the imperialistic thrust of eighteenth-century British commerce. The everyday debate over expansionism was fluid because its spokespeople rarely respected formal ideological boundaries. The same Grub Street journal could satirize the megalomania of expansionist ministers one day but congratulate the government on a victory in battle the next. The same balladeer could denounce the influx of expansion's luxury goods into London in one verse but celebrate the spread of British trade in the following. Though ideology on the ground in eighteenth-century Britain came packaged in bits, it was for all its messiness no less a coherent position in discourse.

Expansion, then, lay at the heart of the reaction to New World visitors. The great *appeal* of such people, however, depended not on their ability to create common ground on the issue but on their ability to provide a means of debating expansion from multiple positions. The key to this attribute was their unquestioned status as savages. It was specifically as agreed embodiments of radically distinct simplicity, with a long history of ambivalent valuation, that New World visitors in eighteenth-century Britain became "good to think." Their radically distinct simplicity stood in eloquent relation to all that expansion was imagined to effect. And their ambivalent valuation meant that any discursive articulation of that relation was possible. For instance, visiting savages could be held up as emblems of the retrograde backwardness that awaited those who failed to expand, or they could be made into avatars of the pure orderliness that

would come from expansion's full pursuit. Conversely, savages in Britain could be seen as *memento mori* of the innocence lost in the move away from classical political economy, or they could be demonized as specters of the dependent brutishness entailed in embracing an exchange culture. Savagery did not foster consensus on expansion but its innate distinction and rich flexibility made the concept comprehensively attractive.[40]

The waning of interest in New World visitors from the 1780s was not merely an instance of overfamiliarity. After all, such folk had been arriving on British shores for nearly three hundred years—they had seemingly acquired fresh luster after two hundred and then suddenly lost their appeal within eighty. The rise and fall of fashions usually have histories independent of modern estimates for mass fatigue. Likewise, the turn away from New World visitors was not a sign of a change in the definition of savagery—the term continued to indicate radically distinct simplicity into the late 1700s, even if it now tended to be judged with increasing reprove. Rather, the shift took the form of a change in the *purchase* of savagery on the debate about expansionism, which in turn indicated a change in the terms of the debate itself. Savagery proved less and less useful to the articulation of opinions about Britain's commercial future because, bluntly, that future had already arrived. By the 1790s, the "bitter dialogue" over expansionism had mostly resolved in favor of the advocates. This is not to say that agreement about Britain's destiny now reigned but it does suggest that symbols of fundamental difference were no longer as potent in the more reform-minded debates that followed.

The conflict over expansion had been one of first principles: it had focused on the probity of whether Britain should become an expansionist state at all. Later conflicts about the empire created by that expansion centered more on secondary concerns: they were less interested in questions of *ought* than in questions of *how*. The diversity of the reaction to New World visitors, which in itself explains their appeal, shows that Britons for much of the eighteenth century were not at all unanimous about their national trajectory. Imperial identity can be no more assumed a dominant trait in this era than the unfolding of empire was a certainty. Both were deeply contingent because both were deeply controversial.

• • •

The Savage Visit takes a simple, chronological structure. Chapter 1 narrates the history of New World travelers to the British Isles before the eighteenth century, establishing the disparate and essentially casual nature of their reception. Chapters 2 to 4 draw the rising arc of eighteenth-century

interest in New World envoys, detailing particular visits from 1710 to the 1760s. Chapter 5 analyzes the critical shift regarding ideal savagery from America to Oceania in the 1760s and 1770s, while chapter 6, on Mai, chronicles the visit that witnessed the height of fascination for people of his kind. Chapters 7 and 8 delineate the downward curve of British interest in New World folk, concluding with a recent controversy that links the phenomenon of the eighteenth-century savage visitor to our day.

It remains only to make clear that, given my concern to understand the "everyday appeal and neglect" of a phenomenon in the British past, this book has a necessarily metropolitan emphasis. The work does, however, also include many micro-histories of the individuals who constituted that phenomenon—each chapter contains short, interlinked narratives of the travelers' backgrounds, ambitions, interpretations, and returns. But unlike the analysis of metropolitan engagement, these micro-histories do not pretend to amount to one overarching thesis—least of all about the nature of the eighteenth-century indigenous travel experience. To do so would be to perpetuate contemporary British assumptions about the sameness of peoples we now believe to be vastly different. Alden Vaughan has recently reminded us of the difficulty in constructing these micro-histories at all. As with any folk who leave little or no records of their personal existence, the men and women who traveled from the New World to Britain in our era are mostly glimpsed between lines written by others, among shades painted in portraits, and behind rumors spread after they left. Although dispiriting at some level, Vaughan also reminds that this paucity of evidence is still richer than what we know about "many thousands of Europeans and Africans who went in the opposite direction."[41]